



# Afghanistan: Changing the Frame, Changing the Game



**BELFER CENTER**

**for Science and International Affairs**

John F. Kennedy School of Government  
Harvard University

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**Discussion paper #09-02**

**Belfer Center Student Paper Series**

**Harvard Kennedy School**

**March 2009**



This document appears as discussion paper #09-02 of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. Comments are welcome and may be directed to Eric Rosenbach at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

This paper may be cited as Yll Bajraktari and Peter Roady, "Afghanistan: Changing the Frame, Changing the Game," Belfer Center Student Paper Series #09-02, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, MA, March 2009.

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## Foreword

Yll Bajraktari and Peter Roady prepared this paper as a Harvard Kennedy School Policy Analysis Exercise, the Kennedy School equivalent of a master's thesis. They submitted it as a discussion paper to the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

At a crucial moment, this paper analyzes the challenges the international community faces in Afghanistan and finds that five problems have crippled the effort from the beginning – ambiguous objectives, poor coordination, a mismatch of goals and resources, unrealistic expectations about centralized institutions, and inattention to regional dynamics. The authors offer practical, actionable recommendations that will help the international community achieve a positive outcome in Afghanistan and the region.

Coming at a time when Central and South Asia have become the focus of the Obama administration's foreign policy, this paper is both timely and valuable. The new administration has defined its new objectives for Afghanistan and the region. This paper provides guidance on implementation and coordination to ensure that these new objectives are met.

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## List of Acronyms

ABP	Afghan Border Police
ANSF	Afghanistan National Security Forces
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
BCC	Border Coordination Center
CIVPOL	United Nations Civilian Police
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan
DoD	United States Department of Defense
DOS	United States Department of State
ETT	Embedded Training Team
EU	European Union
EUPOL	European Union Police
FCO	United Kingdom Foreign Commonwealth Office
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
IACT	Interagency Coordination Team
IAG	Illegal Armed Group
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence
JCP	Joint Campaign Plan
JCMB	Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoI	Ministry of Interior

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OEF-A	Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OMLT	Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team
PMT	Police Mentoring Team
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RAW	India's Research and Analysis Wing
RC	Regional Command
ROL	Rule of Law
RTC	Regional Training Center
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
US	United States

## Acknowledgments

This project has benefitted from the time, support, and expertise of many individuals. We would like to thank Eric Rosenbach for providing outstanding guidance and mentoring. Monica Toft was a great advisor.

We are grateful to Joseph Pickerill and the staff of the United Kingdom Consulate General in Boston for their support. The United Kingdom Delegation to NATO helped arrange a superb program of meetings over two days at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

Many other friends and colleagues contributed their thoughts and ideas. We thank them collectively for their time and support.

The views in this report are ours alone and do not represent the positions of any of the institutions with which we are affiliated.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Executive Summary

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The major international actors involved in Afghanistan—the US, NATO, and the UN—have reached a negative tipping point. Five interrelated problems have handicapped their efforts for the past seven years.

1. Lack of clarity on the purpose of the Afghan mission and lack of agreement on objectives
2. Lack of coordination among international actors and between international actors and the Afghan government
3. Insufficient resources
4. Focus on the central government at the expense of provincial, district, and local level initiatives
5. Focus on Afghanistan at the expense of the region

If not addressed, these problems will continue to undermine the effort in Afghanistan. This report analyses these problems and provides recommendations about how to move forward more effectively. Among the recommendations, the following three are critical and require immediate action by the US, NATO, and the UN:

- The coalition needs to **reframe the mission** so that everyone understands the purpose and objectives of the effort in the same terms. For the US and NATO, **the purpose of the mission today is security. The objective is to stabilize Afghanistan and the region** so that they are not safe-havens for terrorists. For the UN, the objective is to enable Afghanistan to become a viable state. Afghanistan will not be stabilized or viable in the next 3-5 years. To achieve their most fundamental objectives, the US, NATO, and the UN will need to be deeply

involved in Afghanistan for at least 20 years.

- The US, working with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), needs to **establish a Regional Contact Group** made up of the many envoys already appointed (with a few additions) to better coordinate international efforts outside of Afghanistan.
- The international community needs to **engage broader regional players** to invest in Afghanistan's success. Afghanistan's neighbors and other regional actors need to join in a shared vision for Afghanistan based on the principle that Afghanistan and the region cannot provide safe havens for terrorists and their supporters.

Unfavorable circumstances and dynamics have emerged and are taking root and the situation in Afghanistan and the region continues to deteriorate. The major players in Afghanistan can still achieve a positive outcome if they build on the momentum generated by President Barack Obama's election and his administration's focus on Afghanistan. The US, NATO, and the UN must act quickly to reverse these negative trends and begin changing the game on the ground and in the region.

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## Introduction

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This report does not outline a new long-term strategy for Afghanistan. There are enough strategies in place or under review. Instead, this report focuses on implementation and coordination. This report touches on many topics but addresses only a few key points in detail.

The state of Afghanistan today reflects, in large part, a failure of the international community. Five related problems have undermined the international effort:

1. Lack of clarity on the purpose of the Afghan mission and lack of agreement on objectives
2. Lack of coordination among international actors and between international actors and the Afghan government
3. Insufficient resources
4. Focus on the central government at the expense of provincial, district, and local level initiatives
5. Focus on Afghanistan at the expense of the region

These problems cut across Afghanistan, the region, and the international community.

The international community has expended a tremendous amount of resources over the past seven years to move Afghanistan to its present and rather precarious position. Yet there still appears to be a general failure to recognize and acknowledge the stakes in Afghanistan.

This report is aimed at the three major international actors involved in Afghanistan today:

the United States, NATO, and the United Nations. These three actors will lose credibility and prestige if the situation does not improve. President Barack Obama's recent decision to deploy additional American forces to Afghanistan has raised the stakes for the United States.

NATO has staked its future relevance on out-of-area operations seen as tied to in-area security. Despite pronouncements of Alliance unity on Afghanistan, there have been strikingly different explanations for the mission offered at home. It is clear that not all countries see the Afghan mission as tied to their national interests. This has led to an insufficient level of commitment to the mission in Afghanistan and could result in a dramatic loss of prestige for what was once the world's premier security alliance.

The UN's inability to coordinate and manage the effort in Afghanistan will call into question its role in world affairs. Kai Eide, UN special representative in Afghanistan, has not received the level of resources that he needs to perform his duties. While UNAMA has tried to walk the middle ground between the Government of Afghanistan and the international actors involved there, it risks failing both constituencies. Complaints about the ineffectiveness of UNAMA are nearly universal. As a result, those most closely involved in Afghanistan talk of the need to strengthen UNAMA. But it is not possible to strengthen UNAMA without building a broader base of support for the Afghan effort at the UN. And it is not possible to build a broader base of support without understanding and addressing the interests of different countries. This report explores the interests of many key countries and shows how they can be brought to play more productive roles in Afghanistan.

The most salient outcome of a failed effort in Afghanistan will be a less secure world. Afghanistan and Pakistan will likely descend into chaos.<sup>1</sup> Taliban-inspired extremist movements could continue to spread to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>2</sup> The "West", in particular, will be less secure. The expenditure of blood and treasure will have diminished the national defense capabilities of countries like the United Kingdom that have strained themselves in Afghanistan. Countries like France that pride themselves on their ability to intervene in crises around the world have already found their capacity to intervene reduced and will have

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1. Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008).

2. Keen analysts have been following this trend for nearly ten years, since the heyday of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. See: Ahmed Rashid, "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 1999). <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19991101faessay1017/ahmed-rashid/the-taliban-exporting-extremism.html> (24 February 2009); see also Catherine Dale, "War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress," CRS Report for Congress 7-5700 (23 January 2009): 24.

to adapt their foreign policies accordingly.<sup>3</sup>

Most importantly, the failure to fully eradicate terrorists in the region will increase the chances of domestic attacks in the next ten years across the Western world.<sup>4</sup> The security services in countries like Germany understand this even if their publics and politicians do not.<sup>5</sup>

After nearly eight years of insufficient progress, the actors most heavily involved in Afghanistan can no longer turn the tide themselves. Coupled with the momentum generated by President Obama's election and the diplomatic goodwill gained by his administration, there is an opportunity for the West to alter many long-held policies and approaches in Central and South Asia. Countries including China, Iran, India, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan stand to lose if Afghanistan and the region are not stabilized. They should be engaged.

The major players in Afghanistan need to change the frame and change the game. This report maps a way forward that is multilateral and viable. By changing the frame, domestic audiences around the world will have the compelling narrative they need in order to support the continuation of the Afghan mission in trying economic times. Going forward, more effective communication about the Afghan mission and more realistic objectives will be vital. Public and private diplomacy need to be employed to change the frame in which countries and their publics think about the Afghan mission. By increasing other key actors' stakes in Afghanistan, the current coalition can change the game and facilitate the outcome it wants in Afghanistan and enjoy positive secondary effects throughout the region.

The international community will not make significant progress unless it addresses the five key problems outlined in this report.

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3. Emmanuel Georges-Picot, "France to cut foreign deployments by 15 percent," *AP* 29 January 2009. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5i4CptqAh4F7M5W7NqAbPoWgYPILAD96oBFG8o> (21 February 2009).

4. Robert Mueller, comments at the Council on Foreign Relations, 23 February 2009. <http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Mueller%20Prepared%20Remarks%202-23-09.pdf> (24 February 2009).

5. "A German Islamist Rises up al-Qaida's Ranks," *Der Spiegel* 27 January 2009. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/o,1518,603752,00.html> (24 February 2009). "Uzbek Group Linked to Video Terror Threat Against Germany," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* 28 January 2009. [http://www.rferl.org/Content/Uzbek\\_Group\\_Linked\\_To\\_Video\\_Terror\\_Threat\\_Against\\_Germany/1375902.html](http://www.rferl.org/Content/Uzbek_Group_Linked_To_Video_Terror_Threat_Against_Germany/1375902.html) (24 February 2009).



## FIVE KEY PROBLEMS

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## Five Key Problems

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At this point, as the international community—led by the US—is reconsidering its objectives in Afghanistan, the most salient question is: what are the most fundamental barriers to progress? There are five:

1. Lack of clarity on the purpose of the Afghan mission and lack of agreement on objectives
2. Lack of coordination among international actors and between international actors and the Afghan government
3. Insufficient resources
4. Focus on the central government at the expense of provincial, district, and local level initiatives
5. Focus on Afghanistan at the expense of the region

This section examines these five interrelated problems and shows how they have crippled the international effort.



## Problem 1

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### *Lack of clarity on the purpose of the Afghan mission and lack of agreement on objectives*

The clarity of purpose and level of agreement on the objectives of the Afghan mission have oscillated over the past seven years. The initial purpose and objectives of the Afghan mission were clear and widely agreed upon. It was a counterterrorism and security mission. With wide international support, the United States began a military campaign in October 2001 in response to the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. The objectives of Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan (OEF-A) were to capture or kill Osama Bin Laden, rout al-Qaeda, and remove the Taliban regime that had provided safe haven for al-Qaeda.<sup>6</sup>

The Taliban and al-Qaeda's retreat into Pakistan marked a transition towards a more diffuse constellation of ideas about the purpose and objectives of international efforts. For the US, the primary purposes remained counterterrorism and security. Despite facing similar threats from Islamist extremists, many countries with stakes in the Afghan effort do not fully share the threat perception of the US and do not clearly connect the Afghan mission with their national interests.<sup>7</sup> For the UN, the purpose was stabilization and reconstruction. NATO's purpose was to provide security assistance through the ISAF mission so that the Afghan government could get on its feet. The Bonn Agreement of December 2001 laid out the objectives of the burgeoning international effort.<sup>8</sup>

The apparent unity of purpose and agreement on objectives secured at Bonn did not translate clearly to countries contributing to the Afghan mission: many of them explained the mission to their domestic audiences in different terms. This has led to a profusion of frames for the mission. While it is certainly to be expected that different countries will have different reasons

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6. For specific background information on the early months of the campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, see Richard W. Stewart, *The United States Army in Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom 2001-2002*. <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/Afghanistan/Operation%20Enduring%20Freedom.htm> (23 January 2008); Gary Schroen, *First In: An Insider's Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2005); Gary Bernstein and Ralph Pezullo, *Jawbreaker: The Attack on bin Laden and Al Qaeda* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005); Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002); Dalton Fury, *Kill Bin Laden: A Delta Force Commander's Account of the Hunt for the World's Most Wanted Man* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008).

7. C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, *Securing Afghanistan: Getting on Track*, United States Institute of Peace Working Paper, 23 January 2009: 7.

8. The full text of the Bonn Agreement is available at <http://www.afghangovernment.com/afghanagreementbonn.htm> (12 March 2009).

for participating, the use of so many different frames has fostered global confusion about the core purpose of the mission. For ISAF countries in particular strategic communication about the Afghan mission has been rendered ineffective by the lack of shared purpose. This has dampened public support for the effort and has contributed to the unwillingness of countries to contribute sufficient resources to the mission and follow-through on pledges made to the mission and the Afghan government.

The deteriorating security situation has amplified these problems. As the security situation in Afghanistan has worsened, not all ISAF countries have adapted their postures to reflect the realities on the ground. Some countries sold the mission as a humanitarian effort in which the use of force would be severely proscribed.<sup>9</sup> Many ISAF contributors stress the importance of development, yet it is extremely difficult to foster durable development in the absence of sustained security throughout the country.<sup>10</sup>

NATO countries tried to refocus the mission at the summit in Bucharest in April 2008. However, the principles they agreed upon were quite general. The Bucharest Declaration contains many good ideas, but the summit and resulting document did not succeed in reframing the mission. As a result, there has been a lack of follow-through.<sup>11</sup> Since Bucharest, ISAF, under the leadership of General David McKiernan, has made a bit of bottom-up progress reframing the mission. The Joint Campaign Plan (JCP) describes the ISAF mission in counterinsurgency (COIN) terms. This trend towards understanding the mission in Afghanistan in COIN terms is positive.<sup>12</sup> However, ISAF needs to go further: the primary purpose of the ISAF mission today must of necessity be to provide security for the population and secure the whole of Afghanistan.

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9. Catherine Dale, "War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress," *CRS Report for Congress* 7-5700 (23 January 2009): 11.

10. Interviews with personnel at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium, January 2009.

11. Interviews with personnel at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium, January 2009. See also "Bucharest Summit Declaration," 3 April 2008. <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html> (7 March 2008).

12. Dale: 8.

## Problem 2

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### *Lack of coordination among international actors and between international actors and the Afghan government*

The absence of shared purpose and a clearly defined and agreed upon end state has contributed to a lack of coordination. The international effort since 2001 has been marked by chaotic and scattershot political, security, and development efforts as major international actors have pursued their own objectives through unique and sometimes contradictory or competing strategies. Lack of coordination has manifested itself most clearly in aid distribution and civilian casualties. UNAMA, the UN mission in Afghanistan, has been unable to coordinate and control the myriad international assistance efforts in part because there has not been robust high-level agreement among the major players about the end state and the role the international community should play in moving towards that end state. UNAMA was not empowered and resourced to be the main conduit and coordinator of the multi-national effort in Afghanistan. Lastly, there has been a recent trend of appointing national-level envoys to the region. In the absence of a clear coordinating mechanism, their efforts are likely to be scattered and ineffective.

### AID

The international community has failed to create a robust coordinating mechanism to follow-up on pledges made to Afghanistan and to interface with UNAMA to monitor dispersal of funds. Outside the auspices of the UN, Afghanistan did not lack financial or political support. Since 2001, the international community has pledged tens of billions of dollars to Afghanistan's development.

The US alone has pledged \$32 billion and has dispersed roughly \$20 billion.<sup>13</sup> The overall effort has not been sufficiently coordinated and directed. Indeed, there is no reliable data on the actual amount of international assistance that has been pledged or dispersed in Afghanistan. These initial pledges also had the deleterious effect of raising expectations inside Afghanistan about what would be achieved in the short-term. Problems quickly emerged with the amount of money that was pledged and later delivered to Afghanistan. Nascent Afghan institutions were not capable of handling the influx of aid and spending it wisely. Donors responded by slowing the flow of money and aid, leading "many local Afghans to grow frustrated with the slow pace of aid."<sup>14</sup>

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13. Department of Defense, *Security and Stability and in Afghanistan*, report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), January 2009, 13.

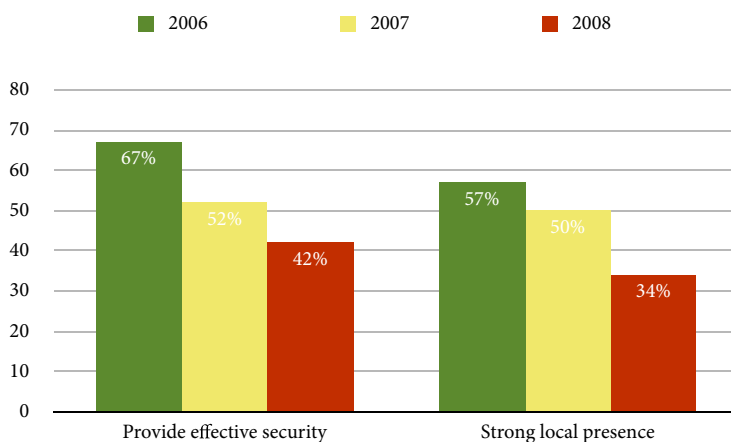
14. Scott Baldauf, "Aid Flows to Afghanistan, in Drips," *The Christian Science Monitor* 27 August

Considering that every aspect of Afghan society needed some kind of aid, there were large numbers of government and non-governmental organizations operating in Afghanistan. Although the Afghan government did assume responsibility over aid coordination, it was constrained by the political context in which it operated and the limited influence it held over aid disbursement outside of the capital Kabul. Moreover, UN agencies and NGOs all had their own coordination mechanisms with limited degrees of interaction with the Afghan government.<sup>15</sup>

## CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Many Afghans welcomed, or at least tolerated, the international presence in their country initially because they had removed the Taliban. Over time, however, Afghans have felt the impact of the international security forces more in the form of falling bombs than in concrete progress in stabilization and reconstruction. Thus, if the foreign military presence was initially welcomed, attitudes have changed. Increased insurgent activity and NATO's engagement in fighting these elements has caused civilian casualties and has raised doubts among Afghans about the presence of foreign troops. Polling from 2006 to 2008 shows that Afghan views of international security forces have taken a negative turn. As the following chart illustrates, many Afghans do not perceive benefits from the international security presence.

### AFGHAN VIEWS OF US/NATO/ISAF FORCES<sup>16</sup>



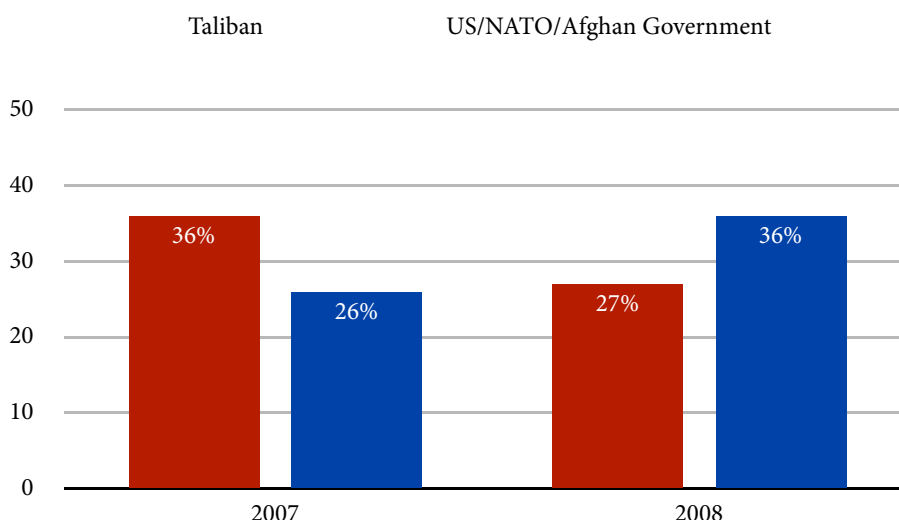
2002. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0827/p01s03-wosc.html> (24 January 2009).

15. Arne Strand, "Aid Coordination in Afghanistan," paper commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 13 December 2002. [http://www.google.com/url?sa=U&start=1&q=http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/%3F1766%3Daid-coordination-in-afghanistan&ei=NT6LSd2ANoT6MsyloM4H&usg=AFQjCNHq\\_2AdpYwAe6QSy97JX2Hsw01Bug](http://www.google.com/url?sa=U&start=1&q=http://www.cmi.no/publications/file/%3F1766%3Daid-coordination-in-afghanistan&ei=NT6LSd2ANoT6MsyloM4H&usg=AFQjCNHq_2AdpYwAe6QSy97JX2Hsw01Bug) (24 January 2009).

16. ABC News/BBC/ARD poll. [http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/o9o211\\_afghanlangerpoll.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/o9o211_afghanlangerpoll.pdf) (20 February 2009).

Increased civilian casualties over the past seven years has weakened Afghan support for international security forces. From 2007 to 2008, polling indicates that Afghans have shifted blame for violence in their areas from the Taliban to international security forces and the Afghan government.

#### RESPONSIBILITY FOR VIOLENCE<sup>17</sup>



In response to these trends, the central government that ISAF is supposed to be supporting has called for better coordination of NATO attacks with the Afghan government. President Karzai referred to “careless operations” when many civilians were killed in a ten-day period in 2007.<sup>18</sup> While Karzai’s statements can be partially attributed to pre-election rhetorical posturing, the increase in civilian casualties has damaged the ISAF mission and will continue to be a problem going forward.

ISAF recognizes that this is a serious issue and has taken steps to address the problem by issuing a new tactical directive that outlines rules of engagement designed to minimize civilian casualties to the greatest extent possible. ISAF has also adopted a new approach to dealing with civilian casualty incidents after the fact. The approach includes a joint investigation with the Afghan government, acknowledgment of the incident and acceptance of responsibility, as well as payments to victims’ relatives.<sup>19</sup>

17. ABC News/BBC/ARD poll. [http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/090211\\_afghanlangerpoll.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/090211_afghanlangerpoll.pdf) (20 February 2009).

18. Griff Wite, “Karzai Decries Civilian Deaths: Recent NATO, U.S. Operations Called ‘Careless,’” *The Washington Post* 24 June 2007. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/23/AR2007062300355.html> (24 January 2009).

19. Department of Defense, *Security and Stability and in Afghanistan*, report to Congress in

A more coordinated strategic communication campaign by the international actors in Afghanistan in cooperation with the Afghan government would help maintain a more supportive population. While civilian casualties might not be as obvious a coordination problem as aid, they have potentially far larger implications for the international effort in Afghanistan and for how the local population perceives the mission. The kinetic and non-kinetic aspects of the mission need to be interlaced and coordinated much more carefully going forward.

Despite the negative trends cited above, most Afghans do not want the Taliban to return to power. Only 7% of Afghans have favorable views of the Taliban.<sup>20</sup> This should reassure the international community that there is still time to design and implement a more effective coordination approach.

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accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), January 2009, 33.

20. ABC News/BBC/ARD poll. [http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/090211\\_afghanlangerpoll.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/isis/pubs/090211_afghanlangerpoll.pdf) (8 March 2009).

## Problem 3

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### *Insufficient Resources*

A lack of sufficient resources across the international effort has compounded the first two problems. UNAMA has never had enough staff and there has been a general shortage of coordinated civilian capacity to partner military efforts. An overall lack of sufficient security forces to secure the country since 2001 has negatively impacted all aspects of the international effort and has slowed progress.

### INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN CAPACITY

Unlike the interventions of the 1990s (Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor), the parties gathered at Bonn gave the United Nations a modest mandate in Afghanistan. By contrast, in East Timor and in Kosovo, the UN exercised ultimate authority over political and economic developments and was put in charge of running these territories until a local authority emerged from democratic elections. International stakeholders would have benefited if they had engaged more actively with the UN in post-conflict Afghanistan. There was a sufficient depth of knowledge and expertise within the UN system and among UN staff to handle post-conflict missions like Afghanistan.<sup>21</sup> According to Jim Dobbins, who served as special envoy to many of these missions (including Afghanistan), “the international community, and the UN in particular, were improving after every mission.”<sup>22</sup> The decision to put the UN in charge without sufficient resources and capabilities has contributed to the scattershot nature of the international effort.

Many of the countries involved in the early stages of post-conflict Afghanistan were skeptical of the UN’s role in other peace-building missions, notably in the Balkans and Africa. Consequently, these countries did not provide adequate resources, direction and authority for UNAMA. Other countries were more enthusiastic and supportive and thought that the UN would bring moral legitimacy and political authority to the task in Afghanistan. The divisions between these two types of countries weakened UNAMA.<sup>23</sup>

Kai Eide has led UNAMA since March 2008. UNAMA has 1,300 staff, 80% of which are Afghans. While the US and NATO are supportive of UNAMA’s effort, there is

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21. James Dobbins, “The US and UN Ways of Nation Building,” *UNA-USA Policy Brief* 8 (1 June 2005). <http://www.unausa.org/site/pp.asp?c=fvKRI8MPJpF&b=730613> (24 January 2009).

22. Notes from USIP Conference: Passing the Baton, 8 January 2009. James Dobbins speaking.

23. Tony Jones, “United Nations Faces Role in Rebuilding Afghanistan,” *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* 26 September 2001. <http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2001/s376458.htm> (24 January 2009).

widespread agreement that UNAMA does not have enough money and resources. Like the Afghan government, UNAMA has little influence and impact outside Kabul.<sup>24</sup> The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), made up of 7 representatives of the Afghan government and 21 representatives of the international community, is supposed to oversee the coordination and implementation of the Afghanistan Compact.<sup>25</sup> Two problems have rendered the JCMB largely ineffective: it has shown no real ability to influence policy and it does not meet often enough. If UNAMA is empowered and resourced to play the lead role coordinating international efforts in Afghanistan, the JCMB could yet prove to be a useful structure.

Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been involved in Afghanistan for decades and have an unparalleled depth of knowledge and expertise. This resource has gone largely untapped, leading to much redundancy of effort. In addition, many countries have channeled their non-military assistance to Afghanistan through NGOs without coordinating effectively with UNAMA. There are some signs of progress as ISAF militaries and NGOs become more familiar and comfortable working with each other.

## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

From the beginning, there have not been a sufficient number of security forces, local or international, to secure the country. Unlike other post-conflict interventions, the international community, led by the US, wanted to have a light footprint in Afghanistan. Instead of securing the entire territory of Afghanistan, the international community believed that simply getting rid of the Taliban and al-Qaeda would enable local security institutions to create a safe and secure environment. In an op-ed piece written for *The Washington Post*, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recalled that “after the major fighting ended, we did not flood Afghanistan with Americans but rather worked with Afghans to establish an interim government and an Afghan national army.”<sup>26</sup> US and coalition forces relied on local groups.

In examining how to secure a post-conflict country, the Rand Corporation has studied all the major interventions of the 1990s and concludes that “among the recent operations, the United States and its allies have put 25 times more money and 50 times more troops on a per capita basis into post-conflict Kosovo than into post-conflict Afghanistan [as of 2003]. These

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24. Interviews with personnel at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, January 2009. See also: Dale, 10.

25. UNAMA, “Fact Sheet on JCMB,” April 2006. [http://www.unama-afg.org/news/\\_publications/fact%20sheets/2006/FactSheet-onJCMB.pdf](http://www.unama-afg.org/news/_publications/fact%20sheets/2006/FactSheet-onJCMB.pdf) (8 March 2009).

26. Donald Rumsfeld, “Beyond ‘Nation Building,’” *The Washington Post* 25 September 2003. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A61380-2003Sep24?language=printer> (5 February 2009).








































higher levels of input account in significant measure for the higher levels of output in terms of democratic institution building and economic growth.”<sup>27</sup> If securing Afghanistan was a priority, it was not reflected in the international community’s initial level of effort.

More forces have been added over time. However, demand has grown faster than supply. As the ISAF mission conducts more COIN operations in some parts of the country, the number of international forces is a serious constraint.<sup>28</sup>

## ISAF CONTRIBUTIONS BY COUNTRY (MARCH 2009)

**Troop Contributing Nations (TCN):** The ISAF mission consists of the following 42 nations (the troop numbers are based on broad contribution and do not reflect the exact numbers on the ground at any one time).

	Albania	140		Finland	110		Lithuania	200		Spain	780
	Australia	1090		France	2780		Luxemburg	9		Sweden	265
	Austria	1		Georgia	1		Netherlands	1770		The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*	170
	Azerbaijan	90		Germany	3640		New Zealand	150		Turkey	690
	Belgium	405		Greece	140		Norway	490		Ukraine	10
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2		Hungary	370		Poland	1590		United Arab Emirates	25
	Bulgaria	470		Iceland	8		Portugal	30		United Kingdom	8300
	Canada	2830		Ireland	7		Romania	900		United States	29820
	Croatia	530		Italy	2350		Singapore	20			
	Czech Republic	580		Jordan	4		Slovakia	120			
	Denmark	700		Latvia	160		Slovenia	70			
	Estonia	140									
										<b>Total (rounded)</b>	<b>61960</b>

\* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

Also, some troops operate with caveats and are restricted to less volatile parts of the country. There is significant tension within the ISAF mission between countries that participate fully and those that operate with caveats. At the center of this debate is the fact that not all ISAF troops have been equally engaged in fighting the insurgency. US, Australian, British, Canadian, Danish, Dutch, and Romanian troops have shouldered much of the fighting in south and east Afghanistan, while other NATO members, notably Italy and Germany, have resisted pressure to operate outside the country’s relatively safe north.<sup>29</sup>

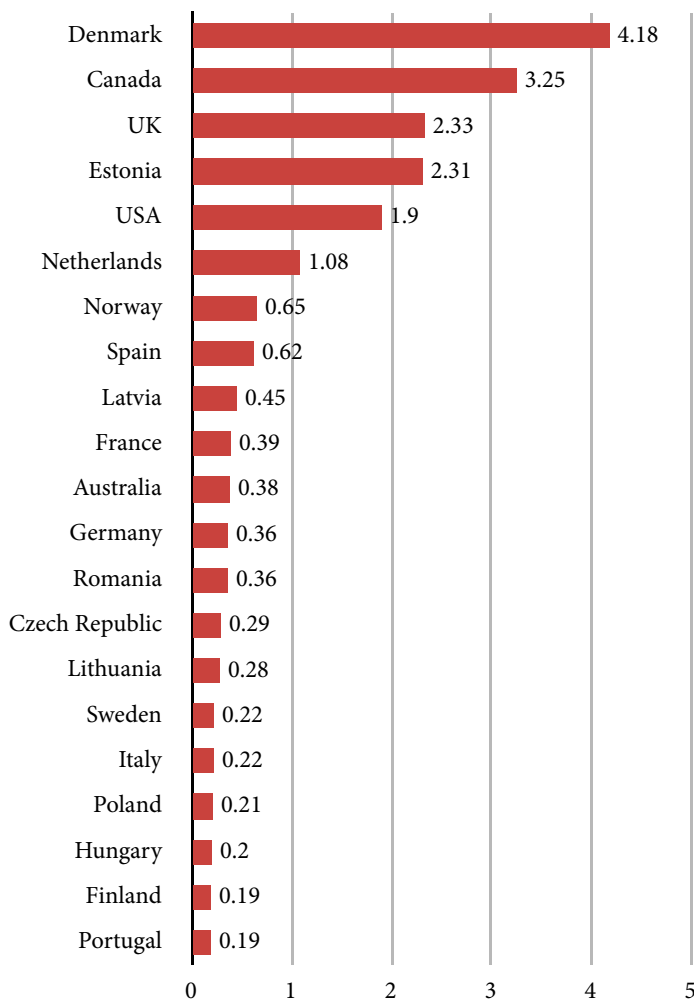
27. James Dobbins, “Nation-Building: The Inescapable Responsibility of the World’s Only Superpower,” *RAND Review* (Summer 2003): 3. <http://www.rand.org/publications/randreview/issues/summer2003/nation3.html> (24 January 2009).

28. Dale: 27.

29. Mark Heinrich, “NATO forces should drop Afghan ‘caveats’—commander,” *Reuters* 2 July 2008. <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSL0272699> (24 January 2009).

Burden sharing has been the subject of much discussion at NATO Headquarters. The following chart illustrates that the countries engaged in the more volatile parts of Afghanistan have borne the largest share of the burden in terms of casualties.

**BURDEN SHARING: CASUALTIES PER 1,000,000 OF POPULATION**



Despite pronouncements of Alliance unity in Brussels, the bifurcated nature of the ISAF mission has hindered operations and strained the Alliance.

Compounding this problem, the support of domestic audiences in many ISAF contributing nations has wavered. As NATO commanders call for more troops, the mission faces significant domestic opposition in key countries. In large part, this reflects the failure to frame the mission in terms that resonate with domestic audiences in many European countries. The following chart illustrates public opinion on the Afghan effort in key European countries.

## EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION AND THE AFGHAN WAR<sup>30</sup>

Question: “If President Obama calls on European Union states to increase significantly the number of troops they deploy in Afghanistan, how should your country respond?”

It should not send more troops under any circumstances	It should not send more troops as a gesture of defiance toward President Obama, irrespective of conditions within Afghanistan	Countries	It should send more troops but only if warranted by conditions within Afghanistan	It should send more troops as a gesture of solidarity with President Obama, irrespective of conditions within Afghanistan
52%	8%	Germany 	35%	5%
44%	9%	France 	44%	4%
50%	7%	UK 	38%	5%
26%	19%	Spain 	50%	9%
48%	5%	Italy 	42%	5%

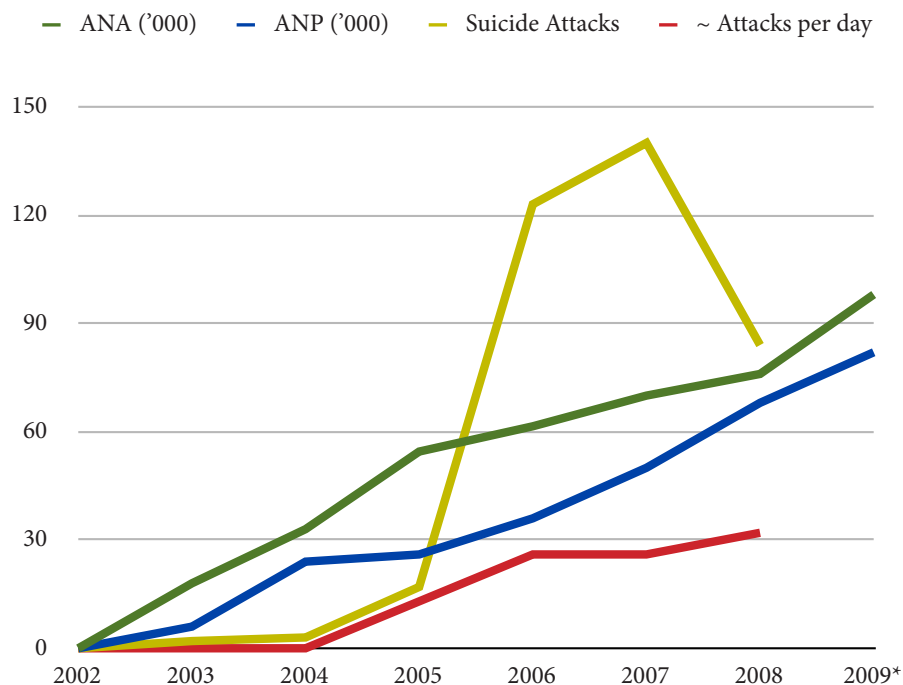
30. [http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/FTHarrisPoll/HI\\_FinancialTimes\\_HarrisPoll\\_January2009\\_23.pdf](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/FTHarrisPoll/HI_FinancialTimes_HarrisPoll_January2009_23.pdf) (20 February 2009).

Public opinion polling on war can be quite unreliable. However, the trends suggest that the expiry date for the Afghan mission could be approaching more quickly than would be optimal. This is problematic because the Afghan effort will take many years and is not tied to national election cycles. Also, the mission has been insufficiently resourced to date and requires increased support from many of these countries which could be even harder to find in the future.

## TRAINING, EQUIPPING, AND MENTORING AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

Efforts to build Afghanistan's indigenous security capacity have not kept pace with the increase in violence in the country. The following chart shows the gradual growth of Afghan security forces as well as the rapid increase in suicide attacks and the sustained increase in the average number of attacks per day.

AFGHAN SECURITY FORCE DEVELOPMENT AND VIOLENCE TRENDS<sup>31</sup>



## ANP

The international community has not devoted sufficient resources to building the capacity of the Afghan National Police (ANP). In part, this reflects disagreements among the international

31. Kenneth Katzman, *Afghanistan: Postwar Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, 16 January 2009.

community about what type of police force Afghanistan should have—traditional or paramilitary, or both. These disputes have undermined capacity building efforts. This problem persists today, nearly seven years after the Germans took initial responsibility for training the police in 2002.<sup>32</sup> The situation on the ground lends support to the arguments for a more robust, paramilitary type of force. This squabbling has contributed to a shortfall in coherent international support for the ANP.

As of November 2008, there was a 67% shortfall of international mentors for the ANP.<sup>33</sup> Mentoring for the police is extremely important as a means of increasing effectiveness, ensuring that training sticks, and reducing corruption. Enhanced police mentoring must be the focus of ANP capacity building efforts. Police Mentoring Teams (PMTs) provide a solid model but there are not enough of them.<sup>34</sup> The US Department of Defense estimates that mentoring teams can reach only a quarter of all ANP units and organizations.<sup>35</sup> The EUPOL mission that is supposed to be training ANP leaders has only 230 people assigned to it.<sup>36</sup> UNAMA, despite decades of UN CIVPOL experience building police forces, has 10 police officers working in Afghanistan.<sup>37</sup> Inside Afghanistan, the overall level of international effort with regard to the ANP is insufficient. Internationally, despite being located mere kilometers apart, the EU and NATO have not cooperated on a shared vision for security sector reform in Afghanistan.

As a result, the ANP has had a checkered beginning. A variety of training efforts, some more successful than others, and insufficient equipment has produced an ineffective force. Corruption remains rampant. Morale is low. The new Afghan Minister of Interior Mohammad Hanif Atmar has acknowledged the scope of the problem and is considering ways to improve this vital piece of Afghanistan's security forces.

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32. Interviews with personnel at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium, January 2009. See also C. Christine Fair and Seth G. Jones, *Securing Afghanistan: Getting on Track*, United States Institute of Peace Working Paper, 23 January 2009: 13-14.

33. Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 13.

34. Department of Defense, *Security and Stability and in Afghanistan*, report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), January 2009, 44.

35. Cited in Mark Schneider, "Training and Equipping Afghan Security Forces: Unaccounted Weapons and Strategic Challenges," testimony before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, 12 February 2009.

36. Interviews with personnel at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium, January 2009. See also: Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 12.

37. Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 12.

## ANA

ISAF countries have not committed sufficient resources and personnel to the Afghan National Army (ANA) training and mentoring missions. As of November 2008 there was still a 22% shortfall in international mentors for the ANA.<sup>38</sup> Despite this shortfall, efforts to train the ANA have been comparably more successful. Indeed, according to a 2008 poll, the ANA is the most respected public institution among Afghans.<sup>39</sup>

Two unresolved questions cast a shadow over the future of the ANA: end strength and financing. The Bonn Agreement called for a 70,000 person army. In 2008, the Afghan government and its international partners revised the end strength upwards to 134,000. Today, in response to security problems, some in the Afghan government and a number of outside experts want a much larger force of around 250,000 soldiers.<sup>40</sup> The increasing size of the ANA has raised concerns about the long-term financial viability of the army. The Afghanistan Compact calls for the army to be largely self-funded by 2010—an unachievable objective.<sup>41</sup> However, the countries most deeply involved in Afghanistan recognize that Afghan security forces are the exit strategy for international security forces. While the ANA is expensive, it is cheaper to deploy new ANA brigades than it is to send additional international security forces to Afghanistan.

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38. Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 9-10.

39. *Afghanistan 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People*, The Asia Foundation, 2008: 25. <http://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/Afghanistanin2008.pdf> (8 March 2009).

40. Dale: 34-35. See also Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 9.

41. *The Afghanistan Compact: Building On Success*, the London Conference on Afghanistan, London 31 January-1 February, 2006. [http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/afghanistan\\_compact.pdf](http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/afghanistan_compact.pdf) (8 March 2009).

## Problem 4

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### *Focus on the central government at the expense of provincial, district, and local level initiatives*

Since 2001, there has been a major mismatch between the international community's objectives for Afghanistan and the realities on the ground. Only rarely in its history has Afghanistan had anything resembling a strong central government. Thirty years of war and occupation shattered the country.<sup>42</sup>

The Bonn Agreement devised a political process that would produce a strong central government capable of extending its writ throughout the country. By not including at least some elements of the Taliban, the Bonn conference also punted on reconciliation.

The focus on centralization contributed to four challenges that Afghanistan faces today:

#### 1. INABILITY TO CONTROL TERRITORY

The most immediate consequence of the decision to build a strong central government was the need to fill the security vacuum outside Kabul. It would take time before the Afghans were ready to stand up their government and the Afghan Army would take years to develop. In the meantime, the coalition, due to the lack of troops, relied heavily on local warlords to provide security in select areas from the remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Some of these groups led by different warlords later became the biggest impediment to the future central government of Afghanistan's ability to extend its presence and power into different regions of Afghanistan.<sup>43</sup>

#### Point of Departure

*In 2001, the average Afghan man had a life expectancy of 42.5 years, the literacy rate was 36%, and 70% of the population was under-nourished.<sup>1</sup> Coupled with the country's extremely difficult terrain this historical legacy makes Afghanistan a difficult country to govern from the capital. The challenges facing the international community and the nascent Afghan government were unprecedented. It is important to keep this point of departure in mind.*

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1. UNDP, *Human Development Report 2001*, 238. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2001/> (23 January 2009).

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42. This general background information is drawn primarily from "Afghanistan's Turbulent History," *BBC News* 21 November 2008. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/1569826.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1569826.stm) (23 January 2008); Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 11, 2001* (New York: Penguin, 2004); additional citations follow the text.

43. For commentary on this topic, see Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: The United States and the*

## 2. INSURGENCY

These makeshift security forces did not succeed in preventing the emergence of a complex insurgency in Afghanistan, including a resurgent Taliban. The growth of an insurgency reflects some resentment on the part of the Taliban and other groups that they were not represented at the Bonn talks and were shut out of the political process thereafter. If other alternatives and venues for their participation had been explored, some elements of the Taliban might have been better integrated in the post-Bonn era. While this might not have included hard-core Taliban commanders, the so-called third and fourth-tier Taliban who are less ideologically committed might have been co-opted.<sup>44</sup>

The Afghan government has tried to manage reconciliation efforts at the national level. This top-down approach has caused many missed opportunities for reconciliation. Some senior Taliban commanders tried to make contact with the nascent Afghan government in 2002 to agree terms for their return, possibly under house arrest. The central government did not know what to do with them.<sup>45</sup> The Afghan government has not put sufficient effort into bottom-up reconciliation

### Structure of the Insurgency

*Four elements:*

**Tier-1:** *Full-time mobile column; 200-450 full-time fighters in each province in Afghanistan; have foreign advisors and are often foreign trained and assisted; led by older commanders; recruit from Pakistani refugee camps; operate 4-6 month tours, then go back and refit in safe havens inside Afghanistan or Pakistan; work valley-to-valley; move in a flying column*

**Tier-2:** *Village underground; series of small cells; 2-3 families in a valley; often ex-Taliban officials; look after caches of weapons; spy on Afghan government and coalition forces; intimidate people who work with Afghan government; link full-time column with local guerillas; carry-out Taliban governance functions*

**Tier-3:** *Local guerilla; local farmers; work part-time normally, and work full-time when mobile column is in their area; act as scouts, provide fire support; help to swell the mobile column to several times its normal size*

**Tier-4:** *Opportunists and unemployed*

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*Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008).

44. Tom Coghlan and Michael Evans, "We can't defeat Taleban, says Brigadier Mark Carleton-Smith," *The Times of London* 6 October 2008. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article4887927.ece> (22 January 2009).

45. Interview with former senior Afghan government official, January 2009.



initiatives.<sup>46</sup> In another example of poor coordination between the Afghan government and the international community, some countries—principally the US—have sent mixed signals about reconciliation.

### 3. CORRUPTION

Centralization placed a great amount of power in the hands of a few, many of whom found the lure of corruption irresistible—particularly with billions of dollars of assistance flowing into the country. Corruption also creates incentives to prevent decentralization. In Afghanistan, members of the central government have little incentive to devolve authority to the provincial and district levels.<sup>47</sup>

### 4. INSUFFICIENT PROVINCIAL, DISTRICT AND LOCAL LEVEL CAPACITY

Afghanistan's terrain, size, and lack of infrastructure make it extremely difficult for a central government to deliver services to all of the country's citizens. The Taliban has capitalized on this reality by providing governance and services in neglected areas.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to these four challenges, the effort to create a strong central government led the international community to focus its capacity-building efforts on national-level institutions. This manifested itself most clearly in the lead-nation effort, whereby countries would take responsibility for the development of different sectors of the Afghan government. Italy, for example, had responsibility for the justice sector and focused on building national-level capacity. Italy did not coordinate its efforts with the Germans, who were responsible for the building the police force but who also focused their efforts in Kabul.<sup>49</sup> As Mark Schneider, Vice President of the International Crisis Group, noted: "The lead nation approach to security sector reform has added to the stove-piped nature of the response so that, except for the fledgling ANA, with the US as the lead nation, the other elements in the security structure—police, judiciary, prisons—remain largely dysfunctional."<sup>50</sup> This is particularly true outside of Kabul.

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46. Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 25-26.

47. For additional analysis of the costs of the top-down approach in Afghanistan, see Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 1; 24-26.

48. David Kilcullen, comments at New York University conference on Afghanistan, 17 October 2008.

49. Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 16.

50. Mark Schneider, Vice President of the International Crisis Group, Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, "Strategic Chaos and Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan," 2 April 2008.

Rule-of-law in Afghanistan remains scattered.<sup>51</sup> Even where effective police have been trained and put in place, there is a significant shortage of detention centers, jails, judges, investigative capacity, and courtrooms.<sup>52</sup> Building jails is not as popular for international donors as building schools and clinics, but they are an essential component of a full-spectrum rule of law system. International actors have been too focused on national-level institutions. They have also spent too much time debating the type of judicial structures that should be put in place at the district and local level rather than simply building the capacity for the Afghans to decide for themselves what types of law they would like to implement.

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51. For a more detailed discussion of rule of law efforts, see Department of Defense, *Security and Stability and in Afghanistan*, report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), January 2009, 54-58.

52. Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 17.

## Problem 5

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### *Focus on Afghanistan at the expense of the region*

*“Those seeking to help Afghanistan and Pakistan need to widen the aperture even farther, to encompass at least the Central Asian states, India, Iran, and even China and Russia.”*  
—General David Petraeus<sup>53</sup>

A final major problem that cuts across the entire Afghan effort has been a focus on Afghanistan at the expense of the region. Inattention to regional dynamics hampered the international effort from the beginning. Indeed, at times it has seemed that the international actors in Afghanistan think about some of Afghanistan’s neighbors only when worried about their supply lines.

There is general consensus within the international community, however, that Afghanistan represents one of a series of interconnected challenges in Central and South Asia. The important lesson going forward is that the international community has not done enough and must do more to invest Afghanistan’s neighbors and other regional actors in a positive future for Afghanistan.

#### PAKISTAN<sup>54</sup>

Pakistan agreed to cease support for the Taliban in 2001 following the September 11th attacks. However, the Pakistani government has largely ignored the Taliban elements that are living openly in Quetta and elsewhere in the country and has maintained support for other elements of the cross-border insurgency.<sup>55</sup> This is a serious issue for many reasons, not least of which is that more than 80% of materiel support for coalition forces in Afghanistan

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53. Quoted in Dale: 30.

54. There are many schools of thought on Pakistan’s interests and positions. For a cynical view of Pakistan’s recent behavior, see Dexter Filkins, “Right at the Edge,” *The New York Times Magazine* 7 September 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/07/magazine/07pakistan-t.html> (23 January 2009). For a modest defense of Pakistan’s actions in light of its interests, see Barnett R. Rubin and Ahmed Rashid, “From Great Game to Grand Bargain,” *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2008). <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20081001faessay87603-p10/barnett-r-rubin-ahmed-rashid/from-great-game-to-grand-bargain.html> (23 January 2009). Rashid expands on some of these arguments in his book, Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008).

55. Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 28.

transits Pakistan and there have been many attacks on supply convoys.<sup>56</sup>

The international community, particularly the US, has not fully understood the way Pakistan conceptualizes its security. Senior American military leaders have devoted considerable time to trying to persuade the Pakistanis that Islamist extremists present the greatest threat to Pakistan's security. Yet the official Pakistani response to the Mumbai attack of November 2008 underscored that Pakistan's military leadership still sees India as its biggest threat. At a press briefing after Mumbai, a senior ISI officer told reporters that the Taliban had assured the army of its support in the event of a war with India.<sup>57</sup> As a senior member of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) put it "Never in my lifetime will we ever have peace with India."<sup>58</sup> Efforts to persuade Pakistan to shift its security focus westward can succeed in the long-term, but in the meantime the US must take steps to assuage Pakistani fears of war with India.

Also, based on prior experience, Pakistan remains unconvinced that the United States and the international community will stay the course in Afghanistan. Instead, many in Pakistan believe that Afghanistan will be left in chaos and Pakistan will have to fill the void.<sup>59</sup> This has led Pakistan to hedge its bets by supporting or tolerating, officially and unofficially, insurgent elements.

## INDIA-PAKISTAN

The international community has only recently begun to fully appreciate the destabilizing effect Indo-Pakistani relations have on Afghanistan. The 7 July 2008 bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul provided the international community a stark reminder of the continuing

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56. Barnett R. Rubin and Ahmed Rashid, "From Great Game to Grand Bargain," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2008). <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20081001faessay87603-p10/barnett-r-rubin-ahmed-rashid/from-great-game-to-grand-bargain.html> (23 January 2009).

57. "In the face of chaos," *The Economist* 19 February 2009. [http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13144811&CFID=43880518&CFTOKEN=92280766](http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13144811&CFID=43880518&CFTOKEN=92280766) (25 February 2009).

58. "In the face of chaos," *The Economist* 19 February 2009. [http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13144811&CFID=43880518&CFTOKEN=92280766](http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13144811&CFID=43880518&CFTOKEN=92280766) (25 February 2009).

59. The governor of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) shares his thoughts: "Foreign Troops a Threat to the Region: Owais," *Dawn* 22 January 2009. <http://www.dawn.com/2009/01/22/top8.htm> (23 January 2009).

tensions between the two countries.<sup>60</sup> The Mumbai attack underlined the point.<sup>61</sup> India and Pakistan are waging a proxy war against each other in Afghanistan as part of a larger struggle in South Asia. Many senior Pakistani intelligence and military officers are convinced that India's external intelligence service, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), provides support for Baluch and Pashtun separatists along the Afghan border. Indian officials believe that Pakistan continues to provide support to Islamist extremists who carry out attacks in India.<sup>62</sup> The two countries are stuck in a cycle of violence fueled by mistrust and misdeeds. The international community must do more to break this cycle of violence lest the proxy war continue to retard progress in Afghanistan and threaten stability in the region.

## IRAN

The international community shares two major interests in Afghanistan with Iran: neither wants to see a Sunni extremist movement return to power and both believe that narcotics are a serious problem. Yet the international community has not engaged Iran in any meaningful way, principally because of strained relations between the US and Iran. Secretary Clinton's recent announcement that she would like to include Iran in an upcoming summit on Afghanistan is a positive step.<sup>63</sup>

Long an opponent of the radical Sunni Taliban regime, Iran supported the initial intervention in Afghanistan in 2001. Iran participated in the Bonn Conference in 2001 and was generally supportive of international efforts in Afghanistan through 2004 despite worsening relations with the United States. The emerging possibility of long-term American military bases on Iran's western (Iraq) and eastern (Afghanistan) borders coupled with the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005 caused Iran to adopt a less cooperative stance towards Afghanistan.<sup>64</sup> Since then, there have been strong indications that Iran has been supporting

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60. "India: Afghanistan's Influential Ally," *BBC News* 7 July 2008. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7492982.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7492982.stm) (23 January 2009). See also "Terror in Kabul," *The Economist* 8 July 2008. [http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=796681&story\\_id=11696894](http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=796681&story_id=11696894) (23 January 2009); "Pointing a Finger at Islamabad," *The Economist* 10 July 2008. [http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=796681&story\\_id=11707246](http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=796681&story_id=11707246) (23 January 2009).

61. "Mumbai Attacks," *BBC News* 22 January 2009. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/south\\_asia/2008/mumbai\\_attacks/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/south_asia/2008/mumbai_attacks/default.stm) (23 January 2009).

62. Steve Coll, "The Back Channel," *The New Yorker* 2 March 2009.

63. Mark Landler, "Afghan Summit Could Bring U.S. and Iran to Table," *International Herald Tribune* 5 March 2009. <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2009/03/05/europe/diplo.php> (8 March 2009).

64. See Marvin G. Weinbaum, "Afghanistan and Its Neighbors: An Ever-Dangerous Neighborhood," *USIP Special Report* 162 (June 2006). [http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr162\\_afghanistan.html](http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr162_afghanistan.html) (24 January 2009).

a range of Afghan insurgents, including the Taliban.<sup>65</sup>

Iranian support for the Taliban against its long-term interests demonstrates the extent to which Iran feels that its interests are threatened by Afghanistan's current trajectory. Iran nearly invaded Afghanistan during Taliban rule, so perhaps if the international community leverages its shared interests, Iran can be persuaded to drop its current anachronous support for the group.

## UZBEKISTAN, TAJIKISTAN, AND KYRGYZSTAN

At present, it costs nearly twice as much to deploy a brigade to Afghanistan as it does to deploy a brigade to Iraq.<sup>66</sup> Instability in Pakistan along major supply routes has caused US and NATO commanders and planners extreme anxiety. As a result, they have worked to establish relationships with other countries that could provide supply routes into Afghanistan. Policies towards these countries have been badly unbalanced, have not leveraged shared interests, and have not been attuned to internal dynamics. The US also assumed, incorrectly, that the initial goodwill and willingness to cooperate post-9/11 would last indefinitely.

Fluctuations in relations with Uzbekistan are the clearest example. Uzbekistan supported the initial intervention in 2001.<sup>67</sup> American forces used Karshi-Khanabad (K2) air base to spearhead the assault on the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Relations with Uzbekistan fell apart following American criticism of the Uzbek government's brutal repression of protesters in 2005. Uzbekistan subsequently evicted American forces from K2.<sup>68</sup> In response, the US shifted assets to Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>69</sup> Now that the Kyrgyz government is threatening to close Manas by August 2009, the international community will have to find additional ways to solve its logistical problems in Afghanistan. The US and NATO have returned to

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65. Seth G. Jones, "Afghan Problem is Regional," *United Press International* 4 July 2007. <https://www.rand.org/commentary/o7o4o7UPI.html> (24 January 2009).

66. "How Much More "Impossible" Can This War Get?" <http://abumuqawama.blogspot.com/2009/02/how-much-more-impossible-can-this-war.html> (5 February 2009). See also Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, 10.

67. Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos*, 66-72.

68. Robin Wright and Ann Scott Tyson, "U.S. Evicted from Air Base in Uzbekistan," *The Washington Post* 30 July 2005. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/29/AR2005072902038.html> (24 January 2009).

69. Marvin G. Weinbaum, "Afghanistan and Its Neighbors: An Ever-Dangerous Neighborhood," *USIP Special Report* 162 (June 2006). [http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr162\\_afghanistan.html](http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr162_afghanistan.html) (24 January 2009): 14-15.

Uzbekistan.<sup>70</sup>

The fiasco over use of air bases in the region typifies the problems associated with extreme attention to the needs of forces in Afghanistan without carefully considering the interests and concerns of countries in the region. The Central Asian states remain as skeptical as anyone about the prospects for a stable and secure Afghanistan. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan share concerns about the spread of the Taliban and the violent extremism that comes along with it. The major international actors in Afghanistan have not used them as a foundation for better cooperation on Afghanistan. They have not been made active stakeholders in the Afghan effort.

## RUSSIA

There are two drivers of the international actors in Afghanistan's relationship with Russia. Russia does not like having NATO in its neighborhood and undermines the ISAF mission by, for example, inducing the Kyrgyz government to deny international access to Manas Air Base.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, Russia does not want to see Islamist extremists regain the ascendancy in Afghanistan. The US and NATO have let problems unrelated to Afghanistan, including the conflict in Georgia, prevent effective cooperation with Russia on Afghanistan. Recently, the US has engaged Russia but it remains to be seen if much will change.

## CHINA

The major international actors in Afghanistan have not done enough to invest China in Afghanistan's future. In part, this reflects a failure to recognize (or remember) that China has interests in Afghanistan and the region that extend well beyond its small border with the Central Asian country. In the 1980s, China provided covert support for the mujahideen fighters resisting the Soviet occupation.<sup>72</sup> Following the American-led intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, China seemed intent on using diplomacy to try to weaken support for any long-term American military presence in the region. China made comparatively small early contributions to Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts.<sup>73</sup> More recently, China has

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70. Jim Heintz, "Reports: Uzbekistan, NATO reach Afghanistan deal," *The Associated Press* 25 February 2009. [http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hvkoy-MbXcEly-HBsHkal\\_Bx3ESgD96IIVT00](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hvkoy-MbXcEly-HBsHkal_Bx3ESgD96IIVT00) (26 February 2009).

71. Jeremy Page, "Russian threat to NATO supply route in Afghanistan," *The Times* 26 August 2008.

72. Melinda Liu, "How China Could Quietly Play a Key Role in Afghanistan," *Newsweek* 22 November 2008. <http://www.newsweek.com/id/170320> (24 January 2009).

73. Marvin G. Weinbaum, "Afghanistan and Its Neighbors: An Ever-Dangerous Neighborhood," *USIP Special Report* 162 (June 2006). [http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr162\\_afghanistan](http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr162_afghanistan).

deepened ties with Pakistan and has been making large infrastructure investments in the region. China helped build the Gwadar port in western Pakistan and recently won a \$3B copper mining contract for the Anyak area southwest of Kabul. China plans to build a large coal power plant near Anyak and a rail link to Gwadar.<sup>74</sup> China has an interest in stability and its close relationship with the Pakistani government and heavy investment in Pakistan are part of a broader attempt to maintain order in the region. China can play a larger role in Afghanistan over the next decade.

## **Five Key Problems—Major Consequences**

In sum, building a strong central government with a viable economy and long-term legitimacy in Afghanistan depended largely on robust international support, effective coordination, and strong unity of effort. In the absence of these three pillars, Afghanistan has not made as much progress as had been hoped. Today, the major international actors in Afghanistan – NATO, the UN, and the US – find themselves in a difficult situation with no clear way forward. The goodwill of the Afghan people has been squandered and the generosity of contributing nations has been imperiled by the global economic downturn. The Obama administration's determination to produce a positive outcome in Afghanistan presents the last chance for the international effort to succeed. Failure to capitalize on what might be the last window of opportunity to produce a positive outcome in Afghanistan will have serious long-term repercussions.

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html (24 January 2009): 16.

74. Christian Bleuer, "China's Entry into Central Asia's Southern Tier," *ANU Bulletin* 15:1 (2008): 5. <http://arts.anu.edu.au/cais/pdf/CAIS%20Bulletin%20Vol%2015%20No%201.pdf> (24 January 2009).





# THE WAY FORWARD

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## The Way Forward

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### Recommendations

To restate, there are five key interrelated problems crippling the international effort in Afghanistan. They are:

1. Lack of clarity on the purpose of the Afghan mission and lack of agreement on objectives
2. Lack of coordination among international actors and between international actors and the Afghan government
3. Insufficient resources
4. Focus on the central government at the expense of provincial, district, and local level initiatives
5. Focus on Afghanistan at the expense of the region

These five problems need to be addressed together. The following recommendations are aimed at the three major international actors involved in Afghanistan today: the US, NATO, and the UN. In some cases, recommendations are targeted specifically at one or more of these players. In other cases, third parties can play the most productive roles. To facilitate implementation, the recommendations suggest leading roles where capabilities and needs intersect most clearly. Assigning a lead role to one or more actors should not be read to exclude or imply that others do not have important roles to play.

Among the recommendations, the following three are critical and require immediate action by the US, NATO, and the UN:

- The coalition needs to **reframe the mission** so that everyone understands the purpose and objectives of the effort in the same terms.
- The US, working with UNAMA, needs to **establish a Regional Contact Group** made up of the many envoys already appointed (with a few additions) to better coordinate international efforts outside of Afghanistan.
- The international community needs to **engage broader regional players to invest in Afghanistan's success**. Afghanistan's neighbors and other regional actors need to join in a shared vision for Afghanistan based on the principle that Afghanistan and the region cannot provide safe havens for terrorists and their supporters.

#### SUMMARY OF PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROBLEMS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Lack of clarity on the purpose of the Afghan mission and lack of agreement on objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reframe the mission</li> </ul>
Lack of coordination among international actors and between international actors and the Afghan government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Regional Contact Group</li> <li>• Strengthen UNAMA</li> </ul>
Insufficient resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Civilian Capacity</li> <li>• Increase ISAF Troop Levels</li> <li>• Increase ANA/ANP Capacity Building Efforts</li> <li>• Rule of law</li> </ul>
Focus on the central government at the expense of provincial, district, and local level initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Reconciliation</li> <li>• UNAMA should help the Afghan government create a political process that is inclusive and broad based</li> </ul>
Focus on Afghanistan at the expense of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pakistan</li> <li>• India-Pakistan</li> <li>• Iran</li> <li>• Russia</li> <li>• China</li> </ul>

## Problem 1

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### *Lack of clarity on the purpose of the Afghan mission and lack of agreement on objectives*

#### **RECOMMENDATION: REFRAME THE MISSION**

The international community, led by the US, needs to reframe the Afghan mission in a way that accurately captures the purpose and objectives of the mission. The new frame must be realistic, manage expectations about what is possible, and resonate with domestic publics around the world.<sup>75</sup> We suggest the following:

The Afghan mission has deteriorated to the point that failure will have serious consequences for the US, NATO, and the UN. The mission has also spilled over Afghanistan's borders.

The most salient outcome of a failed effort in Afghanistan will be a less secure world. Afghanistan and Pakistan will likely descend into chaos.<sup>76</sup> Taliban-inspired extremist movements could continue to spread to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.<sup>77</sup> The "West", in particular, will be less secure.

The expenditure of blood and treasure will have diminished the national defense capabilities of countries like the United Kingdom that have strained themselves in Afghanistan. Countries like France that pride themselves on their ability to intervene in crises around the world have already found their capacity to intervene reduced and will have to adapt their foreign policies accordingly.<sup>78</sup> Most importantly, the failure to fully eradicate terrorists in the region will

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75. There is extensive research in economics and psychology that shows the importance of framing. The frame we have written here draws on the core concepts found in works such as: Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, *Choices, Values, Frames* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Robert Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998).

76. Ahmed Rashid, *Descent Into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008).

77. Keen analysts have been following this trend for nearly ten years, since the heyday of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. See: Ahmed Rashid, "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 1999). <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/19991101faessay1017/ahmed-rashid/the-taliban-exporting-extremism.html> (24 February 2009); see also Catherine Dale, "War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress," *CRS Report for Congress* 7-5700 (23 January 2009): 24.

78. Emmanuel Georges-Picot, "France to cut foreign deployments by 15 percent," AP 29 January 2009. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5i4CptqAh4F7M5W7NqAbPoWgYPILAD96oBFG8o> (21 February 2009).

increase the chances of domestic attacks in the next ten years across the Western world.<sup>79</sup>

For the US and NATO, **the purpose of the mission today is security. The objective is to stabilize Afghanistan and the region** so that they are not safe-havens for terrorists. For the UN, the objective is to enable Afghanistan to become a viable state.

Afghanistan will not be stabilized or viable in the next the next 3-5 years. To achieve their most fundamental objectives, the US, NATO, and the UN will need to be deeply involved in Afghanistan for at least 20 years.

At the NATO and G20 summits in April, President Obama should make these points and reframe the Afghan mission.

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79. Robert Mueller, comments at the Council on Foreign Relations, 23 February 2009. <http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Mueller%20Prepared%20Remarks%202-23-09.pdf> (24 February 2009).

## Problem 2

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### *Lack of coordination among international actors and between international actors and the Afghan government*

#### **RECOMMENDATION: ESTABLISH A REGIONAL CONTACT GROUP**

The US decision to appoint a special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan was a good initial step towards adopting a broader approach to the challenges in Afghanistan and the region. Many countries followed suit. It is imperative that the efforts of these envoys be coordinated. The US special representative should take the lead, but UNAMA should participate in meetings. This group will be incomplete without envoys from other important power brokers, including the EU and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).<sup>80</sup> This group will complement UNAMA's efforts inside Afghanistan.

At its first meeting, the group should establish redlines for Afghanistan and the region, set diplomatic objectives, and determine which envoys can be employed most productively towards the achievement of each objective. An important role for this group will be to ensure that pledges made to Afghanistan and the mission are met. They will interface with UNAMA to monitor dispersal of funds inside Afghanistan. The continuing global economic crisis will make this particularly important. The Regional Contact Group will also be an important mechanism for ensuring long-term commitments to the effort.

#### **RECOMMENDATION: STRENGTHEN UNAMA**

UNAMA needs to be the conduit for political efforts inside Afghanistan. UNAMA has this mandate on paper, but it has not been given sufficient financial resources and staffing. Additional money and staff will be essential enablers for UNAMA to extend its reach to all of Afghanistan. If the international community's primary short-term objective is security, its long-term objectives are political and economic development.

The US and ISAF countries should take the lead in using the G8 and G20 summits (and other forums) to bolster UNAMA. These countries can make it clear that Afghanistan is a priority and that they want to see additional support for UNAMA from other global leaders. Since the G20 summit in April is in London, the UK should ensure that expanded support for UNAMA is on the agenda. France and Germany should follow suit at the April NATO summit and Italy should do the same at the G8 summit in Trieste in June.

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80. See James Dobbins, "Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 26 February 2009. [http://www.senate.gov/~armed\\_services/statemnt/2009/February/Dobbins%2002-26-09.pdf](http://www.senate.gov/~armed_services/statemnt/2009/February/Dobbins%2002-26-09.pdf) (8 March 2008). Dobbins suggests EU; we recommend EU and OIC.

## Problem 3

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### *Insufficient resources*

The situation in Afghanistan and the region requires enhanced attention from the international community, including more civilian advisors and security forces.

#### **RECOMMENDATION: ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN CAPACITY**

*“It is not only a matter of more forces in Afghanistan. We need an equal civilian surge as well.”<sup>81</sup>—Jaap de Hoop Scheffer*

The increased international presence in Afghanistan over the coming years should not be only military. Given Afghanistan’s current level of development, civilian capacity building efforts will take many years to bear fruit. Therefore, additional civilian advisors, including agricultural specialists, trainers, and other experts should be sent to Afghanistan as part of the international community’s renewed commitment. The US has worked to build interagency civilian capacity for stabilization and reconstruction missions. Many of Afghanistan’s biggest challenges can be best addressed by these specialists. For countries unable or unwilling to send additional combat forces, civilian capacity is an area where the US should ask for more contributions.

#### **RECOMMENDATION: INCREASE ISAF TROOP LEVELS**

In the absence of sufficient Afghan security force capabilities, the international community will need to provide additional troops. The United States has committed to increasing its troop levels by at least 17,000 troops in 2009. But an increase in troops should not come only from the US because this would lead to the “Americanization” of the mission in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is and should remain an international mission and it needs to be perceived to be as such. This requires burden sharing. In addition, if countries decide to send more troops to Afghanistan they should be open to the possibility of sending these troops to the more hostile areas.

*UNAMA is the only viable body to coordinate and lead over longer time horizons.*

Most NATO countries have welcomed the election of President Obama and they look forward to a new approach to Afghanistan and the region. Careful private diplomacy and extensive public diplomacy and robust strategic communication will be crucial.

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81. Lorne Cook, “NATO calls for ‘civilian surge’ in Afghanistan,” *AFP* 19 February 2009. [http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20090219/wl\\_asia\\_afp/usmilitaryafghanistangates](http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20090219/wl_asia_afp/usmilitaryafghanistangates) (26 February 2009).

In addition to reframing the mission, there are three keys to securing additional troops for the ISAF mission:

1. **Publicly and loudly recognize and show appreciation for past and current contributions.** If President Obama can spend two days before the NATO summit in April 2009 stopping in the major contributing nations in Europe to thank them for their efforts, that will go a long way towards securing the necessary level of troops.
2. **Find someone else to pay for them.** In the 1991 Gulf War, countries that did not contribute as many military forces picked up proportionally more of the bill. Some of the newer members of NATO have the capacity to send more troops to Afghanistan but would find it hard to pay for them. G8 countries should be asked to help at Trieste in June.
3. **Listen and consult with contributing nations as part of all Afghan and regional policy reviews.** General David Petraeus has proven to be adept at securing buy-in from coalition partners in large part because he does an outstanding job of making everyone feel consulted in advance of decisions that affect them. The Obama administration should put this approach to work immediately at the summits in March and April.

Nearly every country participating in the ISAF mission has spent the past several months stating publicly that they are unable to contribute additional troops to the mission in Afghanistan. Some countries are indeed at their limits. Others are not. The recommendations above will help these countries save face, climb down from their positions, and increase their contributions. The following section makes targeted recommendations about how best to engage countries on key issues.

- **Spain** can contribute additional troops;<sup>82</sup> if asked by President Obama, they might be able to double their level of effort to 1,600 troops, 200 more than the highest level they sustained in Iraq. Recent public opinion polling shows that more than half of the Spanish public would support sending more troops to Afghanistan.<sup>83</sup> A senior member of the Obama administration—perhaps Vice President Biden—should publish an op-ed piece in one of the major Spanish newspapers acknowledging Spain's important contribution to the mission and thanking them for their past and continuing efforts. This request should be couched as part of NATO's effort to increase troop levels in advance of the Afghan election in August.

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82. "Spain Says No Plans for More Troops to Afghanistan," *International Herald Tribune* 10 February 2009. <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2009/02/10/europe/EU-Spain-Afghanistan.php> (7 March 2009).

83. See charts on European public opinion and the Afghan war on page 27.



- **France** has recently withdrawn 2,100 troops from Chad and the Ivory Coast. Some of these troops and their enabling assets can be sent to Afghanistan.<sup>84</sup> As with many of the European countries, France needs additional recognition and acknowledgment for its past efforts in Afghanistan. France plans to reenter the NATO military command structure in April. During his visit to Strasbourg to mark the 60th anniversary of NATO, President Obama should ask France to send additional trainers to work with the ANA and, particularly, the ANP. As of February 2009, France only had 300 trainers working with both the ANA and ANP.<sup>85</sup> France has a comparative advantage with its Gendarmerie forces and can play a more central role in ANP capacity-building efforts.
- **Germany** has increased its troop level in advance of the August 2009 Afghan election. If its troops continue to operate with caveats in the north, they can be asked to assume a much larger share of the burden for training the ANA. The current mandate from parliament for the Afghan mission sets a troop ceiling of 4,500 soldiers. President Obama should ask Germany to maintain that level of troops through the German election in September, even if the additional troops are dedicated to ANA training and mentoring.

After the German election, the US and other ISAF contributors should ask Germany to lift its prohibition on joint operations with the Afghan units they are mentoring. Over the next two years, the US should ask Germany to send additional forces and consider lifting the rest of their caveats. If they find this politically infeasible, they should be asked to pay for ISAF soldiers from other countries.

- **The UK** has carried a significant share of the burden in Afghanistan both in terms of troop levels and casualties. Increasingly, the British public has come to question the merits of the Afghan effort. Recent polling suggests that half of the British public opposes sending more troops to Afghanistan under any circumstances.<sup>86</sup> In part, this reflects the fact that the British government has not been able to successfully link the mission to domestic security concerns. President Obama will be in London in April

*Many of the allied countries are aware that the new administration will ask them to increase their level of effort because of increased mission requirements. These requests need to be packaged carefully.*

84. "Back to the Fold?" *The Economist* 12 February 2009. [http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=13109550](http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13109550) (21 February 2009).

85. Sharif Khoram, "French Officer, Afghan Interpreter Killed," *AFP* 11 February 2009. <http://www.canada.com/news/French+officer+Afghan+interpreter+killed/1277925/story.html> (7 March 2009).

86. See charts on European public opinion and the Afghan war on page 27.

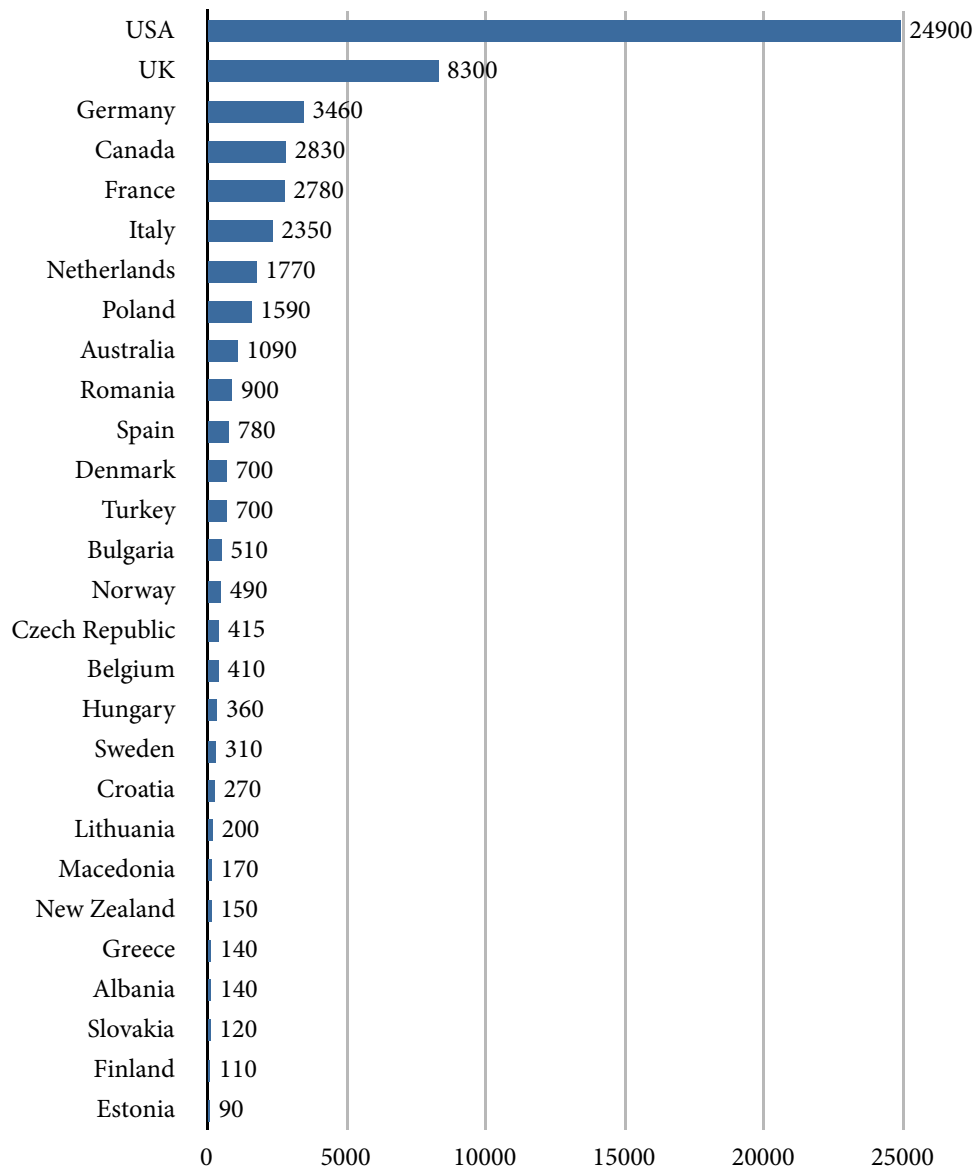
for the G20 summit and should explain to the British public the importance of the success of the mission in Afghanistan and how the outcome there will impact events in the UK.

- **Italy** is going to increase its troop level to 2,800 by the end of April. With its strong Carabinieri national police forces, Italy can send additional trainers to mentor and build the capacity of the Afghan Border Police (ABP). This effort will be most effective if wedded to a series of initiatives to enhance cooperation with Iran.

Italy would like to involve Iran in the G8 summit meeting on Afghanistan in Trieste in June. This is a positive step, but Italy can do more on the ground in Afghanistan to improve the coalition's relationship with Iran. Enhanced cross border counter-narcotics cooperation could be a good trust-building mechanism. Italy should push for the creation of a Tripartite border cooperation group made up of Iran, Afghanistan, and ISAF, with Italy occupying the ISAF seat. This group would be modeled on the similar structure operating along Afghanistan's southeastern border.

Of the ISAF contributors, these countries have the most to lose if Afghanistan and the region descend into chaos. They have all had Islamist terrorists or terror attacks on their soil. Securing troop increases from these countries will make it easier to secure troop increases from the rest of the NATO countries. Many of the countries look at the following chart and are comfortable with their position in the table relative to other countries.

### ISAF TROOP CONTRIBUTIONS BY COUNTRY (>100)<sup>87</sup>



Movement by benchmark countries could lead to movement by followers.

The following three countries represent a diverse group of countries that make up the balance of the NATO landscape in Afghanistan. These countries have different capacities and can play essential roles in the Afghan effort.

87. [http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf\\_placemat\\_090112.pdf](http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat_090112.pdf) (20 February 2009).

- **Sweden** plans to increase its troop level to around 500 in 2009.<sup>88</sup> Sweden has the financial wherewithal to help pay for additional ISAF soldiers from countries like Bulgaria and Romania and should be asked to fund an increase in troops from these countries. Similarly, Sweden should also be asked to increase its level of non-military assistance. Sweden is committed to building the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and should be asked by the US to send additional trainers and mentors for the ANA.<sup>89</sup>
- **Turkey** has a significant number of troops in Afghanistan but they are not engaged in major combat.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, they should be asked to play an enhanced role in other efforts. When President Obama visits Turkey in April, he should consult Turkish civilian and military leaders about how best to pursue reconciliation and rule-of-law initiatives. Turkey is unlikely to send troops into major combat. However, they can supply additional trainers for the ANA and ANP and mentor units in less volatile areas.
- **Romania** has made a substantial commitment to the Afghan effort that has gone largely unrecognized. As a recent NATO member, Romania has quickly committed itself to the Alliance's efforts in Afghanistan. They have 900 troops fighting in the South. Romania has borne more than its share of the burden in Afghanistan. Romania is ready to contribute more forces, but countries that have not contributed as much should finance the deployment and absorb some of Romania's burden, particularly given Romania's current economic difficulties.<sup>91</sup> A senior US official, either Vice President Biden or Secretary Clinton, should visit Romania in 2009 and show appreciation for Romania's efforts.

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88. "Sweden increases support to Afghanistan," *Government Offices of Sweden* 13 November 2008. <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/11116/a/115629> (21 February 2009).

89. Sven-Åke Haglund, "Sweden must be prepared to play a larger role in Afghanistan," *Swedish Armed Forces* 22 December 2008. <http://www.mil.se/en/News/Mission-and-defence/Sweden-must-be-prepared-to-play-a-larger-role-in-Afghanistan/> (7 March 2009).

90. Umit Enginsoy, "Hey Buddy! Can you spare some troops?" *Hurriyet Daily News* 17 February 2009. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11025570.asp> (21 February 2009).

91. Justyna Pawlak, "Romania Likely to Shelve Fighter Jet Purchase," *Reuters* 19 February 2009. <http://www.reuters.com/article/marketsNews/idUSLI36950320090219> (7 March 2009).

## **RECOMMENDATION: INCREASE ANA/ANP CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS**

The ANA and ANP are not sufficiently developed. The international community has not devoted enough military or civilian personnel to the effort to build Afghanistan's security forces.

### **ANA**

NATO needs to take more responsibility for the training, equipping, and funding of the ANA. ISAF countries like Germany that are not willing to send additional combat troops or will only operate with caveats should assume a greater share of the burden. They should also partner with the ANA and conduct more joint operations. Other countries that refuse to send any troops should help pay for the ANA. It is cheaper to deploy new ANA brigades than it is to send additional international security forces to Afghanistan.

### **ANP**

Some of the countries participating in the ISAF mission oppose expanded formal responsibility for NATO to train and mentor the ANP. This is problematic because the ANP needs help and ISAF is well positioned to provide the needed assistance. In the short term, France and Italy can play a lead role in training and mentoring ANP units on the Gendarmerie/Carabinieri model, and Germany can be asked to cover much of the cost. They can do this on a bilateral or trilateral basis with the Afghan Ministry of Interior if NATO is unwilling to take ownership of the ANP training mission as part of its ISAF effort.

Denmark has a large stake in the overall ANP effort since a Dane heads the EUPOL mission to Afghanistan. Over the medium term, Denmark can work with the US, UK, and Canada – countries most heavily invested in seeing more robust Afghan security forces in the most volatile parts of the country – to lobby NATO countries for additional support for the EUPOL mission. This effort will be smaller in scale and will focus on mentoring the leadership of the ANP. The French-Italian effort should focus on building the capacity of the force as a whole.

## **RECOMMENDATION: RULE OF LAW**

Afghanistan needs a full-spectrum rule-of-law system. The US and NATO should provide financial and logistical support to UNAMA in a concerted effort to build Afghanistan's judicial capacity. As the number of Afghan Security Forces increases demand for jails, judges, and courts will increase as well. The international community's role will not be to dictate the type of law that is being implemented. Instead, the mechanisms for rule-of-law need to be in place for whatever legal system Afghans decide to implement in their localities.

## Problem 4

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*Focus on the central government at the expense of provincial, district, and local level initiatives*

### **RECOMMENDATION: GOVERNANCE**

The US, NATO, and UNAMA should focus on village and district-level governance. Afghanistan does not – and might never – have a strong centralized government capable of extending its reach and delivering services to the whole of the country. Even without considering the efficacy of the central government, it makes sense to focus on local and district-level initiatives, such as ensuring that the full spectrum of law and order mechanisms are present down to the village level. Winning and sustaining the consent of the population is crucial. Even if such efforts are only loosely tied to the central government, the existence of decent local and district-level governance will counteract Taliban efforts to out-govern the Afghan government.

### **RECOMMENDATION: RECONCILIATION**

The US has come to acknowledge that reconciliation will be part of the end game in Afghanistan.<sup>92</sup> Afghans have been fighting each other in some guise for much of the past thirty years. Reconciliation efforts will be an essential prerequisite for stability. US and ISAF forces face insurgents daily. It is in their interests to adopt policies and practices that encourage reconciliation. Ultimately, however, the Afghan government must be in charge of reconciliation efforts.

There are elements of the insurgency that will likely not stop fighting. Equally, there are many third and fourth-tier insurgents who might be reconciled if given an alternative to fighting.

### ***Reconcile the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Tier Immediately***

Efforts need to be stepped up to win and maintain the support of key village and district elders and officials who support the Taliban on a part-time basis. Success on this front could mark a tipping point in Afghanistan. The myriad groups who make up the insurgency doubtless realize this as well and will likely meet any progress on this front with increased efforts to kill those seen as collaborating with the Afghan government.

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92. Helene Cooper and Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Obama Ponders Outreach to Taliban,” *International Herald Tribune* 7 March 2009. <http://iht.com/articles/2009/03/07/america/o8obama.php> (8 March 2009).

These people need to be offered compensation and job training or jobs. One option would be a fast-tracked application process for entry into the army and/or police. The international community should establish a fund to pay for this program.

#### *Hold Confidence-Building Talks with 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Tier Using Third-party Mediation*

Simultaneously, the international community needs to find a reliable third party to mediate confidence-building talks between the Afghan government and the various leaders of the insurgency and criminal groups. The international community needs to agree on who will play the third-party role. Such efforts are already underway (including the Saudi initiative). Although led by the Afghans, the reconciliation process needs to be supported by the international community to facilitate a political accommodation that integrates individuals into society and avoids politicizing the reconciliation issue.

*Afghan security forces  
are the international  
community's exit strategy  
for Afghanistan*

#### **RECOMMENDATION: UNAMA SHOULD HELP THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT CREATE A POLITICAL PROCESS THAT IS INCLUSIVE AND BROAD BASED**

Regardless of the outcome of the Afghan elections, the next president must create a political structure that represents all Afghans. The reconciliation efforts outlined above are the first step. If they are successful, the Afghan government as currently constituted might not be sufficiently representative of the will of all Afghans. The Afghan president, therefore, could re-establish the Emergency Loya Jirga to allow local and regional communities to elect new representatives. UNAMA, working with the US, NATO, and regional actors, will need to push for a higher level of inclusivity as the reconciliation process continues.

## Problem 5

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### *Focus on Afghanistan at the expense of the region*

The US and NATO countries need to invest Afghanistan's neighbors and other regional players in a shared vision for Afghanistan based on the principle that Afghanistan and the region cannot provide safe havens for terrorists and their supporters. Regional players need to become positive stakeholders in Afghanistan. These recommendations are not meant to encompass the full range of relations with these countries. They are meant to help policy makers operationalize a more effective approach to the region.

#### **RECOMMENDATION: PAKISTAN**

The international community—particularly the US—needs to listen more carefully to Pakistan's perception of the threats it faces. High-level visits from Western civilian and military leaders help, but the impact of the visits needs to extend beyond the press conference. To better address Pakistan's concern that the international community will abandon Afghanistan before it is stabilized, the US, NATO, and the UN should begin publicly defining the Afghan mission in terms of much longer time horizons. The US should also adjust its assistance to Pakistan so that there is a better balance between security assistance and development. The US and NATO should also work to reduce their dependence on Pakistan in all areas. The first step in this effort should be to continue diversifying supply routes into Afghanistan.

#### **RECOMMENDATION: INDIA-PAKISTAN**

To break their cycle of retributive actions, India and Pakistan need to talk. Indians and Pakistanis need to understand the perceptions (and misperceptions) that drive policy in Islamabad and Delhi. The time is not ripe for public high-level talks. However, back-channel negotiations are possible and should be encouraged.<sup>93</sup> The Regional Contact Group should designate the EU regional envoy as a largely hands-off facilitator for this process. In addition, the US, Afghanistan, and Pakistan should expand their Tripartite Border Commission process to include India.<sup>94</sup>

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93. For an account of recent back-channel negotiations between India and Pakistan, see Steve Coll, "The Back Channel," *The New Yorker* 2 March 2009.

94. Xenia Dormandy, "Afghanistan's Proxy War," *The Boston Globe* 16 February 2007. [http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/1651/afghanistans\\_proxy\\_war.html](http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/1651/afghanistans_proxy_war.html) (2 February 2009).



## **RECOMMENDATION: IRAN**

The international actors in Afghanistan must continue to engage Iran. NATO countries with forces deployed along the Iran-Afghanistan border should take the lead in bilateral and multilateral talks on issues of common concern including narcotics, criminal activity, and refugees. Italy's plan to include Iran at the G8-hosted Afghanistan summit in Trieste in June is a good step towards ensuring that Iran plays only productive roles in Afghanistan and the region.<sup>95</sup> Some NATO countries should also pursue efforts to ship supplies to Afghanistan through Iran.<sup>96</sup> The Italian regional envoy should be the liaison between the Regional Contact Group and Iran.

## **RECOMMENDATION: RUSSIA**

*"It is time to press the reset button and to revisit the many areas where we can and should work together. Our Russian colleagues long ago warned about the rising threat from the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Today, NATO and Russia can and should cooperate to defeat this common enemy."*<sup>97</sup> —US Vice President Joe Biden

When Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and President Obama meet on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in London in April, Afghanistan should be on the agenda. President Obama should build on their common interest in combating Islamist militants in Afghanistan.<sup>98</sup> The US should ask Russia to appoint an envoy to the Regional Contact Group. This envoy can be tasked with deepening cooperation between Afghanistan and the Central Asian states. The US can also ask for additional Russian cooperation on supply routes.

## **RECOMMENDATION: CHINA**

As part of its new diplomatic engagement with China, the Obama administration should encourage additional Chinese investment in Afghanistan.

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95. Jon Boone, "Italy Seeks to Involve Iran in G8 Talks," *The Financial Times* 18 February 2009. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/o/aod32332-fdeo-11dd-932e-000077bo7658.html> (21 February 2009).

96. Slobodan Lekic, "NATO says members may use Iran for Afghan supplies," *AP* 2 February 2009. [http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5j3\\_ihUM6goqNrPsOOMoTQVRwnTWwD963JNNO5](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5j3_ihUM6goqNrPsOOMoTQVRwnTWwD963JNNO5) (26 February 2009).

97. Vice President Joseph R. Biden, speech at the 45th Munich Security Conference, 7 February 2009. [http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu\\_2009=&menu\\_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=238&](http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2009=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=238&) (26 February 2009).

98. Mikhail Antonov, "Russia, US leaders set for first talks in April," *Reuters* 27 January 2009. <http://www.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSTRE5oQ3DT20090127> (26 February 2009).





# Appendices

## Appendix A: Map of Afghanistan



Source: The World Fact Book

# Appendix B: ISAF Operations Overview



## International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Army strength & laydown



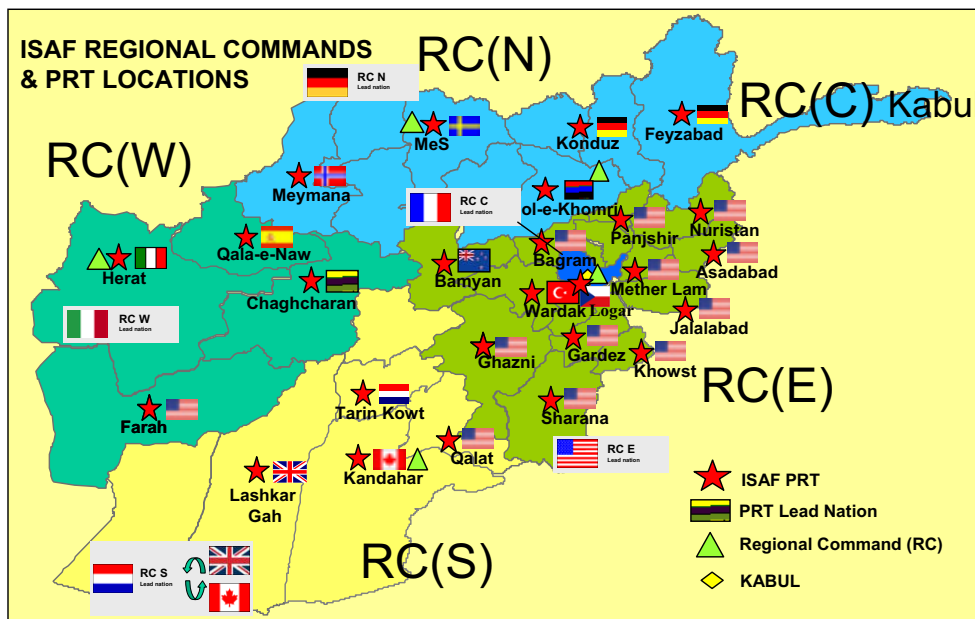
### I. International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Facts and Figures

In accordance with all the relevant Security Council Resolutions, ISAF's main role is to assist the Afghan government in the establishment of a secure and stable environment. To this end, ISAF forces are conducting security and stability operations throughout the country together with the Afghan National Security Forces and are directly involved in the development of the Afghan National Army through mentoring, training and equipping.

#### Key Facts:

- Commander: General (USA) David D. McKiernan
- 42 Troop Contributing Nations
- ISAF Total Strength: approx 61,960
- ISAF AOR (Afghanistan land mass) 650,000 km<sup>2</sup>
- 26 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

**Note on numbers:** Totals are approximations and actual numbers change daily. Number of troops will never be exact and should be taken as indicative.



#### Regional Command Capital: (appx ISAF strength 5,740)

- HQ ISAF in Kabul (Composite)
- HQ RC(C) in Kabul (FRA)
- KAIA (HUN)

#### Regional Command South: (appx ISAF strength 22,330)

- HQ RC(S) in KANDAHAR (NLD) (rotates CAN, NLD, GBR)
- Forward Support Base Kandahar (multinational)
- PRT KANDAHAR (CAN)
- PRT LASHKAR-GAH (GBR, DNK, EST)
- PRT TARIN KOWT (NLD,AUS)
- PRT QALAT (USA,ROU)

#### Regional Command West: (appx ISAF strength 2,940)

- HQ RC(W) in HERAT (ITA)
- Forward Support Base HERAT (ESP)
- PRT HERAT (ITA)
- PRT FARAH (USA)
- PRT QALA-E-NOW (ESP)
- PRT CHAGHCHARAN (LTU)

#### Regional Command North: (appx ISAF strength 5,080)

- HQ RC(N) in MAZAR-E-SHARIF (DEU)
- Forward Support Base MAZAR-E-SHARIF (DEU)
- PRT MAZAR-E-SHARIF (SWE)
- PRT FEYZABAD (DEU)
- PRT KONDUZ (DEU)
- PRT POL-E KHOMRI (HUN)
- PRT MEYMANA (NOR)

#### Regional Command East: (appx ISAF strength 25,870)

- HQ RC(E) in BAGRAM
- Forward Support Base BAGRAM (USA)
- PRT LOGAR (CZE)
- PRT SHARANA (USA)
- PRT KHOST (USA)
- PRT METHER LAM (USA)
- PRT BAMYAN (NZL)
- PRT PANJSHIR (USA)
- PRT JALALABAD (USA)
- PRT GHAZNI (USA)
- PRT ASADABAD (USA)
- PRT BAGRAM (USA)
- PRT NURISTAN (USA)
- PRT WARDAK (TUR)
- PRT GARDEZ (USA)

Current as of 13 March 2009

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Peter is a graduate student at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government where he focuses on international security and political economy. He will graduate from the Kennedy School in June 2009. He holds a BA with honors in history from Davidson College where he completed his honors thesis on US policy towards Pakistan. Currently, he is a researcher at the Belfer Center for International Affairs at Harvard on security issues. Previously, Peter worked as a research assistant at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington. At CSIS, he worked on the Embassy of the Future project, an initiative conducted in collaboration with the Department of State to rethink the US overseas presence. Before joining CSIS, he interned for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon working on a variety of international security issues.

