

Afghan National Security Forces

What It Will Take to Implement the ISAF Strategy

AUTHOR

Anthony H. Cordesman

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Center for Strategic and International Studies
1800 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202) 775-3119
Fax: (202) 775-3199
Web: www.csis.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

President Barack Obama's new strategy for Afghanistan is critically dependent upon the transfer of security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). His speech announcing this strategy called for the transfer to begin in mid-2011. However, creating the Afghan forces needed to bring security and stability to the region is a far more difficult challenge than many realize and poses major challenges that will endure long after 2011.

A successful effort to create effective Afghan forces, particularly forces that can largely replace the role of U.S. and allied forces, must overcome a legacy of more than eight years of critical failures in both force development and training, and in the broader course of the U.S. effort in Afghanistan. Such an effort must also be shaped as part of an integrated civil-military mission, and not treated simply as an exercise in generating more Afghan military and police forces.

Success will be equally dependent on strategic patience. There is a significant probability that the ANSF will not be ready for any significant transfer of responsibility until well after 2011. Trying to expand Afghan forces too quickly, creating forces with inadequate force quality, and decoupling Afghan force development from efforts to deal with the broad weakness in Afghan governance and the Afghan justice system will lose the war. America's politicians, policymakers, and military leaders must accept this reality—and persuade the Afghan government and our allies to act accordingly—or the mission in Afghanistan cannot succeed.

The Strategic Context: Developing the ANSF in the Face of Eight Years of Major Policy Failures

The current Afghan force development effort has been shaped by eight years of hard-won lessons and bitter strategic mistakes. This experience has a grim parallel to the U.S. efforts in Iraq and has left an enduring legacy. The ability to create the ANSF still suffers from the heritage of the following U.S. actions during the years following the collapse of the Taliban in 2002:

- Constantly confusing conceptual plans with successful actions, leaving the initiative to the Taliban and Afghan powerbrokers.
- Attempting to create a centralized state and government without regard to capacity, power structures, ethnic and sectarian differences, or the realities of tribalism and geography. The resulting system placed an impossible burden on the central government and gravely weakened provincial, district, and local government and encouraged corruption.
- Creating the conditions for massive corruption at every level of Afghan governance and power structures by flooding in money for aid and security activities without proper planning, management, and audits. Failing to establish controls on the funding of corrupt Afghan officials and officers, as well as powerbrokers—some of whom were linked to or made payments to insurgents.

- An initial failure to plan for meaningful nation building on realistic terms that reflected the capability and needs of the nation involved, compounded by a failure to see the need for effective host country military forces, and to provide the resources and trainers necessary to make those forces possible.
- Near-denial of the possibility of a serious insurgency and internal threat before and during the operation to take control of Afghanistan, and during the operation's immediate aftermath. This was followed by years of understating the growing scale of the threat that lasted until mid-2009.
- Under-reacting to every aspect of the rise of the Taliban and other insurgents from 2004 to mid-2009, and constantly setting force goals for the Afghan military and police that failed to meet the needs imposed by a growing threat, and which were then never properly funded, given the right urgency, and supported with the needed advisory personnel and trainers.
- Failing to see the need for Afghan forces that could be effective partners and then transition to responsibility for Afghan security until at least mid-2009. Treating the Afghan Army as a low-grade auxiliary force that was effectively used up in ongoing operations, and leaving the police under-armed and undertrained, through that same critical period.
- Treating the overall police development effort as if Afghanistan, with a different value system, legal heritage, and radically different levels of capacity, would be able to draw on Western models of policing and be modeled on those terms. Ignoring the critical need for paramilitary police and forces that could survive an insurgency, and then effectively using up the limited paramilitary police that were created in combat and deployments without adequate leave and retraining.
- Denying the level of corruption and power broker influence within every element of the ANSF, rather than honestly addressing the problems involved.
- Treating the rule of law effort as a largely theoretical exercise centered around the central government and to be built up over a period of more than a decade in a nation where prompt justice is critical to the social order, has to be active in the field, and is a key test of governance. Ignoring the need to rely on an informal justice system, and allowing the Taliban to take control of the de facto justice system in much of the country by default.
- Decoupling this same rule of law effort from the effort to create effective local police—who were supposed to somehow operate regardless of whether adequate courts and detention facilities existed, and as if the Afghan government had a meaningful or effective presence relative to powerbrokers and insurgents.
- Creating a counternarcotics campaign which effectively drove narcotics production into the areas dominated by the insurgents—and where narcotics help finance the insurgency—while leaving narcotrafficking and processing largely untouched in key parts of the rest of the country, where they served as yet another source of corruption and stimulated the growth of powerbrokers.
- Taking until 2009 to see the need for truly integrated civil-military operations directed at what became a major national insurgency, and reacting to the fact that ANSF development cannot be decoupled from the successful development of Afghan civil government capacity and integrity.

These mistakes have done more than critically delay and damage the development of the ANSF. They have empowered the resurgence of what began as a weak and incapable Taliban, helped to cripple the overall development of the Afghan government, and brought the United States and its allies to a point where they may still lose a war they had once won.

It is also clear from the sheer scale of these mistakes that responsibility does not lie with the U.S. and ISAF efforts in the field. Responsibility rests at the most senior levels in Washington. The key mistakes were made at the strategic level—driven in part by a past focus on Iraq and very real limits to the resources the United States could bring to the war. The key choices were made by Presidents, Secretaries of State, Secretaries of Defense, and National Security Advisors and not by those directly leading the training effort in Afghanistan, or senior personnel in the field. In fact, previous Ambassadors and commanders in the field made major efforts to correct these, and the U.S. and allied training and force generation efforts made progress in spite of pressure to accept unrealistic goals and to exaggerate success.

Acting on the Lessons of Two Wars' Worth of Mistakes

Each such mistake is both a lesson for the future and a warning that some of the most critical steps in Afghan force development have nothing to do with training methods or the shape of the particular forces involved. Force development cannot succeed against a serious enemy except in the context of an effective overall strategy. It cannot succeed without treating host country forces as real partners, and without a plan for transition to host country responsibility for security. It cannot succeed unless force development is linked to a matching civil effort to provide effective governance and all of the elements of a functioning justice system.

Like Iraq, Afghanistan is a clear demonstration that major operations in weak or broken states must include plans for sustained efforts in armed nation building, and denying this reality is an act of almost criminal neglect. So is failing to react quickly and decisively to the emergence of an insurgent or major extremist threat, and failing to properly fund and support the development of governance at the central, regional, and local levels. Allowing massive waste and corruption in the aid and contracting effort will breed massive corruption and power brokering in the host country, undermine or destroy the justice system and security forces, and deprive the government of popular support.

There are two further lessons that we must keep firmly in mind in evaluating Afghan force development:

- Creating strong host country security forces will be a critical and urgent need in many future U.S. military operations. Treating those forces as true partners should begin the moment they have minimal capability. Host country forces should not be overstretched and used up but rather made a base for transition to host country responsibility for security. It should be matched by efforts that ensure that capable civil servants and technocrats are retained or created/recruited on the civil side. A focus on democracy, constitutions, and elections decoupled from security and the capability to govern is a recipe for failure.
- A military focus on tactical operations, rather than the security of the population, empowers any insurgents and extremists and deprives most tactical victories of strategic meaning. A civil focus on transforming a broken or failed state into Western models of democracy, rule of law, and human rights ignores the realities of all three sets of values and further empowers insurgents and extremists. Post-conflict reconstruction can only begin when the conflict has truly ended, and this can only occur when integrated and successful civil-military operations have brought lasting security and stability.

The Practical Challenge for the Future

The war will be lost if the United States, our allies, and ISAF do not learn and *act upon* these lessons. It will be lost if efforts to meet political deadlines try to rush ANSF development beyond what is possible, or in ways that do not create strong, growing cadres and forces to take over responsibility for security.

Winning in ways that use up the ANSF and emphasize hollow levels of quantity over needed quantity will make any tactical gains during the next few years largely meaningless and push the United States and its allies out of the war. The same will be true if the United States and its allies do not carefully phase their force reductions and fail to create a force that can actually transition to taking responsibility as they withdraw. It will be true if they deny the need for enduring aid efforts and to continue a major advisory effort. It will be true if the ANSF effort is successful but decoupled from effective civil governance and popular support. Victory requires armed nation building and not simply successful force development.

The U.S. and ISAF force development efforts in Afghanistan now seem to recognize these realities. Both, however, face serious pushback from some policymakers in the United States and allied countries, and it is far from clear that the Afghan government is fully committed to creating an effective mix of Afghan forces and to fighting the war within the war the new strategy calls for.

Everyone involved in developing the ANSF—Afghan, American, and ISAF—must now resist the past tendency to claim false progress, exaggerate combat capability, downplay the seriousness of key problems, and rush towards impractical deadlines. It will be far better to under-promise and over-deliver than to repeat the mistakes made during 2002-2008 or in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Iraq. General Petraeus has warned that security force training is similar to “building the world’s largest aircraft while in flight and while being shot at.”¹ This is a warning that strategic patience is not a luxury; it is the only way to win.

The Race for Quality and Quantity

Even if the ANSF development effort does receive the proper level of U.S., allied, and Afghan government support, it still faces major challenges. Every aspect of Afghan force development will have to build on an awkward legacy of insufficient resources and past failures. The Afghan National Security Forces have made significant advances during the last few years, but their development had low priority for nearly half a decade. It was not until 2006-2007 that the ANSF began to have meaningful force goals and not until FY 2007 that it began to receive adequate ISAF and U.S. funding for developing its “force quantity.” There are still critical shortcomings in trainers, and U.S. and allied forces are only beginning to learn how to effectively partner with either the Afghan Army or its various police elements as a result of guidance that was only issued as recently as the summer of 2009.

¹ “Petraeus Blames Bookkeeping for Missing Weapons,” *Stars and Stripes*, August 9, 2007, <http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=55519&archive=true>.

As a result, the current ANSF development effort is a race to improve both quantity and force quality in ways that create a sustained force that can transition to assuming primary responsibility for the nation's security.

Numbers do count. Forces must become large enough to do the job or the strategy will fail. Major increases must take place in the ANSF if they are to become able to provide a total mix of ISAF and ANSF large enough to implement a population-oriented strategy, “shape, clear, hold, build,” and then accept “transfer.” It is all too clear that the Allied forces in ISAF will not make significant further increases and some will leave in 2011. It is equally clear that any further effort to make major increases in U.S. troops will be politically difficult—if not impossible. Larger and more effective Afghan forces are critical to providing security and stability in a country where civil Afghan capacity will lag behind the military and cannot operate without ANSF protection.

But it is even more important that the ANSF are capable enough to win and enduring enough to accept transition. Increases in ANSF numbers will be meaningless without increasing ANSF quality, and building quality takes time, mentoring, and experience. The statement that “numbers create a quality of their own” is scarcely a recipe for success. Counterinsurgency history has shown again and again that large but low quality forces are defeated by much smaller high quality forces, and that one of the best ways to lose a counterinsurgency campaign is to alienate the people with corrupt forces and/or forces that cannot protect them. The kind of “quality” that sheer numbers create is a proven way of losing wars, with thousands of years of historical examples to warn that such an approach is a recipe for failure.

Dealing with Key Shortcomings

It must be stressed that the NATO Training Mission—Afghanistan (NTM-A) and Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan (CSTC-A) effort is already far more effective than in the past, and major advances are being made in partnering with Afghan forces in ways that prepare them for transition. The analysis in this paper shows that major progress is taking place at many levels. At the same time, however, the legacy of the past has left major qualitative shortcomings that still cripple the ANSF, and will take time and resources to correct:

- ISAF efforts that lacked unity of command and the ability to flexibly apportion both ANSF and ISAF forces across the battle space;
- Failure to make the ANSF a full partner with the ISAF and to lay the groundwork for transfer of lead security responsibility;
- Lack of effective coordination among the elements of the ANSF;
- Lack of capability and willingness on the part of the government of Afghanistan to honestly and efficiently develop and deploy the security forces;
- Unwillingness among various elements of ISAF and member countries to directly confront problems with corruption, powerbrokers, criminal elements, and insurgent influence within the Afghan government, and within the leadership of various elements of the ANSF;

- Setting inadequate force goals and force expansion plans that led to a lack of sufficient capacity and capability of all types of ANSF, across the theater;
- Lack of clear near-term priorities and timelines for developing the capacity and capabilities of the ANSF required for the current fight;
- Lack of longer-term plans to expand and fund/sustain the ANSF for the length of the entire campaign and transition to taking responsibility for giving Afghanistan lasting security and stability;
- Sustained mismatch between the force goals and the resources necessary to implement them, including funding and the provision of adequate trainers, mentors, and partners. Ongoing problems growing out of past failures to set the proper goals for ANSF expansion, to provide adequate numbers of mentors and partners, and to fund the level of effort required;
- Failure to understand and properly audit and survey the motivation of ANSF forces by force element to understand recruiting, performance, motivation, and retention problems. Failure to properly assess the levels of pay, privileges, leave, medical benefits, death and disability benefits, facilities and equipment. This is necessary to create effective forces on a sustained basis and compete with the Taliban and other insurgents and to offset the pressure from powerbrokers, narcotraffickers, and other sources of corruption;
- A series of major shifts in the training effort for the Afghan National Police (ANP) involving repeated changes of mission and policing concepts coupled to a failure to prepare police for the reality of counterinsurgency and the Taliban threat and a failure to tie police development to the creation of a practical approach to the rule of law that could provide a functioning mix of formal, informal, and prompt justice; and
- A focus on creating large numbers of kandaks (battalions) in the Afghan National Army (ANA) with emphasis on quantity over quality, and formal training without effective mentoring and partnering of newly created units; failure to understand that newly formed units require extended training at the whole unit level, and that extended mentoring and partnering of deployed units is critical, or formal training fails to achieve its goals.

U.S. and allied responsibility for much of this mix of past failures does not mean that the Afghans should be excused from taking full responsibility for ANSF development over time. It does mean that the United States must now take responsibility for the years in which it failed to act as if Afghanistan faced a serious and growing insurgency and for its past under-resourcing of every aspect of the war in ways that allowed the insurgents to take the initiative. The United States cannot succeed by ignoring the fact that far too many of the failures in today's ANSF are the product of a critical half-decade in which the White House, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) cut back on requests from U.S. commanders and ambassadors and essentially had no meaningful strategy for Afghanistan.

The Uncertain Race to 2011 and Beyond

This highlights what may well be a critical failure in both the present strategy and current efforts at Afghan force development. The current ANSF force goals for 2011 essentially attempt to rush plans forward by two years in spite of past failings and current resource limitations. Even where Afghan forces meet the goals for force numbers, the result is that they may well not provide the force quality that is needed or a force that can endure under the strains it faces and provide a viable base for transition to Afghan responsibility

for security. The heritage of years of inadequate resources, massive shortfalls in trainers and mentors, failing to set the right force development goals, and false progress reports cannot be overcome by 2011. This does not mean setting an open-ended deadline for Afghan force development, but it is far better to proceed at a pace that may require one or two extra years than to rush forward and fail.

At a minimum, the United States and ISAF must be ready to fully support and resource the critical elements of the new plans that the combined ISAF and U.S. advisory team that is shaping Afghan force development, NTM-A/CSTC-A, have developed to accelerate current ANSF force expansion plans. NTM-A and CSTC-A reported the following key priorities in December 2009, following President Obama's speech:²

- Develop and grow leaders for tomorrow;
- Generate professional, competent, capable ANSF;
- Accelerate ANA growth to 134,000 by October 2010;
- Reform and growth the ANP to 96,800, and continue to 109,000—pending Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) approval;
- Partner with and grow the ANA Air Force;
- Develop Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI) systems;
- Develop the institutional base (training and education for force generation); and
- Resource the fielded force.

Force Goals for 2014-2016 and Beyond

As this analysis shows, it is unlikely that enough success can be achieved in these areas to support any significant real-world transfer of responsibility to the ANSF during 2011. These goals, however, are only part of the story. The United States and ISAF also have ambitious plans for the future.

NTM-A/CSTC-A intends to establish the groundwork for further major expansions of the ANA and ANP by 2014-2016. Lt Gen Caldwell provided more details on these expansion plans in January 2010 and indicated that they call for the ANA to grow to 171,600 by October 2011 and the police to grow to 134,000.³ NTM-A/CSTC-A later added that there were tentative plans for the ANA to grow to 240,000 by 2013. It also stated that the ANP was at an authorized strength of 94,958 in December 2009, and there were tentative plans for it to grow to 160,000 by 2013. These plans would raise total ANSF strength from 191,969 in December 2009 to 305,600 by October 2011 and to 400,000 by 2013, although early success in the war could make full implementation of such plans unnecessary.⁴ On June 20, 2010, the force total stood at 235,758.⁵

² Background briefing, December 11, 2009.

³ Rod Nordland, "U.S. Approves Training to Expand Afghan Army," *New York Times*, January 15, 2010.

⁴ Background briefing, December 11, 2009.

These expansion plans are truly massive and extremely fast-paced. The expansion in overall force numbers hides the actual numbers of recruits needed to both sustain and expand a force that is undergoing rapid attrition. General Caldwell stated that by the end of 2011, NTM-A/CSTC-A would have to recruit 141,000 new recruits in order to meet expansion goals and sustain the force.⁶

These near-term force goals are shown in **Figure ES.1**.

Figure ES.1: Near-term ANSF Force Goals

ANSF Strength	June 2010 Actual	October 2010 Goal	October 2011 Goal
ANP	105,873	109,000	134,000
ANA	129,885	134,000	171,000
Total ANSF Strength	235,758	243,000	305,000

*Includes about 15,000 Trainees, Transients, Holdees, and Students (TTHS).

Source: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010, p. 56.

As of August 2010, ANA end strength was at 134,028, three months ahead of schedule – although no similar claims were made about force quality. Concurrent data for the ANP was unavailable.⁷

The United States and ISAF must do what they can to meet the most critical and valid aspects of the goals, but they must also take the lead in ensuring that such force expansion efforts do not race beyond Afghan and U.S./ISAF capabilities. Expediency cannot be allowed to put half-ready and unstable ANSF units in the field. It cannot be allowed to push force expansion efforts faster than ANSF elements can absorb them or faster than ISAF can provide fully qualified trainers, mentors, and partner units and the proper mix of equipment, facilities, enablers, and sustainability.

The United States and ISAF also cannot afford to ignore the impact of Afghan cultural needs, regional and ethnic differences, family and tribal structures, and the real world “friction” that affects force development. Slogans and rhetoric about ideological goals, leadership, and morale cannot be allowed to lead the force development effort to ignore Afghan material realities: problems in pay, corruption, and promotion; inadequate

⁵Commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF), “Campaign Overview,” June 2010.

⁶Elizabeth Bumiller, “U.S. General Cites Goals to Train Afghan Forces,” *New York Times*, August 23, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/24/world/asia/24military.html?ref=global-home&pagewanted=print>.

⁷NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A), August 2010.

facilities and equipment; poor medical care; overstretching or over-committing force elements; problems in supporting families; vulnerability to insurgent infiltration and threats; and a lack of meaningful compensation for death and disability. These factors have a far greater affect on ANSF development than ideology and nationalism, which ISAF trainers mistakenly tend to focus on.

Creating the force quality that can deal with these problems on Afghan terms will be more important than quantity, and creating enduring ANSF capabilities that will allow a successful transition as ISAF forces withdraw, are far more important than generating large initial force strengths. However, far too many parts of this analysis highlight the risk that the current goals for 2010 and 2011 will produce a force lacking the proper quality and the enduring mix of size and capability needed for a successful transition. They warn that even a year's more time would sharply increase the chances for success and victory, and that fundamental changes may be needed in the goals for the ANP.

Honest Reporting of Force Quality Is Critical to Victory

Many experts feel that improvements are needed in the training base that emphasize training at the kandak (battalion) and full unit levels before new units go out into the field. Similar improvements proved to be beneficial in Iraq, and while they could make the training effort longer—not shorter—they pay off the moment units become active in the field. At the same time, no element of the ANSF can be trained and thrust into independent operations without adequate mentors and partners. NTM-A/CSTC-A announced an increase in training time in June 2010, and this may help, but like many aspects of the ANSF development effort, the impact on force quality is unclear.

Reporting on every aspect of the training effort—and ANSF operations—must be honest and transparent. NATO-ISAF trainers and mentors must be far more honest in their assessments of the ANSF. The past Capability Milestone (CM) definition of “in the lead” has often been little more than a dishonest joke. This is partially a result of trainers identifying with “their” Afghans and inflating ratings, but it is also the result of spin. There is immense pressure on the training system to perform quickly and capably, and the temptation is strong to inflate ANSF ratings in order to demonstrate progress and to please superiors.

These problems have been compounded by rating units more on the resources they have available, and on the extent to which personnel have gone through formal training, than on the basis of sustained performance in combat or in their actual mission. The ANSF cannot be allowed to repeat the mistakes of Iraq and Vietnam, wherein units with supposedly high effectiveness ratings were sent into combat only to fail.

The April 2010 version of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) quarterly report on Afghanistan identified five areas of concern within the CM system: overall reliability of the system, measurements and validation, analysis and reporting, challenges facing assessment efforts, and systematic ANSF deficiencies undermining efforts to develop unit capability.⁸ As the operation in Marjah and plans for

⁸ Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR), *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 2010, p. 53.

Kandahar make all too clear, the United States and its ISAF allies still need to address these issues at every level of command and operations. In doing so, they cannot afford to ignore the number of times that “optimism” and exaggerated declarations of success have hurt U.S. efforts in the past.⁹

NTM-A/CSTC-A and ISAF has indicated that they are actively seeking to introduce honest and meaningful measures of force quality and effectiveness for the first time in the war. In early 2010, the CM system was dropped altogether and replaced with the Commanders Unit Assessment Tool. This system relies more on narrative and subjective elements to assess ANSF capabilities, and tracks many more areas than the old CM system. While this system is a clear improvement, it does not correct many of the problems with the old CM system and as of spring 2010 had not been in use long enough for its effectiveness to be fully measured. Regardless, the institution of this new system is a critical step, and one that must be made a key part of unclassified reporting both to allow outside validation, and to help NTM-A/CSTC-A resist policy-level pressure to exaggerate success and rush the timelines for ANSF development.

Focusing on Mentoring and Partnering in the Field, Rather Than Formal Training, to Meet These Goals

The most important key to success, however, does not lie in improving the quality of the training in training centers—important as that is. It lies in improving the quality of follow-on partnering, mentoring, support, and enablers once new Afghan forces enter service. This requires an ongoing, expert effort and a true commitment to creating partners and gradually placing them in the lead. Creating combat units with this level of capability will pose particularly serious challenges.

More realistic and effective partnering efforts are needed at every level. Such efforts are proving to be exceptionally important in the field in shaking out new units, giving them continuity of effective leadership, dealing with internal tensions and retention problems, and helping them overcome the pressures of corruption and powerbrokers. They do, however, take time and require careful attention to continuity at the embedded training/mentoring level. Partnering and the creation of effective units in the field is an exercise in sustained human relationships, and short tours and rapid changes in U.S. and ISAF trainers can be as crippling as the assumption that training is more critical than mentoring and partnering in making the ANSF an effective part of civil-military operations.

Dealing with the Fact That This Is a “Resource to Experiment” and Not a “Troop to Task” Ratio

Success also means accepting the experimental nature of much of the activity required, rather than trying to meet unrealistic schedules or to rigidly implement given plans. Every aspect of *clear, hold, build, and transition* is an experiment in the field. Much of this

⁹ For an example, see Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), Special Plans and Operations, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans to Train, Equip, and Field the Afghan National Security Forces*, Report No. SPO-2009-007, September 30, 2009.

activity at least begins under combat conditions and will require help in preparing ANSF elements to go from a combat ethos to one of effective civil-military relations.

It means accepting the fact that Afghan force development cannot be separated from other key aspects of *clear, hold, build, and transition*. Much of this effort will be tied to the progress of the availability of improvements in Afghan governance, the creation of the other elements of a justice system, and putting effective and honest aid efforts into the field. This is easy to call for in general terms, but it is unclear that even the most dedicated advocates of a population-centric strategy within the U.S. military and ISAF can fully define how best to implement *clear, hold, and build* in tangible ways that execute and manage the tasks involved and utilize valid measures of effectiveness. It is far more likely that, as such efforts become operational on a large-scale basis, developing the best approach will take until 2014-2015.

Success requires an honest acceptance of the fact that the United States, its allies, and ISAF are actively involved in “armed nation building.” The United States should not make a continuing commitment to the impossible goals set in ambitious concepts and plans like the Afghan National compact and Afghan Development Plans. The fact is, however, that any victory in Afghanistan must involve extensive mixes of civil-military activity that add up to armed nation building, and the ANSF must play a critical role in the civil aspects of “hold” and “build” and in providing enduring security and stability once “transfer” takes place.

This civil-military aspect of ANSF operations will require enduring U.S. and outside aid that funds both most ANSF development and operations, as well as similar U.S. aid in developing Afghan governance and enough economic activity and growth to bring suitable levels of employment and economic security. The force building effort is inevitably linked to progress in governance.

The ANSF cannot function as an effective institution unless there is an effective Afghan government, which requires the United States and its allies to help develop the capacity of the Afghan government at the central, provincial, district and local levels. This is vital during the “hold” and “build” phases of operations and to allowing the police development effort to support the creation of a functional mix of formal and informal justice systems.

At the same time, the pace of ANSF development must be linked to Afghan capacity at the Ministerial level and to efforts to reduce corruption. The United States must help the Afghan government both to develop the necessary capabilities to plan and manage security within the Defense, Interior, and Finance Ministries. It must help the leadership of every element of the ANSF deal with the problems of corruption, powerbrokers, narcotraffickers, and Taliban infiltration—as well as with the problems of ethnic and sectarian pressures and tensions, in addition to tribalism. No ANSF effort can succeed that does not address the problem of nation building within the Afghan security structure. This is “nation building,” and efforts to deny it are semantic exercises in obfuscation and dishonesty.

This, in turn, is a warning that much of the police development effort is still on the path to failure and defeat. Partnering at the police level requires a matching level of partnering

at the civil and justice levels. The Afghan police cannot operate in vacuum. Their paramilitary operations require the same quality of combat partnering as the ANA. The rest of the police must be shaped to support a functioning justice system based on Afghan norms and values. The present goals for the police fail to provide the mix of paramilitary forces required, while setting standards for the regular police that it may be impossible to properly resource and sustain. These standards are decoupled from the ability to produce a matching level of governance, the other elements of a justice system, and broad relief from the outside pressures that do so much to corrupt the ANP in their day-to-day civil functions.

Key Developments by Force Element

None of these problems mean that the ANSF development effort cannot succeed. As this report makes clear, many important improvements have already been made in the training and partnering effort. Afghan forces are improving and already play an important role in many operations. The training effort is now far better funded, manned, and structured than it was up to the fall of 2007, and partnering has improved—particularly with the Afghan National Army. They do, however, mean that the United States and ISAF need to concentrate on several key priorities by force element.

The Afghan National Army (ANA)

NTM-A/CSTC-A has already begun active efforts to expand ANA forces from an assigned strength of roughly 91,000 to 134,000, and from 117 fielded kandaks to 179. It is procuring improved equipment and raising the number of Commando Kandaks from 6 to 8. A total of 76 of the 117 fielded units are already capable of leading operations. ISAF and the United States have also begun to focus on preparing the ANA to carry out critical counterinsurgency tasks and to *hold* in threatened population areas. ISAF and the United States have also begun to help better prepare ANP and Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP) forces to provide *hold* capabilities where there is a less serious threat.

A successful U.S. strategy to win the war in Afghanistan and to create a true host country partner will, however, require the full—and *ruthlessly self-honest and objective*—implementation of several decisions that shape the qualitative development of the ANA.

- *The first decision is to accelerate improvements in both training/partnering and force development to ensure the ANA can come as close as possible to reaching a nominal effective strength of 134,000 men in 2010 without sacrificing force quality, and to create a base that can support future major expansions in the ANSF by 2011-2014.* NTM-A/CSTC-A has set a tentative goal of 159,000 by July 2011, and 240,000 by 2013. It is unlikely that these goals can be met with the necessary level of force quality and enduring force capability, but if NTM-A/CSTC-A tries, it will require an *expansion in funding, in training facilities and trainers, in equipment, and in mentors and partner units. Resources to do this well should be identified and committed concurrently.* Every regional and task force commander visited or interviewed indicated that such expansion is now needed. If ISAF is more successful, then this process can be slowed and/or the force goal can be cut. Given the lead times, however, it is necessary to act now to begin this force expansion process, particularly if it is to be done both at the pace Afghans can support and to maintain the necessary force quality.

- *The second decision is to either end the shortfall in NATO and Embedded Training Team (ETT) mentors, and resources, or cut the force goals for the ANSF and reshape them to suit the resources that are actually on hand.* There are no easy ways to quantify the present shortfall, but there is no doubt about the scale of shortfalls through 2009. CSTC-A reported that the ANA needed a minimum of 67 Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) plus U.S. trainers in July 2009. However, it had 56 OMLTs on the ground, of which only 46 were validated. American ETTs were also underresourced in the past, though ETTs are being replaced by the “two brigade combat teams (BCT)” concept of providing mentors. The requirement for OMLTs also will expand along with the ANA. It will rise to 91 by the end of CY 2010, and only a maximum of 66 OMLTs will actually be on the ground. This is a deficit of 25. Expert analysis is needed, but it may take the equivalent of a third new brigade combat team (changing the two-BCT approach to a three-BCT one) to correct this deficiency. Expanding to 240,000 men would require substantially more OMLTs plus additional ETT mentors, many of which must be carefully chosen to help the ANA develop critical new “enablers” like artillery, engineering, C2, medical services, as well as logistics and sustainability.
- *The third decision is to focus on building up the capability of deployed units, rather than over-relying on formal training before units are in the field.* Even the best formal training process is only the prelude to shaping the capabilities of new units in the field, testing leaders, providing practical experience, and supporting ANA and key ANP units with experienced cadres of mentors and partner units. With newly formed units, practical training in both operations and unit management and leadership is more critical than formal training and is critical to limiting corruption, the scale of retention, and AWOL problems. Even if the formal training process provided more extensive (or meaningful) training at the full or other unit level, inexperienced units would still be dependent on the “on the job” mentoring and support they receive in the field. Some experts suggest this can be accomplished by embedding a brigade combat team, brigade, or similar force into each echelon of each ANA Corps (which cover the same areas as the ANP regional commands) to provide the expertise and enablers to carry out joint planning, intelligence, command and control capabilities, fire support, logistic expertise, and other capabilities that the ANA now lacks and can acquire through partnership and joint operations with the United States
- *The fourth decision is to create a full operational partnership, focused around the development of the ANA and key elements of the ANP, so that Afghans are a true partner in all NATO/ANSF and U.S. operations and take the lead in joint operations as soon as possible.* It is not enough for ISAF units to partner with the ANSF. The ANSF must be made a full partner at the command level as well. Afghans should see Afghans taking the lead in the field as soon as practical, playing a critical role in shaping all plans and operations as well as in implementing *hold and build*. This often cannot be done immediately, but it must be done as soon as possible.

At a broader level, the United States, ISAF, the Afghan government, and the Afghan Ministry of Defense need to make other critical choices. Creating an effective ANA will serve little purpose unless the Afghan government is fully committed to fighting the war, and ISAF and the Afghan government are fully committed to fighting it with the same strategy. Rhetoric aside, it is far from clear that this is the case. The United States and ISAF are pursuing a far more proactive approach to combat than the government, and this raises serious questions as to whether the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) will use the ANA and the paramilitary elements of the ANP to try to win or seek some form of political compromise.

The same issues exist in implementing the rest of the strategy, compounded by deep uncertainties as to how it can actually be implemented. No one has yet clearly defined how ISAF and the Afghan government will use the ANA to work with civilian partners and put the current concepts for civil-military operations into practice. It is all very well to use a slogan like “clear, hold, and build.” It is quite another to systematically

implement it as part of a population-centric strategy. The ANA will also have to be capable of civil-military operations. No matter how much effort is made to improve the integrity, size, and capability of the various elements of the Afghan police, improve Afghan governance, and create an effective structure for prompt justice—there will be 3 to 5 years in which the ANA will have to play a critical role in various *clear* and *hold* efforts, as well as in helping local, aid, and government workers in various build roles.

Finally, it is all very well to use terms like “transition” and “transfer of responsibility,” but they are being used without so much as a hint of what plans, if any, exist to make them real.

The ANA Air Force (ANAAF)

The Afghan National Army Air Force is still in its formative stages and will take time to form as a fully effective force, although elements of the ANAAF are already contributing to the COIN fight. ANAAF development plans must be tailored to Afghan needs and capabilities. In April 2010, the ANAAF has reported force strength of 3,100 personnel and 46 aircraft, up from 2,538 troops and 32 aircraft.¹⁰

There is a clear case for giving the ANSF the currently planned mix of airlift, battlefield, mobility, RW attack, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R), medevac, and multi-role capability. Shaping an air force that can fully replace U.S. and allied airpower, however, is a far more demanding challenge given Afghanistan’s resources and manpower base. It may be possible to bring the ANA to the point where it is ready for transition by 2014-2016, but this seems doubtful for the ANAAF. There is a need for better transition planning in the case of both forces, but it is particularly important for the ANAAF.

At the same time, there is a broader role that the ANAAF may be able to perform in the near term. It can develop the skills to support NATO in targeting and managing air operations and to take on responsibility for vetting air strikes and air operations. Such a partnership would do much to assure Afghans that Afghan forces were true partners in all air operations and played the proper role in reducing civilian casualties and collateral damage. Such a “red card” role presents obvious difficulties, but it will be applied to all ISAF operations, including ground operations, in time. Working to make it effective now as well as a key partner and part of Afghan and ISAF strategic communications could have major benefits.

The Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP)

Police development raises more serious issues than ANA development. The Afghan police force is broken. Much of the ANP still lags far behind the ANA in development, and it is unclear if all of the resources necessary to correct this situation can be provided. Far deeper problems exist, however, in the fact that current plans do not seem to call for

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), April 2010.

creating the level of paramilitary police capabilities that are a vital element of the new strategy and do call for overall standards for the regular police that ignore the low quality of the overall recruiting base. Also, the lack of matching capabilities in Afghan governance and the justice system and the political realities will ultimately ensure that the force is subject to the influence of local leaders and powerbrokers and outside pressures that corrupt much of the force.

A comprehensive reexamination of the police training effort is needed to determine whether more of the resources now available should go to creating an ANCOP force large enough and enduring enough to meet the need for paramilitary police forces. The present effort clearly falls far short of the need.

With the exception of the Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP) part of the force, the ANP cannot operate effectively in the face of serious insurgent threats. The rest cannot operate without the support of more honest and effective Afghan governance and without the support of the other elements of a justice system.

Most of the ANP lack the ability to support the hold and build missions in the face of insurgent attacks, bombings, and subversion. Improving the size and paramilitary capabilities of the ANCOP force, and selected elements of other parts of the ANP, may not be as time-critical in terms of direct combat operations, but it will be equally urgent if the ANP is to play a central role in performing the *hold* and *build* functions in population centers, without which COIN will not succeed. Such improvement, however, presents different challenges than improving the ANA.

The ANCOP force is still of only token size and suffers from critical levels of attrition. Building up the self-defense and paramilitary capabilities of other elements of the ANP is even more challenging at a time when they still suffer from critical problems in capability, leadership, corruption, supporting governance, and the district and local levels of courts, legal services, and detention facilities necessary to implement prompt justice and the rule of law.

At the same time, this reexamination should honestly assess the real-world quality of the other, regular police forces that Afghanistan can actually develop and sustain. The present goals seem to call for levels of police quality that simply cannot be achieved. This is in addition to a lack of realism in dealing with any aspect of police corruption and the lack of credible support from effective Afghan governance and the other elements of a formal justice system.

It may be better to reshape the entire police development effort to focus on creating the kind of ANP that Afghanistan can actually support rather than wasting resources trying to create a force that can never be achieved. Seeking to create an ANP with the kind of training and quality that ISAF plans now call for involves a race that may never be won. Numbers alone present a critical problem. In April 2010, the DoD reported that the Afghan Uniformed Police had 102,138 assigned, above their goal of 99,261, but these numbers disguised large number numbers of absentees, “ghost” forces who existed only

on paper, and many who paid for safe positions or ones where they did not actually serve.¹¹

Yet overall force quality is a far more critical issue than manning levels. Functional literacy, training, readiness, and activity levels vary sharply but are generally poor. Some experts put the current percentage of ANP who have received no meaningful training as high as 78 percent of the force. A major review is needed to examine the tradeoffs between trying to raise standards for an entire force on the one hand and, on the other, creating strong paramilitary capabilities and key cadres of trained personnel within the other elements of the ANP to meet key missions.

It seems likely that such a review will conclude that there is no practical prospect of training and retaining an ANP force of the kind that ISAF is now seeking to build; that the Afghan government is not capable of sustaining such a force even if it can be built for a short period; and that no credible plans exist for an “end state” that could deprive powerbrokers of their influence and create the mix of a justice system and the level of governance required.

This is particularly true if such a review looks beyond the boundaries of the ANP force development effort and examines what kind of police can actually function in Afghanistan. The ANP faces critical problems in winning popular support and acceptance. Unlike the ANA, which is the most respected institution in the Afghan government, there is a wide consensus that many elements of the ANP are too corrupt and too tied to politics and powerbrokers, to be effective and win/retain popular support. Extortion, bribes, theft, and intimidation remain the rule rather than the exception. Controlling police abuses is even more important than improving police size or capability. This effort must be tailored to work within the constraints imposed by incapable Afghan civil governance and a grossly weak and corrupt justice system. Police, governance, and the justice system interact so closely that any police development effort that is not part of an integrated development (and assessment) effort borders on fantasy.

At a minimum, these problems are so severe that they require a new degree of realism in implementing the current strategy. Civil-military operations need to be tailored to what can actually be accomplished and the time it will take to accomplish it. The initial phase of the *hold* function requires a transition to regular policing activity and supporting the prompt administration of justice. The ANCOs are too small to perform even the most critical aspects of this mission and the rest of the ANP are not sufficiently trained, effective, and free of corruption in this regard. At the same time, the *build* phase cannot be properly implemented until the ANP has the capacity and integrity to support an effective civil rule of law by Afghan standards and custom *and* until the government and judiciary have the capacity and integrity to support the ANP. This will require years of additional ISAF and aid efforts, and may require far more emphasis on the informal justice system.

If the United States, ISAF, and Afghan government do decide to try to implement the current plans for police development, there are several areas where ISAF and the United

¹¹ Ibid.

States need to work with the Afghan government at the central, provincial, and local level to find better ways to shape the future of the ANP:

- *First, reducing current levels of corruption in the ANP and limiting the impact of political abuses and powerbrokers, must be made an integral part of the operational plan for shape, clear, hold, and build.* A public opinion survey reported in July 2010 found that 42 percent of Afghans felt the MoI was one of the three most corrupt ministries in the country, followed by 32 percent for the Ministry of Justice, and 30 percent for the Directorate of National Security (DNS). (18 percent of those polled ranked all three ministries as equally corrupt.)¹² ISAF cannot succeed in its mission unless these problems are sharply reduced and unless the ANP can carry out the political aspects of the hold mission and show that they provide real security and prompt justice. As is the case with the ANA, fighting corruption and political misuse of the ANP are as critical as expanding forces. This can only be done through improvements in ANP leadership, facilitated by far more robust mentoring and training efforts.

Efforts like the Focused District Development (FDD) program offer some hope, but that hope remains uncertain. The program is still evolving, and any effort to apply it nationally is necessarily slow because it takes time, elite police elements, and skilled trainer/mentors. The FDD effort has also been praised without the support of credible reports as to its degree of relative and lasting success. The Directed District Development program may offer another possible solution in the form of an additional quick reaction capability, but it too needs continuing reassessment to determine what scale of effort is practical. Given the resources available, both programs also need to be tightly focused on ensuring that they meet the needs in the population areas most threatened by insurgent activity and where providing the hold function is most urgent.

All these efforts will fail, however, if they are not tied to matching improvements in governance and the judiciary. No ANP program can succeed where political interference, corruption, and powerbrokers block effective ANP action or ensure it cannot be reformed. Powerbrokers have a clear incentive and need to disrupt this process, as it directly threatens their operations. This must be understood and be included as part of the planning for ANP improvement. The political dimension of ANP development is as critical as the military and civil dimensions.

- *Second, major efforts need to be made to simultaneously increase the size and quality of the ANP, but primary emphasis should be on ensuring minimal levels of quality in the most critical areas rather than on generating force numbers or overall force quality.* NTM-A/CSTC-A reported that the ANP had an authorized strength of 94,958 in December 2009, and there were tentative plans for it to grow to 109,000 by October 31, 2010, 134,000 by October 2011, and 160,000 by 2013. Plans called for eliminating the backlog of untrained police (which, as mentioned before, some experts put as high as 78 percent of the existing force) within two years. Yet these plans seemed to leave the ANP under-equipped for some aspects of its mission, and problems remain in leadership and facilities.

According to ISAF, ANP authorized strength had reached 104,500 by April 2010, although actual manning remained unclear. ISAF reported some progress toward leadership training in May 2010. The number of students enrolled in officer courses was projected to reach 3,100 by November 2010, up from 600 in November 2009. Similarly, the number of students enrolled in command and staff courses was projected to reach 568 in November 2010, up from only 4 in November 2009. However, more than 50 percent of the force was still untrained, and retention rates remained an issue.

- *Third, force goals should not exceed the number of qualified trainers and mentors actually present and should not be based on authorized manning rather than the number of police that are actually present and can be retained over time.* The ANP's most immediate need to execute its planned

¹² Ernesto Londono, "Afghans View Police, Judiciary as Corrupt," *Washington Post*, July 8, 2010, p. A8.

expansion is for adequate numbers of qualified trainers and mentors who have the military experience and counterinsurgency background that will be required for several years to come. The day may come when the ANP's main mission is conventional law enforcement in a secure environment, but that day is years away and the ANP needs to focus on security.

In the interim, the ANP faces even more severe shortfalls in training, mentoring, and partnering than the ANA. A CSTC-A report in July 2009 stated that the ANP needed at least 98 additional Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (POMLTs) plus added U.S. Police Mentoring Troop (PMT) trainer/mentors by the end of CY 2010, and 46 more by the end of CY 2011. It is requesting a total of 182 POMLTs and BMTs by the end of CY 2011. There was a major need for added PMTs as well.

These problems are unlikely to be solved in the near term with trainers and mentors with the quality and effectiveness required. The updated 2-year timeline for training the police force is based upon estimates of police trainer contributions from European nations that seem likely to prove sharply over-optimistic. In March 29, 2010, the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) reported that NATO was short 163 POMLTs.¹³ In April 2010, DOD stated that there were 108 unfilled POMLT's or 4,320 personnel (40 members per team).¹⁴ In June 2010, NATO stated that an additional 143 POMLTs would be required by October 2010.¹⁵ If European partner nations do not deliver the required numbers of trainers, NTM-A/CSTC-A will have to reassess its police training timelines. However, these requirements have been substantially increased since the goal for the end-strength of the police was raised to 160,000.

- *Fourth, a major reorganization is needed to strengthen several elements within the ANP. These include elite gendarmeries or paramilitary elements to deal with counterinsurgency and key hold missions.* These could build on ANCOP and police commando cadres. The Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP) are designed to provide more capable forces that can defend themselves, perform key hold functions in urban areas, and provide a lasting police presence in less secure remote areas. Its assigned strength was 3,345 in July 2009, and it had four fielded brigade headquarters and 16 fielded battalion headquarters. As of April 2010, the MoI reported ANCOP end-strength at 5,802, with 48 companies fielded.¹⁶

Despite NTM-A's considerable efforts to stem ANCOP attrition with Heroes Return and other programs, yearly attrition remained above 70 percent in May 2010 while operational requirements were on the upswing. Other special elements may be needed to work with the National Directorate of Security (NDS) and ANA to eliminate any remaining insurgent shadow government, justice systems, and networks; and to deal with the investigation of organized crime and powerbrokers involved in gross corruption. The majority of the Afghan police can be trained to lower levels of police capability suited to meet Afghan standards and needs.

- *Fifth, as with the ANA, ISAF must focus on building up the capability of deployed units rather than over-relying on formal training.* Once again, even the best formal training process is only the prelude to shaping the capabilities of new units, testing leaders, providing practical experience, and supporting ANA and key ANP units with experienced cadres of mentors and partner units. Practical training in both operations and unit management and leadership are more critical with newly formed units than is formal training, and are critical to limiting corruption and the scale of retention and AWOL problems.

¹³ SIGAR, "Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments," June 29, 2010.

¹⁴ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010.

¹⁵ SIGAR, "SIGAR's Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams."

¹⁶ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010.

- *Sixth, the development of the ANP must be linked to improvements in the Afghan formal and informal legal processes to provide prompt and effective justice.* The ANP cannot succeed in meeting one of the most critical demands of the Afghan people—the need for prompt justice—unless ANP development is linked to the creation of effective courts and the rest of the formal justice and corrections systems, or use of Afghanistan’s informal justice system. The ANP’s problems with corruption also cannot be corrected unless the criminal justice system is seen as much less corrupt and subject to political influence. Fixing these problems reflects one of the most urgent demands of the Afghan people. An integrated approach to ANP development and improved popular justice is critical and may need substantially more resources on the justice side of the equation.

This latter point is critical. The current ANP development effort is crippled by the failure to integrate the overall civil-military effort. The rule of law program in Afghanistan seems largely decoupled from reality. ANSF and ISAF success in developing the ANP will have limited impact if the ANP cannot perform alongside a combination of the Afghan formal and informal justice systems and cannot function at the civil level. They are in competition to replace the Taliban, which now dominates the prompt justice system at the local level. So far, GIRoA, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the United States, and other nations have yet to demonstrate that they have effective plans to combine civil policing with an effective civil justice effort.

This is especially troubling because past rule of law programs have usually been failures described as successes. They have been programs that lacked the scale and coverage to meet immediate and urgent needs, which focused far too much on formal justice systems that were not in place and could not be put in place for years, and focused on foreign values rather than Afghan values. Like far too many civilian programs in Afghanistan, they did not seek an effective partnership with ISAF military and tie such efforts to successfully implementing *hold, build, and transfer*—and winning the war.

The Afghan Border Police (ABP)

The ABP had an authorized strength of 17,600 authorized and 13,912 assigned as of March 2010.¹⁷ Afghanistan will require a competent and sufficient border police function in the future. However, border forces are notoriously difficult to create and make effective under counterinsurgency conditions. Afghanistan’s geography and historical border disputes make border enforcement even more difficult than usual, and ISAF and the ANSF have more urgent priorities.

Current plans to develop the ABP should be executed, and the Focused Border Development program may help to improve performance, reduce corruption, and increase government revenues. These efforts should be complemented by specific technologies, including biometrics and ISR, to the extent feasible.

Border protection, however, should not be a priority area for ISAF action relative to building up the ANA or ANP, or for allocating additional forces, resources and other capabilities. A tightly focused effort may be able to help the Afghan government get more revenues from commercial vehicle traffic across the border that are now being lost through corruption.

¹⁷ Ibid.

There is no prospect that the ABP can actually seal the borders, or do more in the near-term than harass the insurgency while becoming a source of casualties and more corruption. Afghanistan's borders have never been fully secured, and likely never will be. This is predominantly true as long as elements of the Pakistan government and ISI covertly support key elements of the Taliban. Moreover, it is not apparent just how much additional revenue will be provided, how well it will be collected and allocated, and whether it will make a real difference in reducing GIRoA dependence on outside aid.

The Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3)

The use of local forces and militias like the AP-3 remains one of the more uncertain and controversial aspects of Afghan force development. The concept of minimally trained local security forces that augment more traditional police and security forces is not a new one in COIN history, and has been both successful and unsuccessful in the past.

The fact that there will not be sufficient ANSF to cover the country for at least the next two years and the severe problems in the police development program make the use of militias and local defense forces worth exploring. It also provides a potential substitute for the inability to deal with the corruption of the ANP and its ties to powerbrokers; for shortfalls in ANP forces; and for the lack of an ability to provide a working mix of local governance, police, and the other elements of a formal justice system.

Failed past experiments with community-based forces—most notably the Afghan Auxiliary Police—underscore the fact that the GIRoA and ISAF must exercise caution in creating local defense forces:

- Such forces only tend to work as long as key cadres of trainers and advisers are present on the scene. This can make them either “boutique” forces that are more resource-intensive than they are worth or failures that cannot outlast the departure of trainers.
- There are no clear reasons why they should be loyal to the Afghan government, particularly in the many areas where the government does nothing to earn that loyalty.
- They are vulnerable to being taken over by given powerbrokers or tribal leaders.
- They have strong temptations to abuse their status and extort from the local population, and
- There is no one model that works. They can be successful in one local area and fail in the next valley. Trying to manage small elements of locally tailored forces is sometimes worth the cost but adds to the general problems caused by a lack of resource and Afghan government capacity.

The Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3) is, however, a potential model for such forces. The underlying premise of the AP3 is that neither ISAF nor the ANSF have sufficient strength to provide security for local communities, and that members of local communities—if properly selected, trained, and overseen—are capable of providing some first-layer security. The AP3 is also intended to free up some Afghan Uniform Police (AUP) from providing fixed-site security, or manning local checkpoints, thus allowing them to focus on policing tasks.

In practice, the AP3 program has focused on securing areas roughly the size of a district (note that traditional structures, such as shuras, may not line up with district boundaries, so they may not exactly mirror districts). The goal of the program is to involve the people in keeping their neighborhoods clear of insurgents once they have been cleared and while they are being held. The program can best be described as a contract among three primary groups:

- Coalition forces (both battle space owners and special forces, who train the guardians);
- The GIRoA, to include the Governor, MOI and the ANP;
- The people of a district

The program has been centered in Wardak. According to the DoD April 2010 report, however, the AP3 “Guardian” force strength was 1,010 out of a planned 1,212.¹⁸ The ethnicity of AP3 members was said to roughly reflect the ethnicity of the districts in which they operate. The current AP3 force is 63 percent Pashtun, 24 percent Tajik, 7 percent Hazar, and 6 percent Sadat.¹⁹

ISAF’s main role in supporting the AP3 was to try to ensure that the district is secure enough so that they will not be overmatched by organized insurgent forces. The GIRoA’s role has been to try to provide both proper administration and oversight of the effort through the MoI and ANP, respectively, and to develop consensus among the key local leaders so that they will not only support the program but also provide reliable manpower for it. The people’s role is, through community and district councils as well as informal structures, to nominate military-aged men (25-45) to serve in the guardian force and to provide popular support to it.

All three sets of players, as well as the NDS, helped in vetting recruits. Special Forces trained and mentored them to ensure they continue to improve and do not become militias. The ANP commander for a province oversaw the program, and the MoI paid them through direct deposit.

The recruitment process was initiated by local elders who selected reliable villagers. The recruits were then vetted by NDS, local and provincial government officials. However, due to capacity limitations, the NDS and U.S. SF (Special Forces) were not able to vet all of the candidates.²⁰

Upon successful screening, the recruits attend a three-week orientation that includes training, drug screening, biometrics upload, and the assignment of a uniform and weapon. AP3 personnel sign a one-year contract. They are issued one AK-47 from the MoI, uniforms from U.S. SF, and are paid \$170. The number of personnel required in each district is determined by the local security commander.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁹ Matthew Lefevre, “Local Defence in Afghanistan,” *Afghan Analysts Network*, March 2010, p. 10.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

Most reports indicate that the training of the initial AP3 class proceeded smoothly and the group was well-received in their home community, but that subsequent classes encountered some glitches. This suggests some familiar lessons about the broader use of local defense forces:

- First, community-based security forces need to be fully supported and vetted by local community leaders; they should be overseen in some form by the ANSF; for the foreseeable future ISAF needs to play a strong advisory and oversight role; and like many other security efforts, success may be catalyzed by linkage to locally-based development initiatives.
- Second, ISAF commanders and Afghan officials at all levels caution against a blanket application of a single AP3 model in all geographic areas. Community-based security forces will only work if they enjoy full legitimacy from their home communities, and their shape and nature may need to vary by area. Furthermore, in some areas, the basic premise of a community-based force linked to official GIRoA structures may founder as a result of the community's strong antipathy toward Kabul.
- Third, it is essential that GIRoA retain approval authority over the formation of community-based security forces, on the principle that the state exercises a monopoly on the legitimate use of force in its territory. Though little known outside the theater, there is already a small proliferation of 'home-grown' forces, including not only AP3, but also the KAU in Uruzgan, and the Helmandi Scouts...and possibly more.

Like all pilot projects, the key question is whether the AP3 can be effectively scaled-up on a broader or national basis. Regional and task force commanders across the theater have actively—and sometimes skeptically—considered the application of AP3 to their battle spaces. This has led to several additional lessons tailored to conditions in Afghanistan:

- First, ISAF HQ, IJC, ANSF and security ministries should take a hard look at options and opportunities to expand AP3 in both political and military terms. This hard look needs to include a clear definition of the requirement for a local force for any given geographic area, clearly assigning training and oversight roles to ANSF and coalition forces respectively, ensuring the result is loyal and does not lead to local tensions and conflicts.
- Second, such forces cannot continue to rely on elite trainers and monitors. They must become forces that the ANSF can shape, train and control. In Wardak province, U.S. SF are playing two key roles—training the ANP trainers, and providing embedded oversight of trained AP3 units, and links to U.S. enablers and fire support. However, U.S. SF is a precious and limited commodity and likely cannot play that role for all AP3 should the program expand significantly. The next pilot, scheduled for Kunduz province, seems not yet to have met these prerequisites—and seems to have taken the RC Commander by surprise.
- Third, the creation and use of AP3 or other militia-like forces must also be based on a coordinated approach developed by regional and local ISAF, ANA, and ANP commanders—working closely with the provincial and district governor where this is possible. AP3 forces should not be imposed, and must be tailored to support all local conditions in ways that do not compete with other elements of the GIRoA, the ANSF, and ISAF forces.
- Fourth, ISAF should also work closely with the ANSF and security ministries to plan the 'way forward' for the AP3, including transition into service in the ANSF or vocational training and transition into civilian jobs.

Community Defense / Local Police

The AP3 program was implemented as an experimental and relatively resource-intensive program. It made enough progress, however, to suggest that similar models could work in selected areas with less ISAF and ANSAF support. Moreover, the deteriorating security situation is virtually forcing local leaders to find some way to build local security. Local militias have independently emerged in many parts of the country. They have already begun to resist the Taliban, and/or already serve the interest of local powerbrokers and tribal leaders. In addition, a number of militias were recruited to provide security during the August 2009 elections, including 12,500 men in 22 provinces recruited by Arif Noorzai, an Afghan politician from Helmand.²¹

The United States encouraged the emergence of some of these militias, and created the Community Defense Initiative (CDI)—or village defense forces—to support and supervise them. These militias were operating in at least 14 different areas in the country as of late 2009.²² The CDI organized the militias mainly through shuras and ran them through jirgas. Small U.S. SF teams deployed to areas where these militias were operating and offered assistance. Thus far, this assistance was light, consisting mainly of food and ammunition.²³ Afghan intelligence officials also played a role in leading the CDI. U.S. officials stress that they are not creating militias, but rather are “trying to reach out to these groups that have organized themselves.”²⁴

Officially, the United States and ISAF did not arm these militias, although the local Afghan government or security forces did in some cases.²⁵ The United States also provided “critical backup when needed, including transportation, communications and medical treatment.”²⁶ The United States has thus far focused on training and defensive deployments of the local militias, although the militias have assisted ANSF and ISAF forces in clearing areas as well.²⁷ The relationship between these militias and the ANSF is unclear, although U.S. Special Forces personnel involved in the initiative report that Afghan Special Forces, once they are trained and equipped, will take over their role in running the CDI.²⁸

According to General Petraeus, the CDI “essentially involves small special forces teams that have members who know the language, culture, and area, and essentially live in the village with the people and seek to empower them to involve them and

²¹ Jon Boone, “US Pours Millions into Anti-Taliban Militias in Afghanistan,” *The Guardian*, November 22, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/22/us-anti-taliban-militias-afghanistan>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Dexter Filkins, “Afghan Militias Battle Taliban with Aid of U.S.,” *New York Times*, November 21, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/22/world/asia/22militias.html?hp=&pagewanted=all>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Carlotta Gall, “Afghans Answering the Call to Fight,” *New York Times*, January 2, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/03/world/asia/03kunduz.html?hp>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Lefevre, “Local Defence in Afghanistan,” p. 21.

empower them in the maintenance of their own security. This is not quite the same as the Sons of Iraq; this is more of a village by village and valley by valley because of the nature of the situation in Afghanistan.”²⁹

The CDI program expanded into the Afghan Local Defense Initiative (ALDI) program in late 2009. It is not clear what, if any, differences existed between the two programs besides the name change. The locations of various Local Defense militias are shown in **Figure 9.15**, although there are likely more militias than shown on this map.³⁰ These militias vary widely in size and structure, and there does not seem to be any standard way to set them up. The official strategy for LDIs bears little resemblance to how many of them are run.³¹

General Petraeus gave such forces even higher priority after taking command of ISAF in July 2010, and obtained President Karzai’s agreement to hire as many as “10,000 community police officers.”³² These forces will be placed under the Afghan Ministry of the Interior and are supposed to work with the Afghan police and Afghan Army. They will evidently have some continued support from U.S. Special Forces and other U.S. units, although with less support per man than the AP3.

This agreement only came after General Petraeus agreed with President Karzai that the program would seek to create lasting support for the government and not simply a force that would provide temporary tactical advantages that left the Afghan government without control or loyalty over such local elements. Recruiting, leadership, and the structure of the force will be tailored to avoid empowering a given tribe or local leader at the expense of others or central government influence. There will be a clear chain of command through the MoI, and it will control or vet leaders, structure, recruiting, and any funding and equipping.

The efforts to shape such programs were far more controversial than the AP3 because they risked becoming a tool for warlords or creating power centers with no ties to the central government. Some analysts feel that such programs risk undoing the work of the 2001 UN effort to dissolve the anti-Taliban militias and incorporate them into the ANSF. According Nader Nadery of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, the CDI “is indeed a matter of concern for us who work to promote the rule of law and protect human rights . . . They would produce a new round of warlords who would fight for resources and positions of power for a long time.”³³

²⁹ David H. Petraeus, radio interview, ABC News Radio, December 14, 2009.

³⁰ Lefevre, “Local Defence in Afghanistan,” p. 15.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Karen DeYoung and Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “Afghan President Karzai Approves Plan for Local Defense Forces,” *Washington Post*, July 15, 2010, p. A1; Alissa J. Rubin, “Afghans to Form Local Forces to Fight Taliban,” *New York Times*, July 14, 2010, p. A1; Alissa J. Rubin, “Afghan Program Adds Local Units to Resist Taliban,” *New York Times*, July 15, 2010, p. A1.

³³ Spencer Ackerman, “Afghan Human Rights Official Criticizes McChrystal ‘Tribes’ Initiative,” *Washington Independent*, December 1, 2009, <http://washingtonindependent.com/69131/afghan-human-rights-official-criticizes-mcchrystal-tribes-initiative>.

GIRoA officials have shown similar concerns and warned that militias can not only form centers of power that become independent of the central government, but they can also cause conflict in the areas they are supposed to protect. Coalition forces hoping to set up local forces often must choose sides in local power struggles. This is particularly problematic in areas with multiple ethnicities and tribes. There have been unconfirmed reports of ALDI forces causing inter- and intra-tribal clashes in several districts.³⁴

These issues have been addressed in U.S. and ISAF plans and in the agreement with President Karzai. An ISAF official stated at the time the agreement was announced that the local forces would be “purely defensive...In some cases, people may bring their own stuff, but part of getting government support is to standardize equipment. They will be armed and equipped and trained to defend their communities....Our position has been to develop a solution that bridge between having nothing and having Afghan National Police, and this program does that...So, it’s a good development and especially so since it has consensus within the Afghan government and the ownership that comes with that.”³⁵ ISAF indicated that other local forces would be “gradually disbanded and reintegrated into a single local police force.”³⁶

Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon spokesman, stated,³⁷

They would not be militias. These would be government-formed, government-paid, government-uniformed local police units that would keep an eye out for bad guys—in their neighborhoods, in their communities—and who would, in turn, work with the Afghan police forces and the Afghan Army to keep them out of their towns...It is a temporary solution to a very real near-term problem.

The risk that such forces will still favor one side in local or tribal rivalries and power struggles is a real one, and it is not clear how many Afghans will support the formation of such forces: “The people were afraid of the commanders, but now they have a choice—they have to choose between the Taliban and the commanders.”³⁸ These concerns seem to have been a reason why Ambassador Eikenberry intervened in late 2009 to “put the brakes” on the ALDI program.³⁹ His intervention, however, appears to have only cut off some USAID aid to the program, which is ISAF run and remained largely unaffected.⁴⁰

General Petraeus found that supporting a somewhat similar program in Iraq had major benefits. Moreover, the real choice is one between an ISAF/GIRoA effort to create

³⁴ Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, *ANSO Quarterly Data Report Q.1 2010*, April 2010, p. 4.

³⁵ Rubin, “Afghans to Form Local Forces to Fight Taliban.”; DeYoung and Chandrasekaran, “Afghan President Karzai Approves Plan for Local Defense Forces.”

³⁶ Rubin, “Afghans to Form Local Forces to Fight Taliban.”

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Gall, “Afghans Answering the Call to Fight.”

³⁹ Greg Jaffe and Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “U.S. Ambassador Puts Brakes on Plan to Utilize Afghan Militias against Taliban,” *Washington Post*, January 22, 2010.

⁴⁰ Lefevre, “Local Defence in Afghanistan,” p. 19.

and encourage such militias, and having them continue to grow without any ties to the ANSF.

The size, role, and location of local militias, personal protection forces, contract security forces, and elements of the ANA and ANP loyal to powerbrokers are major gaps in reporting on the ANSF and the military balance in Afghanistan. It is clear, however, that substantial elements of the ANP are subject to either the influence or control of powerbrokers (or “warlords”), and that many other powerbrokers, local leaders, and contractors have independent security forces or militias. This is a particularly serious problem within the ANP. The scale of such elements within the ANP is unclear, but the problem is serious enough to reflect a major problem in understanding the dynamics of power in Afghanistan, and a reason that critical aspects of reporting on the ANP are fundamentally dishonest. ANP elements that are loyal to local leaders, or their own leaders rather than the central government, need to be clearly identified and not treated as if they were really part of the ANSF that is under the control of the central government.

Creating official local forces is better than unofficial local forces both in terms of loyalty to the government and in dealing with the Taliban. Many tribal groups already have their own forces, while others attempted to create them without outside support and were defeated by the Taliban or their inability to create workable forces without outside support.

As is the case with so much of the war in Afghanistan, it is far better to choose the least bad real-world solution than a more ideal solution based on a goal that can never be achieved.

Locally organized militias have been a feature of a number of successful COIN campaigns, and are a part of COIN doctrine. Indeed, the ALDI program was inspired by the success of the Awakening movement in Iraq. The key factors in determining whether these militias become independent sources of power are how they are supervised and employed and how well they are integrated (and eventually merged) into the official government-run security forces.

Moreover, Geoff Morrell may well be wrong about the temporary nature of this force. It may be years before an effective combination of local police, governance, and a functioning formal justice system are really present in many areas. In the interim, local police may do far more to help the Afghans in many areas than a more formal program whose only substance is a vague fog of conceptual PowerPoints and good intentions.

Afghan Contract Security Personnel

All of these problems are compounded by President Karzai’s directive in August 2010 to abolish the roughly 24,000 to 30,000-man private contract security forces that guard most military and aid convoy and transport movements, as well as many aid

workers and foreign and Afghan facilities. There is good reason to abolish at least some of these forces:⁴¹

- While 52 such companies are legally registered, many factions and groups are not. There are some 23 security forces in Kandahar alone, and some groups are as large as 1,500 men.
- Their competence is mixed at best.
- They are very expensive, add to the high overhead rates of all in-country activity, and often sharply overcharge.
- They are paid far more than the police and other Afghan security forces, and many ANA and ANP personnel leave to join such forces. Changes in the ANSF personnel system require a formal length of service commitment since August 2010, but such arrangements are of very uncertain effectiveness and do not affect older enlistments.
- Other personnel are of low quality and most can be bribed. Many steal from shipments and the contracting group.
- Many are tied to warlords and powerbrokers, with no loyalty to the central government. Some have effectively taken over given districts or transport and roads in given areas.
- Some extort money and services from the local population.
- Most pay bribes to ANP and ANB checkpoints and border crossings and often pay off insurgent groups.
- Fighting between groups for contracts or control in given areas add to the level of violence in Afghanistan.

The fact remains, however, that there simply are far too few ANSF to do the job, and the United States and ISAF lack the manpower to do this relatively low priority security task and perform key missions at the same time. The U.S. military alone hires some 10,000 legal contractors. For all the shortfalls of such private contract forces, many elements of the ANSF are considerably worse and even more vulnerable to intimidation and bribery. Moreover, a SIGAR audit in the spring of 2010 found that only 23 percent of the ANA and 12 percent of the ANP were capable of operating on their own.⁴² As a result, implementing the President's directive, particularly by his deadline of December 2010, could have a major negative impact on ANSF development.⁴³

⁴¹ Jason Thomas, "Making Afghanistan More Dangerous," *New York Times*, August 21, 2010, p. A17; Dexter Filkins and Scott Shane, "Afghan Sees Plan to Ban Private Guards," *New York Times*, August 17, 2010, p. A10.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Thomas, "Making Afghanistan More Dangerous."

Critical Overall Priorities If the ANSF Development Program Is to Work

This analysis raises several recurrent themes in this discussion of ANSF development that affect the entire aid effort in Afghanistan, as well as every aspect of civil-military operations and the *hold* and *build* phases of the new strategy:

Making ISAF a Real Partner

The ANSF cannot be effective in the field or transfer to responsibility for security unless it is made a full partner in every aspect of operations. Every increase in ANSF force quantity and quality must be accompanied by suitable improvements in force quality and in the size and capability of ISAF mentoring and partnering capabilities. As ISAF and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) adjust their command structures, regardless of the specific decisions about command structure, it will be critical to retain both the mentoring and partnering components of ANSF development.

ISAF must achieve far more unity of effort in treating the ANSF as real partners. It cannot win if it pursues the fragmented, stovepiped, and underresourced efforts—and real-world lack of integrated civil-military efforts—that have helped cripple ANSF development in past years. “Unity of effort” has been an awkward cross between a lie and an oxymoron, and many national efforts have acted as if the ANSF were not involved in a real war. This cannot continue if a very real war is to be won.

All the elements of ISAF must begin to work together with all of the elements of the ANSF to create equivalent forces that can conduct combined operations together. This will take time, resources, and patience. ISAF regional command task force commanders must understand, however, that partnering with ANSF forces does not mean simply using them as they are but rather making them effective and treating operations as key real-world aspects of training.

The Need for an Integrated Civil-Military Partnership

The need for integrated civil-military activity will be an enduring one and will affect the ANSF long after its transition to primary responsibility for security. Various elements of the ANSF will have to be involved in forms of armed nation building over a period that may easily last for a decade or more after mid-2011. ISAF and the ANSF will lose the war unless their military successes are matched by a timely and effective civil-military effort in the field. It is not enough for the ANSF to be able to perform its security missions and develop an effective ISAF/U.S./Afghan partnership in security.

A mix of ISAF and ANSF fighting forces can perform the *shape* and *clear* missions and part of the *hold* mission, but if this is all that is accomplished, they will still lose the war to an opponent that can win a battle of political attrition. ISAF, the United States, and the ANSF must work together to provide civil-military action programs while security is being established and make this a key aspect of the *hold* and *build* missions. ISAF and the ANSF cannot wait for adequate civilian capacity to be present in the field and must establish basic services, encourage local leaders, and provide a functioning justice system

immediately. The grim reality is that the Afghan central government is still too corrupt and incapable to take these necessary actions in far too many areas and far too many ways. At the same time, foreign civil aid efforts are far too narrow, far too security-conscious and far too oriented towards talk and planning to serve Afghan needs in the field.

Building the capacity of the civil side of the Afghan government and reducing corruption and the role of powerbrokers will take more time than building the ANSF and may well sharply limit the quality of most elements of the police. If such an effort can be successful at all, it will probably only begin to have full impact in 2014-2016. In the interim, some combination of ISAF and the ANSF must provide at least enough civil services and support to local governance to offer an alternative that is more attractive than the Taliban and takes at least initial steps to hire young men and underpin security with stability. They must also provide sufficient justice and local security, jobs, and progress in areas like roads, electricity, water/irrigation, clinics, and schools to establish lasting security and stability.

Bypassing or countering Afghan corruption will be a key part of this effort. In many cases, however, this will require dramatically new standards of performance by the United States and other national aid donors. There must be a new degree of transparency that shows that aid efforts actually do produce effective and honest results in the field, actually do win broad local support and loyalty, and move toward a true “build” phase.

Corrupt and incapable ISAF and U.S. aid organizations and contractors will need to be removed and blacklisted. Projects that cannot be scaled up to have a meaningful impact, ephemeral good works, fundraising without accountability or validated requirements, and efforts that support national “branding” rather than meeting Afghan needs will need to be ended. There is little point in fixing the efforts that can win the war and not fixing the efforts that will win the people.

The Need for Honesty and Realistic Deadlines

The fact that President Obama has talked about beginning U.S. force reductions in mid-2011, and accelerating transfer of responsibility to the ANSF and Afghan government, cannot be allowed to create unrealistic goals and timeframes. *Nothing about the ANSF development effort to date indicates that it will be ready for large-scale transfer before 2014-2015.*

Sacrificing quality for quantity and rushing the ANSF and GIRoA into transfer before they are ready cannot win the war—particularly when the civil side of GIRoA is likely to remain so weak and the role of Pakistan is so uncertain. U.S. and other ISAF efforts to develop the ANSF must resist pressure from Washington, other capitals, and NATO headquarters to move more quickly than is practical and prudent. It also requires a command ethic that under-promises and over performs, rather than the distorted and dysfunctional command ethic that existed in 2001 and which was pressured into doing just the opposite. It must be clear to all involved in the ANSF development effort that exaggerated progress reports become career killers and not career enhancers.

It will be equally necessary for ISAF, the United States, and other allied nations to be patient in creating the kind of truly integrated civil-military plan needed to implement the rest of President Obama's new strategy. Stovepipes, turf fights, and internal bickering—above all by elements within the State Department—have crippled the effort necessary to create a plan with the depth, detail, and content needed. The Obama administration needs to force real unity of effort—not simply talk about a “whole of government” approach—and do so at every level. At present, the United States is scarcely a model for ISAF or its allies. If anything, the NSC and State Department seem to be as weak in these areas, relative to a rising need, as they have been in the past.

The Need for Transition Planning

Finally, the United States and ISAF need to think in strategic and grand strategic terms and not simply focus on the ANSF or any other element of the war in terms of what, in reality, is tactical expediency. ANSF development is only one element of effective transition planning, but President Obama's creation of a “quasi-deadline” in 2011 has made it the most immediate priority for a level of planning that needs look forward to the day in which Afghanistan assumes most or all of the responsibility for its own stability and security. The United States, ISAF, and UNAMA must concentrate on urgent wartime needs and civil-military programs until the new strategy is tested in the field, and insurgent momentum is decisively reversed, and it is clear that the war can be won.

At the same time, it is clear from this analysis that focusing too much on short-term tactical needs can emphasize ANSF quantity over quality; create a force that is “used up” rather than evolves to the point where it can assume a steadily growing responsibility for security; and can lead to a focus on an approach to “clear, hold, and build” that does not create a structure of Afghan governance capable of surviving without massive outside aid.

Transition planning is not a luxury. The United States and its allies have limited strategic patience, and much of that patience is dependent on the perception that the United States and ISAF have plans and programs that will create effective Afghan forces, governance, and civil-military capabilities to turn insurgent defeats into some form of lasting “victory.”

It is particularly critical that the formal training, the partnering, the force development, and the combat efforts that shape the ANSF are structured in ways that look far beyond 2011 and reflect a coherent – if constantly evolving – plan for the future. This planning should focus on creating not only an enduring and sustainable mix of Afghan forces, but a practical and realistic approach to tying the ANP to a workable mix of formal and informal justice systems. It should consider how the training and support mission will change as Afghan forces gain experience in the field, and the force development shifts away from NTM-A/CSTC-A to making deployed units more effective at every level.

Such planning should look at how the ANSF development interacts with the overall needs of the Afghan government at credible mixes of programs to improve Afghan governance and economic development, and with Afghan self-financing and long-term aid. Such planning cannot succeed if it pursues either impossible levels of

progress or ignores Afghanistan's continuing need for outside aid. Afghanistan will not, however, move towards any form of "end state" that minimizes its need for such outside aid unless transition is given practical priority over short term expediency and is credible to Afghans, as well as to the United States and other members of ISAF.

1. CREATING THE AFGHAN FORCES NEEDED TO WIN

Afghan forces are a key to victory in Afghanistan, and there are good reasons why President Obama made the development of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) one of three critical parts of the new strategy he announced on December 1, 2009:⁴⁴

...huge challenges remain. Afghanistan is not lost, but for several years it has moved backwards. There's no imminent threat of the government being overthrown, but the Taliban has gained momentum. Al Qaeda has not reemerged in Afghanistan in the same numbers as before 9/11, but they retain their safe havens along the border. And our forces lack the full support they need to effectively train and partner with Afghan security forces and better secure the population. Our new commander in Afghanistan—General McChrystal—has reported that the security situation is more serious than he anticipated. In short: The status quo is not sustainable.

... As Commander-in-Chief, I have determined that it is in our vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. After 18 months, our troops will begin to come home. These are the resources that we need to seize the initiative, while building the Afghan capacity that can allow for a responsible transition of our forces out of Afghanistan.

... This burden is not ours alone to bear. This is not just America's war. Since 9/11, al Qaeda's safe havens have been the source of attacks against London and Amman and Bali. The people and governments of both Afghanistan and Pakistan are endangered. And the stakes are even higher within a nuclear-armed Pakistan, because we know that al Qaeda and other extremists seek nuclear weapons, and we have every reason to believe that they would use them.

These facts compel us to act along with our friends and allies. Our overarching goal remains the same: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future.

To meet that goal, we will pursue the following objectives within Afghanistan. We must deny al Qaeda a safe haven. We must reverse the Taliban's momentum and deny it the ability to overthrow the government. And we must strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan's future.

We will meet these objectives in three ways. First, we will pursue a military strategy that will break the Taliban's momentum and increase Afghanistan's capacity over the next 18 months.

The 30,000 additional troops that I'm announcing tonight will deploy in the first part of 2010—the fastest possible pace—so that they can target the insurgency and secure key population centers. They'll increase our ability to train competent Afghan security forces, and to partner with them so that more Afghans can get into the fight. And they will help create the conditions for the United States to transfer responsibility to the Afghans.

⁴⁴ President Barak Obama, “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on the Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan,” *Whitehouse.gov*, December 1, 2009, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan> .

...taken together, these additional American and international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011. Just as we have done in Iraq, we will execute this transition responsibly, taking into account conditions on the ground. We'll continue to advise and assist Afghanistan's security forces to ensure that they can succeed over a prolonged amount of time... But it will be clear to the Afghan government—and, more importantly, to the Afghan people—that they will ultimately be responsible for their own country.

Second, we will work with our partners, the United Nations, and the Afghan people to pursue a more effective civilian strategy, so that the government can take advantage of improved security.

This effort must be based on performance. The days of providing a blank check are over. President Karzai's inauguration speech sent the right message about moving in a new direction. And going forward, we will be clear about what we expect from those who receive our assistance. We'll support Afghan ministries, governors, and local leaders that combat corruption and deliver for the people. We expect those who are ineffective or corrupt to be held accountable. And we will also focus our assistance in areas—such as agriculture—that can make an immediate impact in the lives of the Afghan people.

The people of Afghanistan have endured violence for decades. They've been confronted with occupation—by the Soviet Union, and then by foreign al Qaeda fighters who used Afghan land for their own purposes. So tonight, I want the Afghan people to understand—America seeks an end to this era of war and suffering. We have no interest in occupying your country. We will support efforts by the Afghan government to open the door to those Taliban who abandon violence and respect the human rights of their fellow citizens. And we will seek a partnership with Afghanistan grounded in mutual respect—to isolate those who destroy; to strengthen those who build; to hasten the day when our troops will leave; and to forge a lasting friendship in which America is your partner, and never your patron.

...Third, we will act with the full recognition that our success in Afghanistan is inextricably linked to our partnership with Pakistan. We're in Afghanistan to prevent a cancer from once again spreading through that country. But this same cancer has also taken root in the border region of Pakistan. That's why we need a strategy that works on both sides of the border.

In the past, there have been those in Pakistan who've argued that the struggle against extremism is not their fight, and that Pakistan is better off doing little or seeking accommodation with those who use violence. But in recent years, as innocents have been killed from Karachi to Islamabad, it has become clear that it is the Pakistani people who are the most endangered by extremism. Public opinion has turned. The Pakistani army has waged an offensive in Swat and South Waziristan. And it is quite certain that the United States and Pakistan share a common enemy.

In the past, we too often defined our relationship with Pakistan narrowly. Those days are over. Moving forward, we are committed to a partnership with Pakistan that is built on a foundation of mutual interest, mutual respect, and mutual trust. We will strengthen Pakistan's capacity to target those groups that threaten our countries, and have made it clear that we cannot tolerate a safe haven for terrorists whose location is known and whose intentions are clear. America is also providing substantial resources to support Pakistan's democracy and development. We are the largest international supporter for those Pakistanis displaced by the fighting. And going forward, the Pakistan people must know America will remain a strong supporter of Pakistan's security and prosperity long after the guns have fallen silent, so that the great potential of its people can be unleashed.

These are the three core elements of our strategy: a military effort to create the conditions for a transition; a civilian surge that reinforces positive action; and an effective partnership with Pakistan.

I recognize there are a range of concerns about our approach. So let me briefly address a few of the more prominent arguments that I've heard, and which I take very seriously.

First, there are those who suggest that Afghanistan is another Vietnam. They argue that it cannot be stabilized, and we're better off cutting our losses and rapidly withdrawing. I believe this argument depends on a false reading of history. Unlike Vietnam, we are joined by a broad coalition of 43 nations that recognizes the legitimacy of our action. Unlike Vietnam, we are not facing a broad-based popular insurgency. And most importantly, unlike Vietnam, the American people were viciously attacked from Afghanistan, and remain a target for those same extremists who are plotting along its border. To abandon this area now—and to rely only on efforts against al Qaeda from a distance—would significantly hamper our ability to keep the pressure on al Qaeda, and create an unacceptable risk of additional attacks on our homeland and our allies.

Second, there are those who acknowledge that we can't leave Afghanistan in its current state, but suggest that we go forward with the troops that we already have. But this would simply maintain a status quo in which we muddle through, and permit a slow deterioration of conditions there. It would ultimately prove more costly and prolong our stay in Afghanistan, because we would never be able to generate the conditions needed to train Afghan security forces and give them the space to take over.

Finally, there are those who oppose identifying a time frame for our transition to Afghan responsibility. Indeed, some call for a more dramatic and open-ended escalation of our war effort—one that would commit us to a nation building project of up to a decade. I reject this course because it sets goals that are beyond what can be achieved at a reasonable cost, and what we need to achieve to secure our interests. Furthermore, the absence of a time frame for transition would deny us any sense of urgency in working with the Afghan government. It must be clear that Afghans will have to take responsibility for their security, and that America has no interest in fighting an endless war in Afghanistan.

As President, I refuse to set goals that go beyond our responsibility, our means, or our interests. And I must weigh all of the challenges that our nation faces. I don't have the luxury of committing to just one. Indeed, I'm mindful of the words of President Eisenhower, who—in discussing our national security—said, "Each proposal must be weighed in the light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs."

Implementing the President's Strategy

Like all of the elements of the President's strategy, creating an ANSF with the necessary capabilities presents major challenges and risks. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have made significant advances during the last few years, but their development had low to moderate priority for nearly half a decade. It was not until 2006-2007 that the ANSF began to have meaningful force goals, and adequate ISAF and U.S. aid in developing both its "force quantity" and its "force quality."

Lt. General Caldwell, the current NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan and Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (NTM-A/CSTC-A) (commander, released the following draft commander’s intent statement in early 2010 and visioning of an end state for the ANSF:⁴⁵

NTM-A/CSTC-A is in support of an ANSF-led, enduring system that generates and sustains army, police, air, medical, and logistics capabilities. Afghan ministries are transparent, enduring, and fully capable of executive functions. NTM-A/CSTC-A has established enduring leader development systems that professionalize the force and promote transparency. NTM-A/CSTC-A has reinforced legitimate institutions and set conditions for the continued development of a professional ANSF. NTM-A/CSTC-A has committed its resources efficiently and responsibly.

These are important qualitative goals, but the Afghan government and ISAF have set goals for force expansion as well:

- ANSF Growth and Development
 - Afghan National Police (ANP): 134,000 delivered at Capability Milestone CM-2, balanced against operational requirements
 - Afghan National Army (ANA): 171,600, delivered at CM-2, balanced against operational requirements
 - Afghan National Army Air Force (ANAAF): 5,700 end strength, operating at CM-2, integrated C2 system, balanced against operational requirements; CM-1 by 2016
 - ANSF medical system at CM-3, with growth to CM-1 by 2020
- Systems: Enduring Afghan-operated and -sustained systems (Capability in terms of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF), objective proficiency and other applicable measures)
 - Education & Training at CM-2; Logistics at CM-2; C4I at CM-2; Personnel at CM-2
- Recruiting and Training Commands
 - Afghan National Army Recruiting Command (ANAREC) at CM-2
 - Afghan National Police Recruiting Command (ANPREC) at CM-2
 - Afghan National Army Training Command (ANATC) at CM-2
 - Afghan National Police Training Command (ANPTC) at CM-2
- Infrastructure
 - ANA at CM2:
 - 75 percent in Permanent Facilities
 - 25 percent in Temporary Facilities (for no more than one winter)
 - ANP at CM2:
 - 60 percent in Permanent Facilities
 - 40 percent in Temporary Facilities
- Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA)
 - ONSC coordinating cross-ministerial issues
 - MoD at CM-1
 - MoI at CM-1
- Leader Development
 - Annual attrition goals achieved: ANA 14 percent, ANP 16 percent
 - Non-commissioned Officer (NCO) and Officer positions filled to at least 85 percent
 - Recruiting systems are established to sustain ANSF force levels and enable future growth if required
 - ANA/ANP have achieved 70 percent approval ratings

⁴⁵ NTM-A/CSTC-A (NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan / Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan), January 28, 2010, <http://www.ntm-a.com/>.

- Information Engagement (IE)
 - Ministries and ANSF IE at CM-2
 - Ministries and ANSF IE plan present and effective with objectives met

The end state that ISAF and the Afghan government should seek for the ANSF over the next few years is not a minor issue. President Obama's strategy for Afghanistan is critically dependent upon the transfer of responsibility for Afghan security to the ANSF. His speech announcing this strategy called for the transfer to begin in mid-2011. However, creating the forces needed to bring security and stability is a far more difficult challenge than many realize and poses major challenges that will endure long after 2011.

If the United States, ISAF, and the Afghan government behave as they have in the past, the ANSF may not be able to achieve even its current force goals with the required quality for October 2010, let alone the more ambitious goals for 2011. Critical problems still exist in "force quality" because of a long-standing lack of mentors and partners, equipment, and a lack of the financial support the ANSF needs to grow and become effective. At the same time, "force quantity" is also a major issue. Many experts feel that Afghan forces need to be doubled to implement the new strategy ISAF adopted as a result of the President's speech and largely replace U.S. and ISAF forces by 2014-2016.

Moreover, far more thought also needs to be given to the civil-military roles of the ANSF, and particularly the ANP. As of April 2010, it is unclear that even the most dedicated advocates of a "population-centric" strategy within the U.S. military and ISAF can really define how to implement *clear, hold, and build* in terms of tangible ways to execute and manage the tasks involved. Such efforts are already beginning to become operational on a large-scale basis, but ANSF forces must be ready to support such efforts. This process must also end in "*transition*": a sustainable Afghan force that can take over from the United States and its allies in ISAF, and assume responsibility for both security and enforcing a viable civil justice system.

A successful effort to create effective Afghan forces— and ones that can largely replace the role of U.S. and allied forces—must now overcome a legacy of more than eight years of critical failures in both force development and training and in the broader U.S. effort in Afghanistan. It must now also be shaped as part of an integrated civil-military effort and not treated simply as an exercise in generating more Afghan military and police forces.

Much depends on strategic patience. Trying to expand Afghan forces too quickly, creating forces with inadequate force quality, and decoupling Afghan force development from efforts to deal with the broad weakness in Afghan governance and the Afghan justice system will lose the war. America's politicians, policymakers, and military leaders must accept this reality—and persuade the Afghan government and our allies to act according—or the mission in Afghanistan cannot succeed.

The Strategic Context

This report concentrates on current and future Afghan force developments, rather than past problems or the broader strategic context in which Afghan force development must take place. It is critical to understand, however, that the current Afghan force

development effort has been shaped by eight years of hard-won lessons and bitter strategic mistakes. It was not until 2006-2007 that the ANSF even began to have meaningful force goals, and not until FY 2007 that it began to have adequate ISAF and U.S. funding for developing its “force quantity.” There are still critical shortcomings in trainers, and U.S. and allied forces are only beginning to learn how to effectively partner with either the Afghan Army or its various police elements as a result of guidance that was only issued as recently as the summer of 2009. Despite the additional resources that are now being devoted to ANSF development, increasing ANSF size and capabilities will take years even under optimal conditions.

Accordingly, the ability to create the ANSF still suffers from the heritage of the following U.S. actions during the first years following the collapse of the Taliban in 2002:

- Constantly confusing conceptual plans with successful actions, leaving the initiative to the Taliban and Afghan powerbrokers.
- Attempting to create a centralized state and government without regard to capacity, power structures, ethnic and sectarian differences, or the realities of tribalism and geography. The resulting system placed an impossible burden on the central government and gravely weakened provincial, district, and local government—and also encouraged corruption.
- Creating the conditions for massive corruption at every level of Afghan governance and power structures by flooding in money for aid and security activities without proper planning, management, and audits. Failing to establish controls on the funding of corrupt Afghan officials and officers, as well as powerbrokers—some of whom were linked to or made payments to insurgents.
- An initial failure to plan for meaningful nation building on realistic terms that reflected the capability and needs of the nation involved, compounded by a failure to see the need for effective host country military forces, and to provide the resources and trainers necessary to make those forces possible.
- Near denial of the possibility of a serious insurgency and internal threat before and during the operation to take control of Afghanistan, and during the operation’s immediate aftermath. This was followed by years of understating the growing scale of the threat that lasted until mid-2009.
- Underreacting to every aspect of the rise of the Taliban and other insurgents from 2004 to mid-2009, and constantly setting force goals for the Afghan military and police that failed to meet the needs imposed by a growing threat, and which were then never properly funded, given the right urgency, and supported with the needed advisory personnel and trainers.
- Failing to see the need for Afghan forces that could be effective partners and then transition to responsibility for Afghan security until at least mid-2009. Treating the Afghan Army as a low-grade auxiliary force that was effectively used up in ongoing operations, and leaving the police under armed and trained, through that same critical period.
- Treating the overall police development effort as if Afghanistan, with a different value system, legal heritage, and radically different levels of capacity, could draw on Western models of policing and be modeled on those terms. Ignoring the critical need for paramilitary police and forces that could survive an insurgency, and then effectively using up the limited paramilitary police that were created in combat and deployments without adequate leave and retraining.

- Denying the level of corruption and power broker influence within every element of the ANSF, rather than honestly addressing the problems involved.
- Treating the rule of law effort as a largely theoretical exercise centered around the central government and to be built up over a period of more than a decade in a nation where prompt justice is critical to the social order, has to be active in the field, and is a key test of governance. Ignoring the need to rely on an informal justice system, and allowing the Taliban to take control of the de facto justice system in much of the country by default.
- Decoupling this same rule of law effort from the effort to create effective local police—who were supposed to somehow operate regardless of whether adequate courts and detention facilities existed, and as if the Afghan government had a meaningful or effective presence relative to powerbrokers and insurgents.
- Creating a counternarcotics campaign which effectively drove narcotics production into the areas dominated by the insurgents—and where narcotics help finance the insurgency—while leaving narco-trafficking and processing largely untouched in key parts of the rest of the country where they served as yet another source of corruption and stimulated the growth of powerbrokers.
- Taking until 2009 to see the need for truly integrated civil-military operations directed at what became a major national insurgency, and reacting to the fact that ANSF development cannot be decoupled from the successful development of Afghan civil government capacity and integrity.

It is striking that each of these mistakes was made in some form in Iraq, and many were made in Vietnam. It is important to remember that they did far more than critically delay and damage the development of the ANSF. They empowered the resurgence of what began as a weak and incapable Taliban, helped to cripple the overall development of the Afghan government, and brought the United States and its allies to a point where they may still lose a war they had once won.

It is also clear from the scale and nature of these mistakes that primary responsibility does not lie with the United States and ISAF efforts in the field. It lies at the highest policy levels in Washington. The key mistakes were made at the strategic level—driven in part by a focus on Iraq and very real limits to the resources the United States could bring to the war. The key choices were made by Presidents, Secretaries of State, Secretaries of Defense, and National Security Advisors and not by those directly leading the training effort in Afghanistan, or senior commanders and diplomats. In fact, previous Ambassadors and commanders in the field made major efforts to correct these, and the U.S. and allied training and force generation efforts made progress in spite of pressure to accept unrealistic goals and exaggerate success.

The Bitter Lessons of Two Wars' Worth of Mistakes

Each such mistake is both a lesson for the future and a warning that that some of the most critical steps in force development have nothing to do with training methods or the shape of the particular forces involved. Force development cannot succeed against a serious enemy except in the context of an effective overall strategy. It cannot succeed without treating host country forces as real partners, and without a plan for transition to host country responsibility for security. It cannot succeed when force development is linked to a matching civil effort to provide effective governance and all of the elements of a functioning justice system.

Like Iraq, Afghanistan is a demonstration that major operations in weak or broken states must include plans for sustained efforts that amount to armed nation building and that denying this reality is an act of almost criminal neglect. So is failing to react quickly and decisively to the emergence of an insurgent or major extremist threat, and failing to properly fund and support the development of governance at the central, regional and local levels. Allowing massive waste and corruption in the aid and contracting effort will breed massive corruption and power brokering in the host country, undermine or destroy the justice system and security forces, and deprive the government of popular support.

Afghanistan has also shown that there are two further lessons that we must keep firmly in mind in evaluating force development:

- Creating strong host country security forces will be a critical and urgent need in many future U.S. military operations. Treating those forces as true partners should begin the moment they have minimal capability, and host country forces should not be overstretched and used up, but rather made a base for transition to host country responsibility for security. It should be matched by efforts that ensure that capable civil servants and technocrats are retained or created/recruited on the civil side. A focus on democracy, constitutions, and elections decoupled from security and the capability to govern is a recipe for failure.
- A military focus on tactical operations, rather than the security of the population empowers any insurgents and extremist, and deprive most tactical victories of strategic meaning. A civil focus on transforming a broken or failed state into Western models of democracy, rule of law, and human rights ignores the realities of all three sets of values, and further empowers insurgents and extremists. Post conflict reconstruction can only begin when the conflict has truly ended, and this can only occur when integrated and successful civil-military operations have brought lasting security and stability.

The Broader Challenges for the Future

The war will be lost if the United States, our allies, and ISAF do not learn and *act upon* these lessons in developing the ANSF. It will be lost if efforts to meet political deadlines try to rush ANSF development beyond what is possible, or in ways that do not create strong, growing cadres and forces to take over responsibility for security. Winning in ways that use up the ANSF and emphasize hollow quantity over needed quantity will make any tactical gains during the next few years largely meaningless and push the United States and its allies out of the war. The same will be true if the United States and its allies deny the need for enduring aid efforts, do not carefully phase all force reductions, and continue a major advisory effort. It will be true if the ANSF effort is successful but decoupled from effective civil governance and popular support. Victory requires armed nation building and not simply successful force development.

The U.S. and ISAF force development efforts actually in Afghanistan now seem to recognize these realities. Both face serious pushback from some policymakers in the United States and allies, however, and everyone involved in developing the ANSF—Afghan, American, and ISAF—must now resist the past tendency to claim false progress, exaggerate combat capability, downplay the seriousness of key problems, and rush towards impractical deadlines. It will be far better to under-promise and over-deliver than to repeat the mistakes made during 2002-2008 or in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Iraq. General Petraeus has warned that security force training is similar to “building the world’s largest

aircraft while in flight and while being shot at.”⁴⁶ This is a warning that strategic patience is not a luxury; it is the only way to win.

The Race for Quality and Quantity

The key issue is whether policymakers and politicians will accept the reality that the force development effort is a race to improve both force quantity and force quality, and a race where priority must be given to quality. Forces must become large enough and capable enough to do the job or the strategy will fail. Major increases must take place in the ANSF if they are to become able to provide a total mix of ISAF and ANSF large enough to implement a population-oriented strategy, and “shape, clear, hold, build, and transfer.” It is all too clear that the Allied forces in ISAF will not make significant further increases and some will leave in 2011. It is equally clear that any further effort to make major increases in U.S. troops will be politically difficult—if not impossible. Larger and more effective Afghan forces are critical to providing security and stability in a country where civil Afghan capacity will lag behind the military and cannot operate without ANSF protection.

However, increases in ANSF numbers will be meaningless without increasing ANSF quality, and building quality takes time, mentoring, and experience. The statement that “numbers create a quality of their own” is true, but this is scarcely a recipe for success. Counterinsurgency history has shown again and again that low quality large forces are defeated by much smaller high quality forces, and that one of the best ways to lose a counterinsurgency campaign is to alienate the people with corrupt forces and/or forces that cannot protect them. The kind of “quality” that sheer numbers create is proven way of losing wars, with thousands of years of historical examples to warn that such an approach is a recipe for failure.

Dealing with Key Shortcomings

The progress reports coming from ISAF and NTM-A/CSTC-A show that much is already being done, but the following key shortcomings still cripple the ANSF and will take years to correct:

- ISAF efforts that lacked unity of command, and the ability to flexibly apportion both ANSF and ISAF forces across the battle space;
- Failure to make the ANSF a full partner with the ISAF and to lay the groundwork for transfer of lead security responsibility;
- Lack of effective coordination among the elements of the ANSF.
- A lack of capability and willingness on the part of the government of Afghanistan to honestly and efficiently develop and deploy the security forces.
- Unwillingness among various elements of ISAF and member countries to directly confront problems with corruption, powerbrokers, criminal elements, and insurgent influence within the Afghan government, and within the leadership of various elements of the ANSF.

⁴⁶ "Petraeus Blames Bookkeeping for Missing Weapons," *Stars and Stripes*.

- Setting inadequate force goals and force expansion plans that led to a lack of sufficient capacity and capability of all types of ANSF, across the theater;
- Lack of clear near-term priorities and timelines for developing the capacity and capabilities of the ANSF required for the current fight extend beyond the ‘near-term’ of 12-24 months;
- Lack of longer-term plans to expand and fund/sustain the ANSF for the length of the entire campaign and transition to taking responsibility for giving Afghanistan lasting security and stability;
- Sustained mismatch between the force goals and the resources necessary to implement them, including funding and the provision of adequate trainers, mentors, and partners. Ongoing problems growing out of past failures to set the proper goals for ANSF expansion, to provide adequate numbers of mentors and partners, and to fund the level of effort required;
- Failure to understand and properly audit and survey the motivation of ANSF forces by force element to understand recruiting, performance, motivation, and retention problems. Failure to properly assess the levels of pay, privileges, leave, medical benefits, death and disability benefits, facilities and equipment. This is necessary to create effective forces on a sustained basis and compete with the Taliban and other insurgents and to offset the pressure from powerbrokers, narcotraffickers, and other sources of corruption;
- A series of major shifts in the training effort for the ANP involving repeated changes of mission and policing concepts coupled to a failure to prepare police for the reality of counterinsurgency and the Taliban threat and a failure to tie police development to the creation of a practical approach to the rule of law that could provide a functioning mix of formal, informal, and prompt justice; and
- A focus on creating large numbers of kandaks (battalions) in the ANA with emphasis on quantity over quality, and formal training without effective mentoring and partnering of newly created units; failure to understand that newly formed units require extended training at the whole unit level, and that extended mentoring and partnering of deployed units is critical, or formal training fails to achieve its goals.

Moreover, this effort to improve both ANSF quality and quantity must be accomplished in ways that not only help defeat the Taliban but create an enduring mix of Afghan forces that can take over responsibility for most of the security and stability mission after the next three to five years. This, in turn, requires the United States and its allies to provide the necessary resources long after 2001, and ensure that real progress takes place in ways that are assessed with ruthless honesty and without false claims and exaggeration. Given their past failures, these are not minor risks.

The Uncertain Race to 2011

This does not mean that the Afghans should be excused from taking full responsibility for ANSF development over time. It does mean that the United States must take responsibility for years in which it failed to act as if Afghanistan faced a serious and growing insurgency and for its past under-resourcing of every aspect of the war in ways that allowed the insurgents to take the initiative. The United States cannot succeed by ignoring the fact that far too many of the failures in today’s ANSF are the product of a critical half-decade in which the White House, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) cut back on requests from U.S.

commanders and ambassadors and essentially had no meaningful strategy for Afghanistan.

Racing to an artificial deadline has its costs. The present ANSF force goals for 2011 essentially attempt to rush plans forward by two years in spite of these failings. Even where they meet the goals for force numbers, they may well not provide the force quality that is needed or a force that can endure under the strains it faces and provide a viable base for transition to Afghan responsibility for security. The heritage of eight years of inadequate resources, massive shortfalls in trainers and mentors, failing to set the right force development goals, and false progress reports cannot be overcome by 2011. The United States needs time to work with other ISAF nations to correct these problems and resource shortfalls in the training, mentoring, and partnering effort. At a minimum, the United States must be ready to fully support and resource the new plans NTM-A/CSTC-A have developed to accelerate current ANSF force expansion plans. This does not mean setting an open-ended deadline for Afghan force development, but it is far better to proceed at a pace that may require one or two extra years than to rush forward and fail.

The problems resulting from years of under-resourcing and rushed timelines were on vivid display in eastern Afghanistan in August 2010. Independent operations by the ANA are rare, and the August 4 offensive into the town of Bad Pakh in Laghman Province was supposed to demonstrate the ANA's new abilities to operate independently.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the 1st Brigade, 201st Army Corps, was ambushed, taking heavy casualties and requiring extensive ISAF support. The battle illustrated many of the major problems highlighted in this book.

Details of the operation were leaked beforehand, allowing the Taliban to ambush the main ANA force. While the source of the leak remains unknown, the high levels of corruption in the ANA make such leaks almost inevitable. The ANA's poor communication capabilities were also evident, as 201st Corp commanders at one point lost contact with the 1st Brigade altogether. Although exact numbers remain unclear, several ANA Ford trucks were destroyed by the Taliban, highlighting the ANA's almost complete lack of armored vehicles.⁴⁸ While there were unconfirmed reports of foreign and/or Al Qaida forces aiding the Taliban during the battle, an ANA force of this size should not have been defeated so easily.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ahmad Waheed and Bill Roggio, "Taliban, al Qaeda Forces Repel Afghan Army Assault in Eastern Afghanistan," *Long War Journal*, August 13, 2010, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/08/taliban_al_qaeda_for.php.

⁴⁸ Rod Nordland, "Showcase Afghan Army Mission Turns into Debacle," *New York Times*, August 12, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/13/world/asia/13afghan.html?pagewanted=1>.

⁴⁹ Waheed and Roggio, "Taliban, al Qaeda Forces Repel Afghan Army Assault in Eastern Afghanistan"; Katy Gannon, "Foreigners boost insurgency in eastern Afghanistan," Associated Press, August 12, 2010, http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hUJ9_KjyhWELUDVIKHlzU89ATV5gD9HI2DKG0.

Force Goals for 2012–2016 and Beyond

In any case, the race will scarcely be over in 2011. NTM-A/CSTC-A intends to establish the groundwork for further major expansions of the ANA and ANP by 2012–2016. Lt Gen Caldwell provided more details on these expansion plans in January 2010 and announced that the ANA would grow to 171,600 by October 2011, with the police growing to 134,000.⁵⁰ NTM-A/CSTC-A later added that there were tentative plans for the ANA to grow to 240,000 by 2013. It also stated that the ANP was at an authorized strength of 94,958 in December 2010, and there were tentative plans for it to grow to 160,000 by 2013. These plans would raise total ANSF strength from 191,969 in December 2010 to 305,600 by October 2011 and to 400,000 by 2013, although early success in the war could make full implementation of such plans unnecessary.⁵¹

The United States and ISAF must do what they can to meet such goals but they must also take the lead in ensuring that these force expansion efforts do not race beyond Afghan and U.S./ISAF capabilities. Expediency cannot be allowed to put half-ready and unstable ANSF units in the field. It cannot be allowed to push force expansion efforts faster than ANSF elements can absorb them or the ISAF can provide fully qualified trainers, mentors, and partner units and the proper mix of equipment, facilities, enablers, and sustainability. Quality will often be more important than quantity, and enduring ANSF capability far more important than generating large initial force strengths.

The United States and ISAF also cannot afford to ignore the impact of Afghan cultural needs, regional and ethnic differences, family and tribal structures, and the real world “friction” that affects force development. Slogans and rhetoric about ideological goals, leadership, and morale cannot be allowed to lead the force development effort to ignore Afghan material realities: problems in pay, corruption, and promotion; inadequate facilities and equipment; poor medical care; overstretching or over-committing force elements; problems in supporting families; vulnerability to insurgent infiltration and threats; and a lack of meaningful compensation for death and disability. These factors have a far greater affect on ANSF development than ideology and nationalism, which ISAF trainers mistakenly tend to focus on.

Focusing on Mentoring and Partnering in the Field, Rather Than Formal Training, in Meeting These Goals

Many experts feel that improvements are needed in the training base that emphasize training at the kandak (battalion) and full unit levels before new units go out into the field. Similar improvements proved to be beneficial in Iraq, and while they could make the training effort longer—not shorter—they pay off the moment units become active in the field. At the same time, no element of the ANSF can be trained and thrust into independent operations without adequate mentors and partners.

⁵⁰ Nordland, “U.S. Approves Training to Expand Afghan Army.”

⁵¹ Background briefing, December 11, 2009.

It is even more important, however, that the training effort is honest and transparent. NATO-ISAF trainers and mentors must be far more honest in their assessments of the ANSF. The old Capability Milestone (CM) definition of “in the lead” was often little more than a dishonest joke. It is not clear whether the new Commanders Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT) system’s definitions are any more realistic. This is partially a result of trainers identifying with “their” Afghans and inflating ratings, but it is also the result of spin. There is immense pressure on the training system to perform quickly and capably, and the temptation is strong to inflate ANSF ratings in order to demonstrate progress and to please superiors.

These problems are compounded by rating units more on the resources they have available, and on the extent to which personnel have gone through formal training, than on the basis of sustained performance in combat or in their actual mission. The ANSF cannot be allowed to repeat the mistakes of Iraq and Vietnam, wherein units with supposedly high effectiveness ratings were sent into combat only to fail.

The April 2010 version of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) quarterly report on Afghanistan identified five areas of concern within the CM system: overall reliability of the system, measurements and validation, analysis and reporting, challenges facing assessment efforts, and systematic ANSF deficiencies undermining efforts to develop unit capability.⁵² It is not yet clear whether the new CUAT assessment system fixes these deficiencies.

The key to success, however, does not lie in improving the quality of the training in training centers—important as that is. It lies in improving the quality of follow-on partnering, mentoring, support, and enablers once new Afghan forces enter service. This requires ongoing, expert effort and a true commitment to creating partners and gradually placing them in the lead. Creating effective combat units will pose particularly serious challenges.

More realistic partnering efforts are needed at every level, but they are proving to be exceptionally important in the field in shaking out new units, giving them continuity of effective leadership, dealing with internal tensions and retention problems, and helping them overcome the pressures of corruption and powerbrokers. Such efforts take time and require careful attention to continuity at the embedded training/mentoring effort. Partnering and the creation of effective units in the field is an exercise in sustained human relationships, and short tours and rapid changes in U.S. and ISAF trainers can be as crippling as the assumption that training is more critical than mentoring and partnering making the ANSF an effective part of civil-military operations.

Dealing with the Fact That This Is a “Resource to Experiment” and Not a “Troop to Task” Ratio

It is also important to accept the experimental nature of much of the activity required. Every aspect of *clear, hold, and build* is an experiment in the field. It often takes place under combat conditions and will require help in preparing ANSF elements to go from a

⁵² SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 2010, p. 53.

combat ethos to one of effective civil-military relations. Much of this effort will be tied to progress in the availability of improvements in Afghan governance, the creation of the other elements of a justice system, and putting effective and honest aid efforts into the field. This is easy to call for in general terms, but it is unclear that even the most dedicated advocates of a population-centric strategy within the U.S. military and ISAF can fully define how best to implement *clear, hold, and build* in tangible ways that execute and manage the tasks involved and utilize valid measures of effectiveness. It is far more likely that as such efforts become operational on a large-scale basis, developing the best approach will take until 2014-2015.

Partnering at the military level will require a matching level of partnering at the civil and justice levels. The Afghan military, and especially the Afghan police, cannot operate in vacuum. Finding the right approach requires integrated civil-military operations, and matching progress in others. President Obama and his adviser may have said that the United States is not involved in “nation building” in Afghanistan. They lied.

The United States should not make a continuing commitment to the impossible goals set in overambitious concepts and plans for nation building like the Afghan National compact and Afghan Development Plans. The fact is, however, that any victory in Afghanistan must involve mixes of civil-military activity that add up to armed nation building and the ANSF must play a critical role in the civil aspects of “hold” and “build” and in providing enduring security and stability once “transfer” takes place. This civil-military aspect of ANSF operations will require enduring U.S. and outside aid that funds most ANSF development and operations as long as a major threat remains, as well as similar U.S. aid in developing Afghan governance and enough economic activity and growth to bring suitable levels of employment and economic security. This is “nation building” and efforts to deny it are semantic exercises in obfuscation and dishonesty.

Success in the ANSF development program is inevitably linked to progress in governance. An effective ANSF requires effective Afghan governance. Furthermore, the ANSF cannot function as an effective institution unless there is an effective Afghan government, and the United States and its allies help develop the capacity of the Afghan government at the central, provincial, district and local levels. This is vital during the “hold” and “build” phases of operations, and it is vital to allowing the police development effort to support the creation of a functional mix of formal and informal justice systems.

At the same time, the pace of ANSF development must be linked to Afghan capacity at the Ministerial level and efforts to reduce corruption. The United States must help the Afghan government both to develop the necessary capabilities to plan and manage security within the Defense, Interior, and Finance Ministries. It must help the leadership of every element of the ANSF deal with the problems of corruption, powerbrokers, narco-traffickers, and Taliban infiltration—as well as with the problems of ethnic and sectarian pressures and tensions, in addition to tribalism. No ANSF effort can succeed that does not address the problem of nation building within the Afghan security structure.

As the operation in Marjah and plans for Kandahar make all too clear, the United States and its ISAF allies already faces these issues at every level of command and operations.

In doing so, they must not downplay the number of times that “optimism” and exaggerated declarations of success have hurt U.S. efforts in the past.⁵³

No Chance of a Second Try: Key Shortcomings that Must Be Overcome

Getting it right is particularly important because there is no time to waste and there will be no political support for a second try. Assessments by ISAF intelligence show that the insurgency has steadily gained ground for the half decade before the spring of 2010, and the war has reached the point of crisis. The Afghan government, ISAF, and the United States cannot win—even in the limited sense of giving Afghanistan reasonable stability and security and ensuring it is not a haven for international terrorist movements—unless this situation changes radically and immediately.

An effective ANSF may only be one of the elements of victory, but placing ANSF development on the right track is critical. It also requires immediate decisions and resources to correct the following shortcomings:

- Failing to give ISAF efforts unity of command, and lack of an ability to flexibly apportion both ANSF and ISAF forces across the battle space;
- Failure to make the ANSF a full partner with the ISAF and to lay the groundwork for transfer of lead security responsibility; and
- Lack of effective coordination among the elements of the ANSF.
- Lack of capability and willingness on the part of the government of Afghanistan to honestly and efficiently develop and deploy the security forces;
- Unwillingness among various elements of ISAF and member countries to directly confront problems with corruption, powerbrokers, criminal elements, and insurgent influence within the Afghan government, and within the leadership of various elements of the ANSF.
- Setting inadequate force goals and force expansion plans that led to a lack of sufficient capacity and capability of all types of ANSF across the theater;
- Lack of clear near-term priorities and timelines for developing the capacity and capabilities of the ANSF required for the current fight;
- Lack of longer term plans to expand and fund/sustain the ANSF for the length of the entire campaign, and help Afghanistan achieve lasting security and stability.
- Sustained mismatch between the force goals that were set and the resources necessary to implement them, including funding and the provision of adequate trainers, mentors, and partners. Ongoing problems growing out of past failures to set the proper goals for ANSF expansion, to provide adequate numbers of mentors and partners, and to fund the level of effort required.
- Failure to understand and properly audit and survey, the motivation of ANSF forces by force element to understand recruiting, performance, motivation, and retention problems. Failure to properly assess the levels of pay, privileges, leave, medical benefits, death and disability benefits,

⁵³ See DOD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*.

facilities and equipment necessary to create effective forces on a sustained basis and compete with the Taliban and other insurgents and the pressure from powerbrokers, narcotraffickers, and other sources of corruption.

- Series of major shifts in the training effort for the ANP involving repeated changes of mission and policing concepts coupled to a failure to prepare police for the reality of counterinsurgency and the Taliban threat, and to tie police development to the creation of a practical approach to the rule of law that could provide a functioning mix of formal, informal, and prompt justice.
- A focus on creating large numbers of kandaks (battalions) in the ANA with emphasis on quantity over quality, and formal training without effective mentoring and partnering of newly created units; failure to understand that newly formed units require extended training at the whole unit level, and that extended mentoring and partnering of deployed units is critical, or formal training fails to achieve its goals.

2. PROPERLY RESOURCING AND LEADING THE FORCE DEVELOPMENT EFFORT

No effort can succeed without the proper resources and this will be particularly true of the Afghan force development effort. The United States bears a large share of the responsibility for many of the past failures in ANSF development. The United States took more than half a decade to fund ANSF development seriously, then funded it erratically, and also failed to provide the proper numbers of trainers, mentors, and partners. U.S. critics of today's ANSF should look carefully at the data in **Figure 2.1**. The United States failed to make creating effective Afghan forces a serious goal until FY 2007, and the lead times in using this funding meant it only began to have a full impact in mid to late CY 2008. Furthermore, a massive trainer shortage continues to this day, and is highly unlikely to shrink in the near term.

Providing Adequate Resources

As **Figure 2.1** shows, the United States then failed to fund the level of post-2007 effort necessary to sustain a major force expansion. According to the Department of Defense, FY2008 funding levels totaled \$2.75 billion, including \$1.7 billion for the ANA, \$964 million for the ANP, and \$9.6 million for detainee operations. The total dropped to \$2 billion in FY 2009, although the ANA force goal was being raised to 134,000.⁵⁴

The results have been costly in dollars and in blood. The United States has found itself making massive expenditures it might well have avoided if it had taken ANSF development seriously in the first place. As has been noted by the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction,⁵⁵

The FY 2010 DoD Appropriations Act—signed by the U.S. President on December 19, 2009—provides more than \$6.56 billion for ASFF [the Afghan Security Forces Fund]. This brings the cumulative total funding for ASFF to \$25.23 billion—approximately 49.5% of total U.S. reconstruction assistance in Afghanistan. As of December 31, 2009, DD reported that \$18.67 billion has been made available, of which more than \$17.76 billion had been obligated, and almost \$17.55 billion disbursed . . .

From September 30 to December 31, 2009, DOD obligated approximately \$460.06 million and disbursed almost \$970.49 million to support ANSF initiatives.

. . . As of December 31, 2009, almost \$17.55 billion had been disbursed. Of this amount, more than \$11.47 billion (65.4%) was disbursed for the ANA and more than \$6.00 billion (34.2%) for the ANP; the remaining \$0.07 billion (0.42%) was directed toward other related activities.

. . . Most of the funds for the ANA were disbursed for Equipment and Transportation (more

⁵⁴ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, January 2009, p. 34.

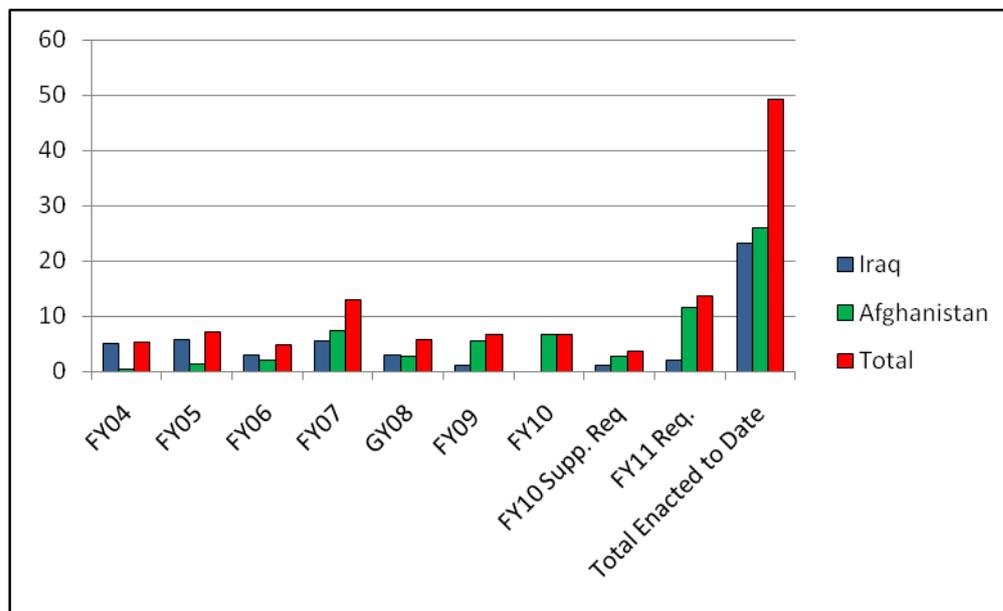
⁵⁵ SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 2010, pp. 46-47.

than \$4.95 billion), followed by Sustainment activities (more than \$2.99 billion). Most of the funds for the ANP were disbursed for Sustainment activities (almost \$1.68 billion), followed by Infrastructure initiatives (more than \$1.59 billion) . . .

Despite the urgent need for adequate resources to fund the growing ANSF, the long-term costs of sustaining the ANSF must be taken into account. As seen in **Figure 2.2**, the Afghan government will not be able to fund its own security forces for years to come. According to SIGAR, spending on security forces alone will likely exceed total GIROA domestic revenue collection the foreseeable future.⁵⁶

A comparison of **Figure 2.1** and **Figure 2.3** shows that the United States and its allies also failed to set adequate ANSF force goals through early CY 2009—although significant improvements began to take place after early CY 2008.

Figure 2.1: Part One, No Real Funding Until FY 2007—Congressional Research Service Estimate of Force Development Costs



	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY10 SuppReq	FY11 Req	Cum FY01-FY09
Iraq	5	5.7	3.0	5.5	3.0	1.1	0	1.0	2.0	23.3
Afghani stan	0.3	1.3	1.9	7.4	2.8	5.6	6.6	2.6	11.6	25.9
Total	5.3	7.0	4.9	12.9	5.8	6.6	6.6	3.6	13.6	49.1

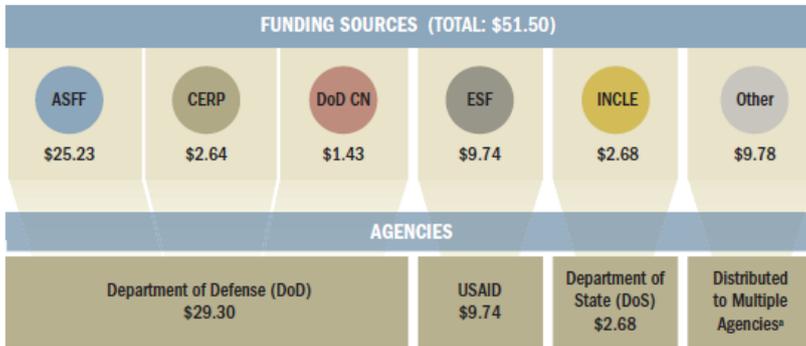
**Note: Value of (1) equals one billion dollars
Figures rounded.*

Source: Adapted by the author from data provided by Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Afghanistan, Iraq and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, Congressional Research Service (RL33110), July 16, 2010, p. 24.

⁵⁶ Ibid., July 30, 2010, p. 92.

Figure 2.1: Part Two, No Real Funding Until FY 2007

U.S. FUNDS SUPPORTING AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS (\$ BILLIONS)



ASFF: Afghanistan Security Forces Fund

CERP: Commander's Emergency Response Program

DoD CN: DoD Drug Interdiction and Counter-Drug Activities

ESF: Economic Support Fund

INCLE: International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement

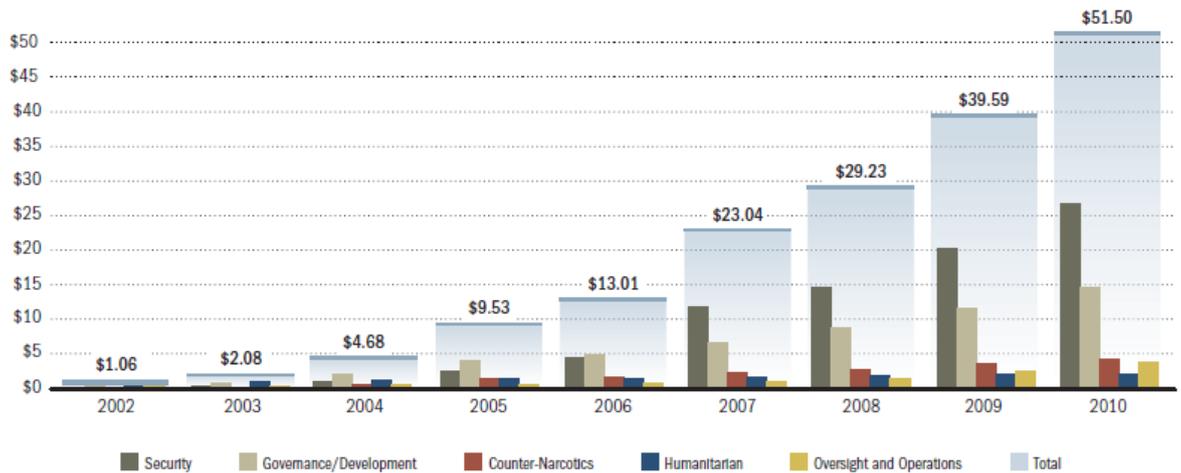
Other: Other Funding

Notes: Numbers affected by rounding. USAID data is as of 3/31/2010, because updates were unavailable at the time this report went to press.

a. Multiple agencies include DoJ, DoS, USAID, Treasury, and USDA.

Sources: DoD, responses to SIGAR data call 7/14/2010, 7/13/2010, 10/14/2009, and 10/1/2009; FY 2010 Defense Explanatory Statement; DoS, responses to SIGAR data call, 7/13/2010 and 7/12/2010; Treasury, response to SIGAR data call, 7/13/2010; OMB, response to SIGAR data call, 4/19/2010; USAID, responses to SIGAR data call, 1/15/2010, 1/8/2010, and 10/9/2009; DoJ, response to SIGAR data call, 7/7/2009; USDA, response to SIGAR data call, 4/2009.

CUMULATIVE APPROPRIATIONS BY FUNDING CATEGORY, AS OF JUNE 30, 2010 (\$ BILLIONS)



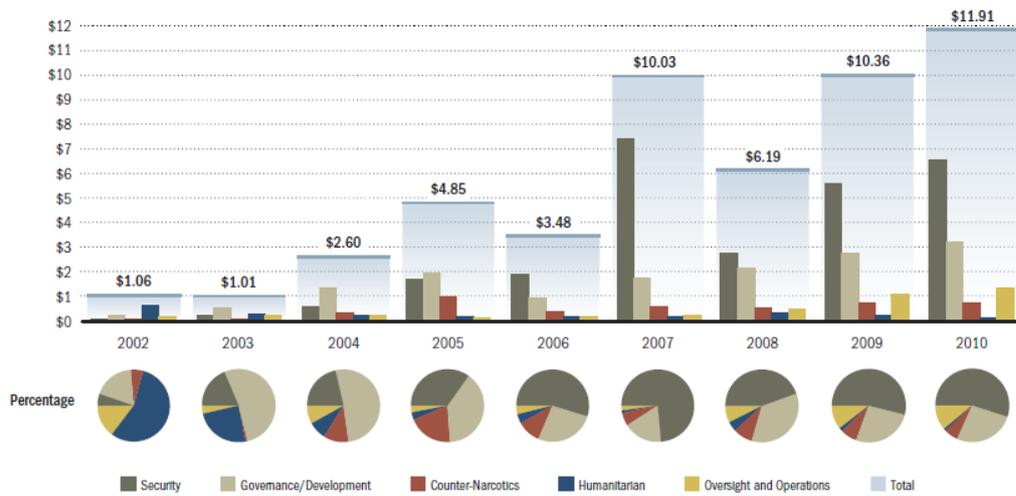
Note: Numbers affected by rounding.

Sources: DoD, responses to SIGAR data call 7/14/2010, 7/13/2010, 10/14/2009, and 10/1/2009; FY 2010 Defense Explanatory Statement; DoS, responses to SIGAR data call, 7/13/2010 and 7/12/2010; Treasury, response to SIGAR data call, 7/13/2010; OMB, response to SIGAR data call, 4/19/2010; USAID, responses to SIGAR data call, 1/15/2010, 1/8/2010, and 10/9/2009; DoJ, response to SIGAR data call, 7/7/2009; USDA, response to SIGAR data call, 4/2009.

(continued next page)

Figure 2.1, Part Two, continued:

APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR, AMOUNT, AND PERCENTAGE (\$ BILLIONS)



Note: Numbers affected by rounding.

Sources: DoD, responses to SIGAR data call, 7/14/2010, 7/13/2010, 10/14/2009, and 10/1/2009; FY 2010 Defense Explanatory Statement; DoS, responses to SIGAR data call, 7/13/2010 and 7/12/2010; Treasury, response to SIGAR data call, 7/13/2010; OMB, response to SIGAR data call, 4/19/2010; USNIID, responses to SIGAR data call, 1/15/2010, 1/8/2010, and 10/9/2009; DoJ, response to SIGAR data call, 7/7/2009; USDA, response to SIGAR data call, 4/2009.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the U.S. Congress*, July 30, 2010, pp. 41-43.

Figure 2.2: Projected ANSF Expenditures, 2008/09–2023/24 and Estimated Domestic Revenue Collection, 2006/7–2009/10

PROJECTED ANSF EXPENDITURES, 2008/09–2023/24				
	2008/09^a	2013/14	2018/19	2023/24
Expenditures by Security Force (\$ BILLIONS)				
ANA ^b	\$3.2	\$3.8	\$5.0	\$6.5
ANP ^c	\$1.5	\$1.7	\$2.1	\$2.7
Total	\$4.7	\$5.5	\$7.1	\$9.2
Expenditures Relative to Revenues (PERCENT)				
ANSF Expenditures as a Share of Projected GIROA Domestic Revenues	449%	270%	195%	154%

Notes: Numbers affected by rounding. Includes operating and investment expenditures.

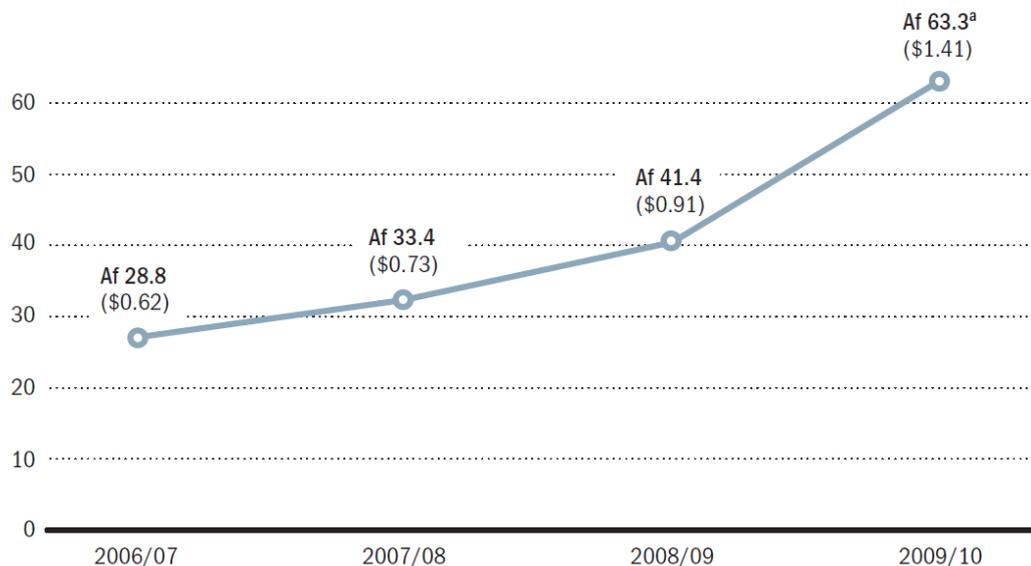
a. Estimated actual.

b. World Bank Manpower Level Assumptions: ANA strength increases to 240,000 by 2012/13; ANP strength increases to 160,000 by 2013/14. These differ from the troop levels agreed to at the January 2010 London Conference, which were 171,600 for the ANA and 134,000 for the ANP by October 2011.

c. Macroeconomic assumptions: Afghanistan's long-term GDP growth rate averages 6% annually; inflation decreases to 3% in 2012/13 and beyond; GIROA domestic revenue rises to 13% of GDP by 2028/29.

Sources: World Bank/DfID, "Afghanistan Public Expenditure Review 2010: Security Sector," pp. 23–24; DoD, "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," 4/2010, pp. 104, 115.

ESTIMATED DOMESTIC REVENUE COLLECTION, 2006/07–2009/10 (Af BILLIONS, \$ BILLIONS)



Notes: Figures are preliminary estimates. Af 45 = \$1.

a. Projected figure, as of 4/10/2010.

Sources: Ministry of Finance; Da Afghanistan Bank.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010, pp. 92–93.

The Trainer Shortfall

A massive shortfall in qualified trainers has also retarded the growth of the ANSF, as seen in **Figure 2.4**. While ANSF development has recently received much better funding and financial support, the shortfall in qualified trainers has not gone away, and will likely worsen in the years to come. The persistent shortfall in training personnel has been one of the biggest stumbling blocks to successful ANSF growth since 2003. The most significant shortfall is in specialist trainers, as seen in **Figure 2.5**. These personnel train Afghans in the many specialized skills needed to make the ANSF independent. Only 9 skilled trainers (1.1 percent of the requirement) are now in place to meet a near term requirement for 819, and 442 (54 percent) of the total have not even been pledged by NATO countries.⁵⁷ These 442 specialized trainers that have not been pledged will either be backfilled by US personnel (who may not have the background and training necessary) or will simply remain unfilled.

The true scale of the trainer shortfall is revealed in **Figure 2.6**. These graphics show the required number of trainers (CJSOR v10 Requirement) versus the actual number of trainers pledged through March 2012. The gap between pledged and required reaches over 1,000 personnel by March 2012. Unfortunately, “confirmed pledges” of trainers from NATO countries are just that - pledges that may or may not be fulfilled. Furthermore, the numerical shortfall may actually understate the problem, as many of these “trainers” have little training themselves. The U.S. RFF and TDY personnel are essentially filler, and may not have a relevant background or have received much pre-deployment training for the mission.

Providing adequate training personnel is one of the most important areas where NATO has failed to live up to its obligations. The United States has repeatedly been forced to shuffle personnel from other duties in order to make up for a lack of NATO trainers. Time and again the United States has requested that NATO members contribute relatively small numbers of trainers to help with the ANSF development mission, and time and again they have failed to help. The entire ANSF training mission is not a large one – a few thousand personnel, tiny when compared to the tens of thousands of combat troops. Yet the importance of training personnel is enormous, and NATO’s failure to provide them will make properly training the ANSF difficult under current timelines.

As a Department of Defense report noted in April 2010:⁵⁸

With an overall requirement of 2,325 institutional trainers, NTM-A/CSTC-A has a current shortfall of 759 personnel. Aggressive engagement by NATO and U.S. senior leadership may have yielded significant potential results against the shortage of trainers (pending confirmation and ultimate deployment of all pledges).

In addition to the need for institutional trainers, the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) has a total requirement of 475 Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (POMLTs) for the ANP and 180 Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLTs) for the ANA, who embed with ANSF formations in the field and

⁵⁷ NATO Training Mission—Afghanistan (NTM-A), September 26, 2010.

⁵⁸ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, January 2009, pp. 38, 39, 44.

coordinate with international partner units. The current projected requirements shortfall for mentoring teams assigned to the fielded ANSF forces is 17 OMLTs for the ANA and 108 POMLTs for the ANP.

The OMLT/POMLT requirements are expected to increase in 2011 with the growth of the ANSF, although the specific requirement has not yet been identified as the final organizational structure for ANA and ANP units is under study. The United States and NATO have stressed the trainer and mentor requirements during repeated high-level, international engagements including the January 2010 London Conference and the February 2010 NATO Defense Ministerial. NATO held an NTM-A/CSTC-A Force Generation Conference in February 2010 to solicit additional contributions against these shortfalls. DOD is currently coordinating a plan with the interagency to identify and demarche regarding the availability of non-NATO resources to provide mentors and trainers to fill those shortfalls. The United States uses every engagement opportunity to drive home the need for NATO allies to step up to contribute forces to fill validated NATO requirements. Without these critical mentors and trainers, our ability to effectively grow and develop the ANSF is at risk.

The trainer shortfall has been exacerbated by crippling attrition rates for the ANA and especially the ANP. High attrition rates mean that NTM-A must not only train new soldiers and police to grow the force, but must constantly train new personnel to replace losses in the field. Currently, NTM-A estimates that in order to grow the ANSF by 50,000 personnel by October 2011, it must actually recruit and train 133,000 personnel. For the ANA, expanding by 36,000 requires 83,000 personnel. For the ANP, with much higher attrition rates, to expand by 14,000 requires 50,000 personnel.⁵⁹ These figures are based on current attrition rates, which have come down significantly in 2010 but could rise again. Attrition rates are affected by a number of factors, from pay and bonuses to rotations and morale. If attrition rates rise significantly, then the entire force generation timeline and trainer requirement will be thrown off.

Funding has improved during the course of 2009-2010, but the legacy of past underfunding is still a problem that needs to be corrected more than eight years after the beginning of the conflict. The trainer shortfall continues unabated, and no amount of funding will make up for it.

⁵⁹ NTM-A, October 2010.

Figure 2.3: Part One, The Resource vs. Reality Gap—ANA Force Level, Goals, and Readiness Failed to Track with Resources through Early 2008

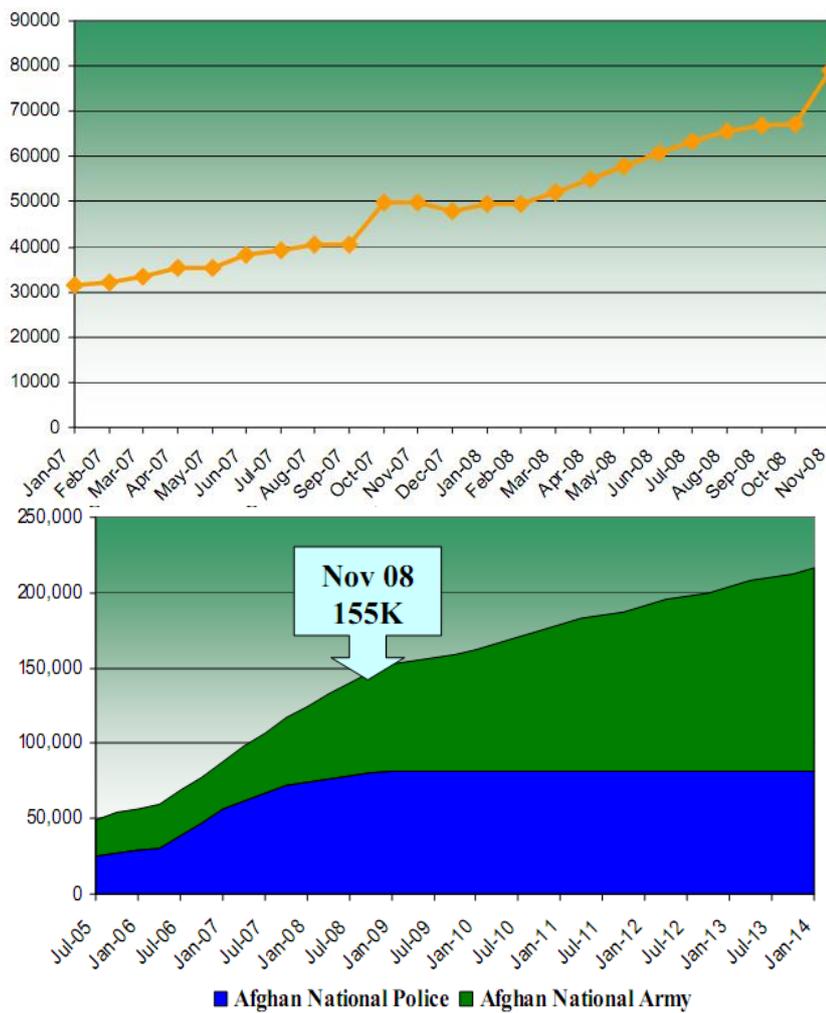


Figure 2.3: Part Two, The Resource vs. Reality Gap—ANP Force Level, Goals, and Readiness Failed to Track with Resources through Early 2008

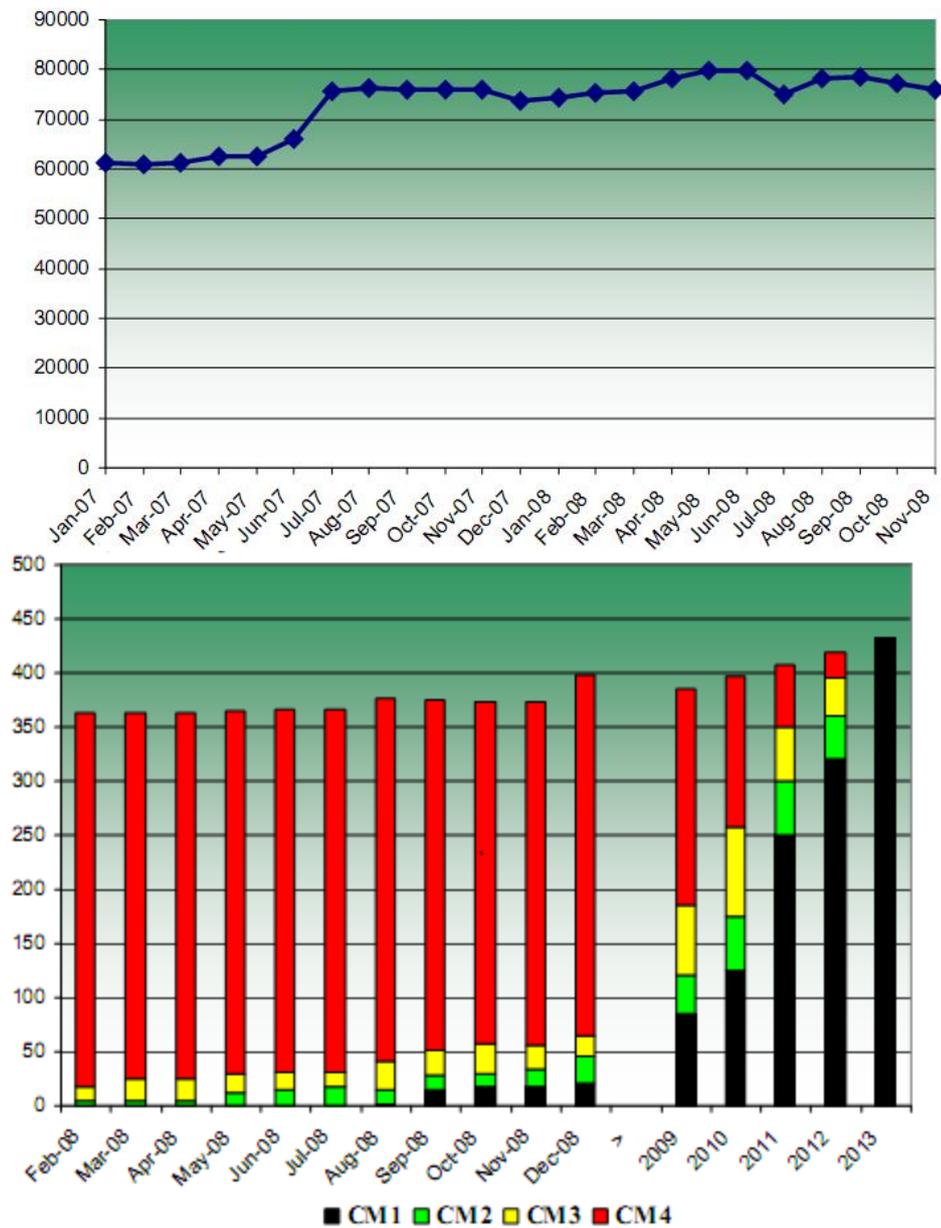


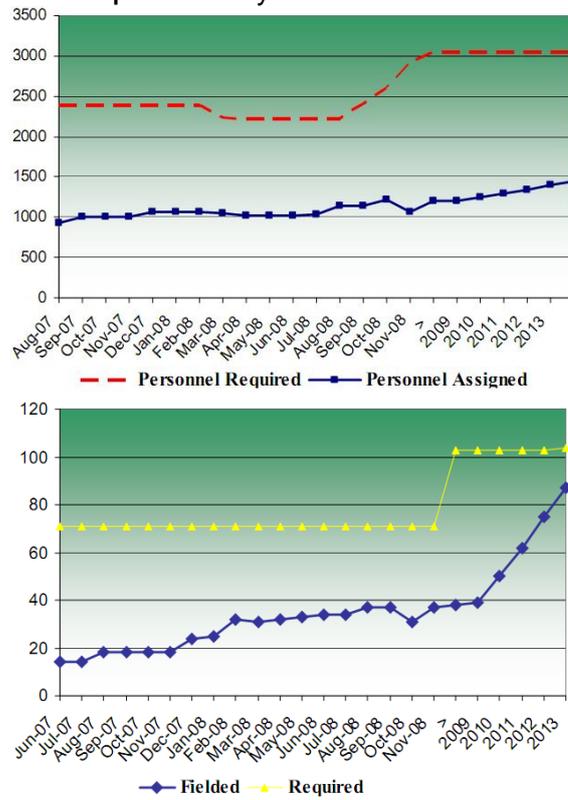
Table 6 - CM levels for ANP Units, December 2008

CM1	CM2	CM3	CM4
18	16	22	317

Source: DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), January 2009, pp. 35, 36, 42, 48.

Figure 2.4: Trainers and Mentors Fall Far Short of Requirement

Estimated Actual versus Required Army Trainers and Mentors:

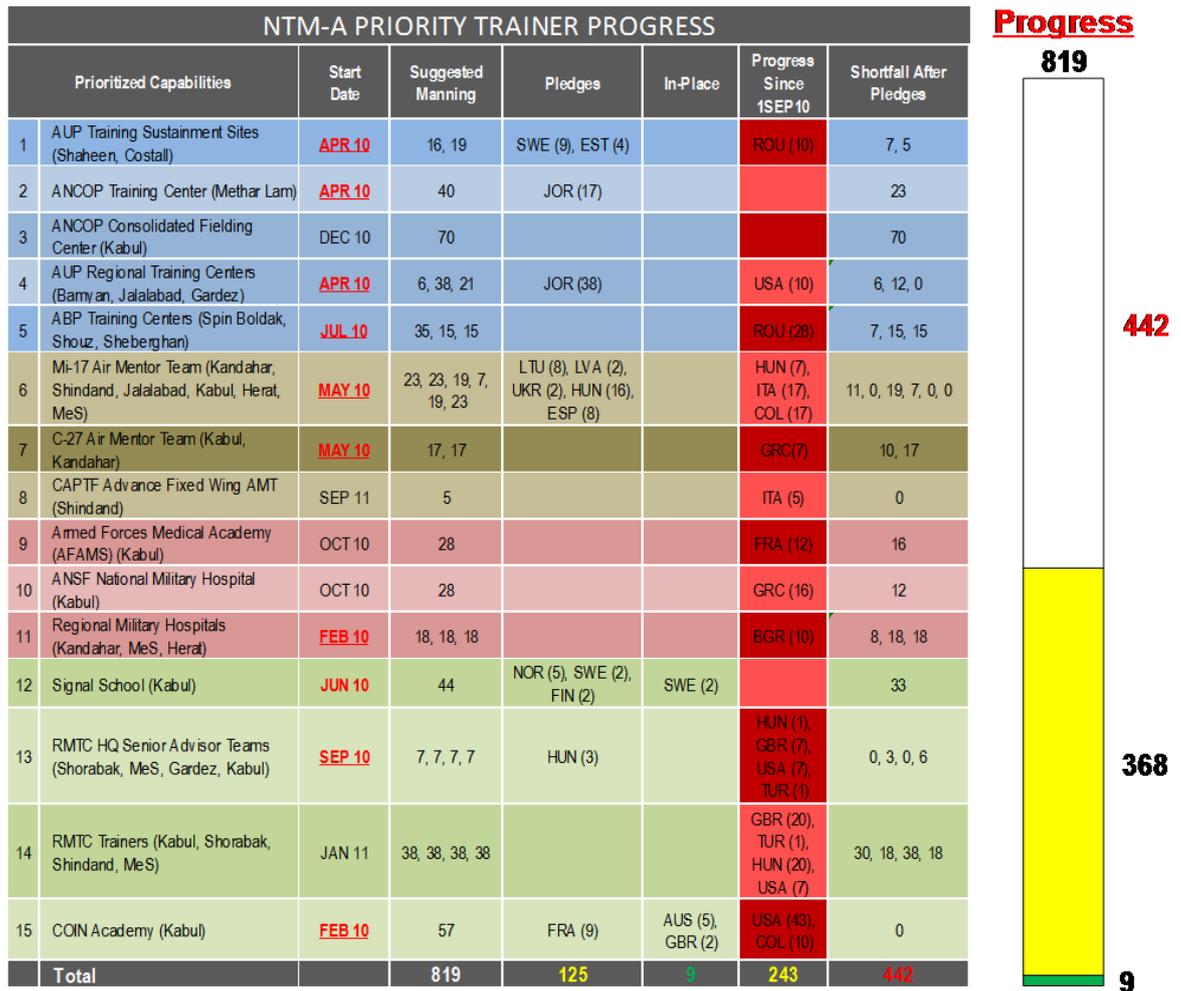


Estimated Actual versus Required Police Trainers and Mentors:



Source: DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, January 2009, pp. 38, 39, 43.

Figure 2.5: Specialist Trainer Shortfall as of September 2010



Source: NTM-A, 2010.

Figure 2.6: Trainer Requirement versus Trainers Pledged

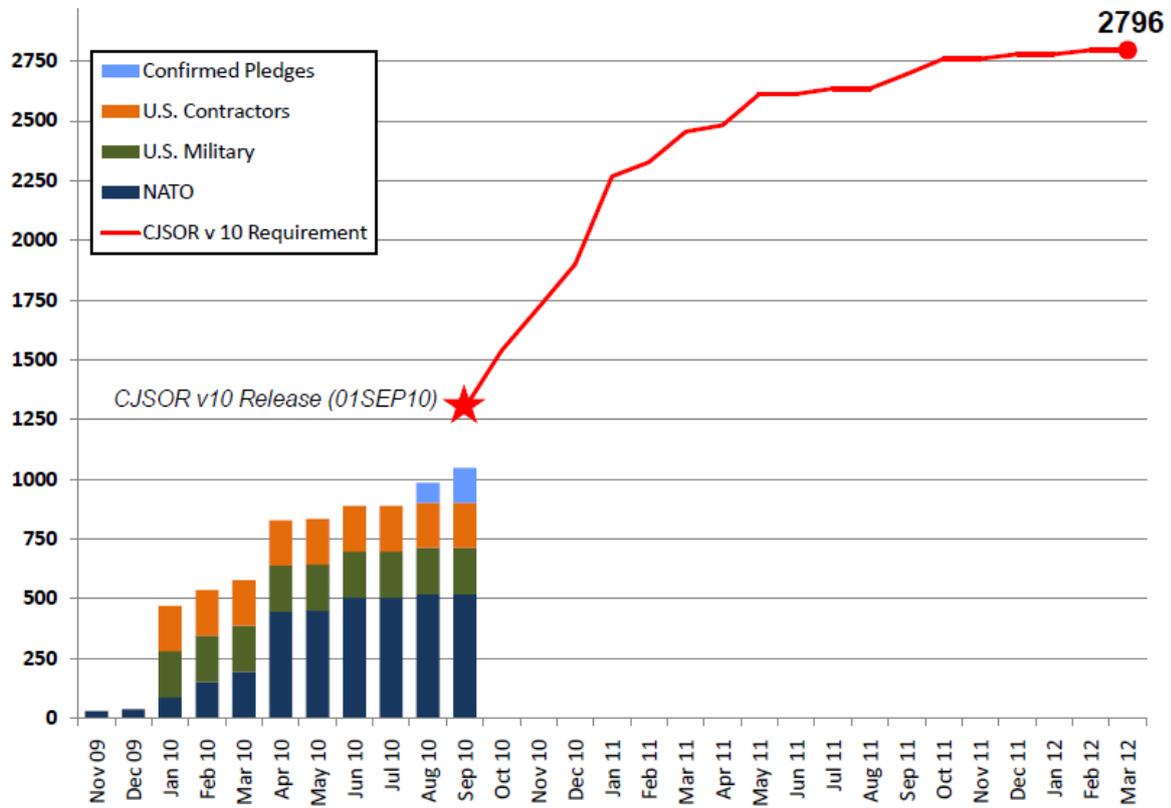
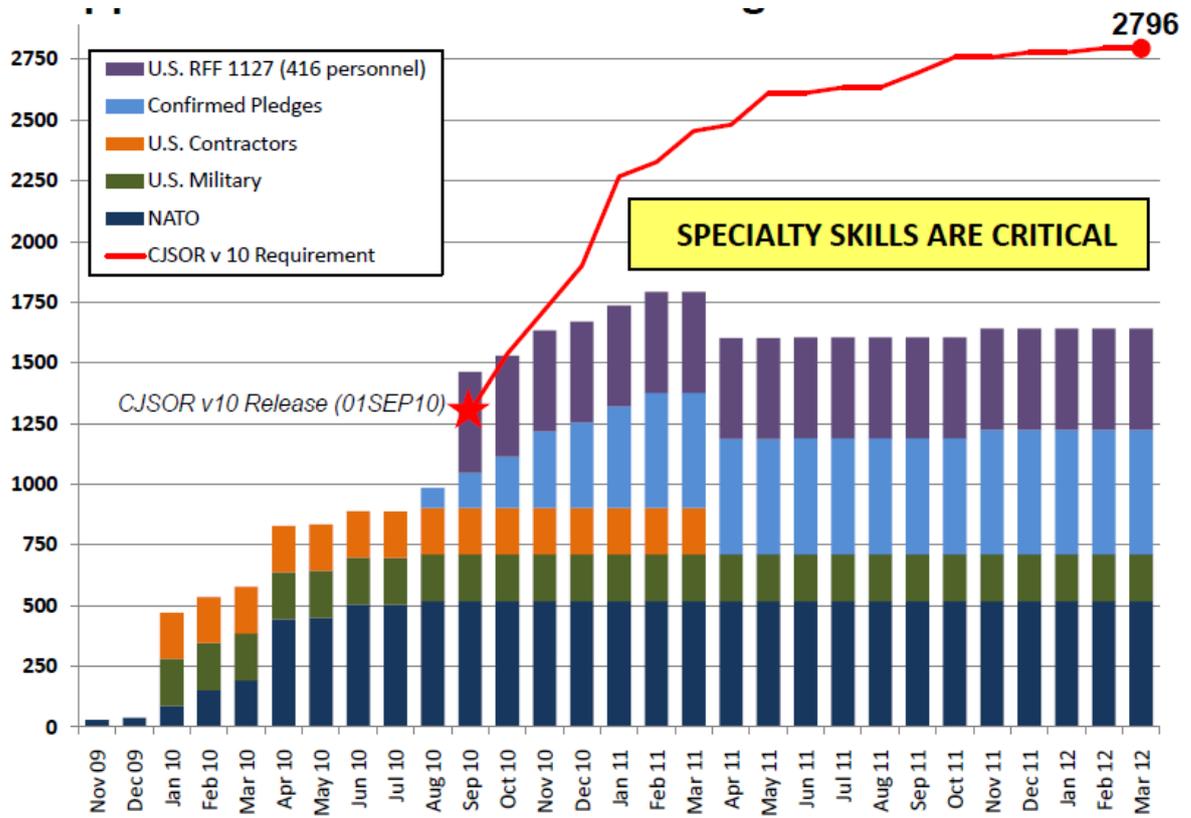


Figure 2.6, continued:



Source: NTM-A, October 2010.

The Human Costs of Inadequate Resources

It is important to understand the human cost of this underfunding and how the lack of adequate pay and privileges, medical and disability benefits, death benefits, facilities and equipment, has affected Afghan forces. There are no public data on surveys of the attitudes of given elements of the ANSF, the impact of pay problems that left them less well-paid than the Taliban and were only recognized in later 2009, or the scale of retention problems that have crippled much of the force development and made some NATO/ISAF readiness ratings little more than statistical nonsense.

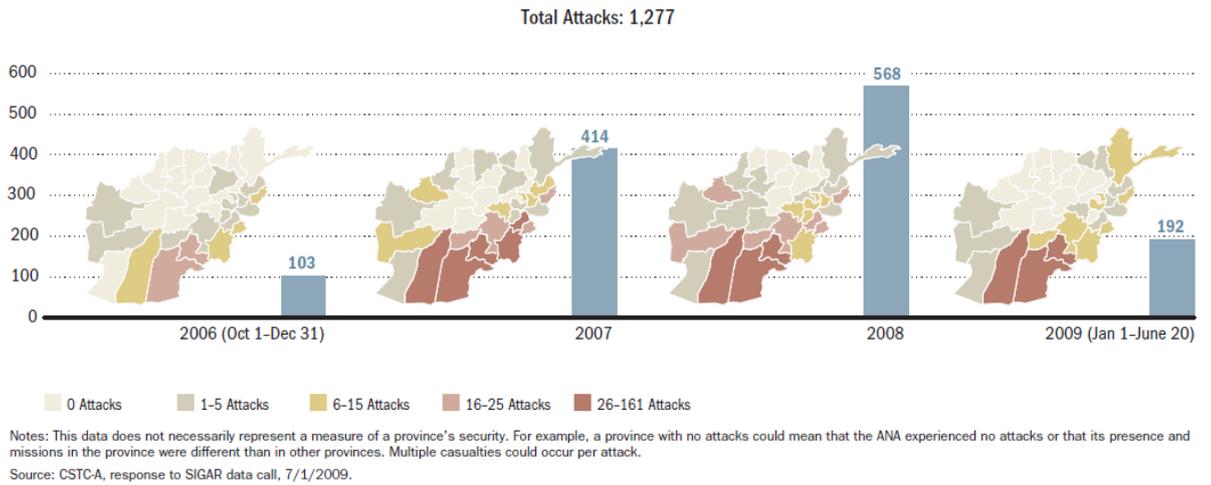
These issues emerge all too clearly in media reporting and in e-mails and other communications from forces serving in the field. They are all too clear when one examines the patterns in casualties over time. **Figure 2.7** shows the rise in attacks on the ANSF during 2007-2009. **Figure 2.8** shows the patterns in casualties that resulted in part from the under-resourcing, under-training, under-equipping and under-partnering of Afghan forces. It is no coincidence that casualties were highest in the Afghan National Police (ANP)—the force that had the least resources and where the following chapters show the United States and ISAF made critical mistakes in virtually every aspect of ANP force development.

In fairness, no one attempted to create an ANSF so vulnerable. Nevertheless, that was the end result. As Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates said in an interview of December 8, 2009, “Attrition is higher in the areas where combat is heavier. The reason is that there aren’t enough of them. And they essentially fight until they die, or go AWOL.” When he was asked if it wasn’t late in the game to learn these facts about the ANSF, Gates replied that, “There’s a lot of this that is late in the game, frankly.”⁶⁰

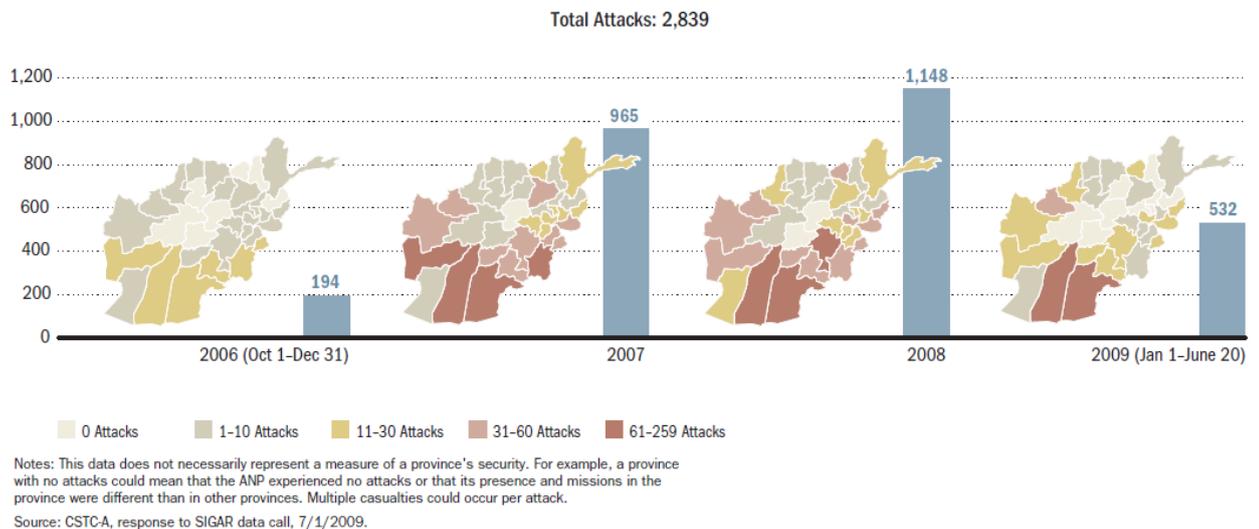
⁶⁰ Richard A. Opiel Jr. and Elisabeth Bumiller, “Afghanistan’s President Says Army Will Need Help until 2024 or Longer,” *New York Times*, December 10, 2009, p. A14.

Figure 2.7: The Rise in Attacks on the ANSF Sharply Outpaced Force Development Effort

ATTACKS ON THE ANA BY PROVINCE, OCTOBER 2006–JUNE 20, 2009

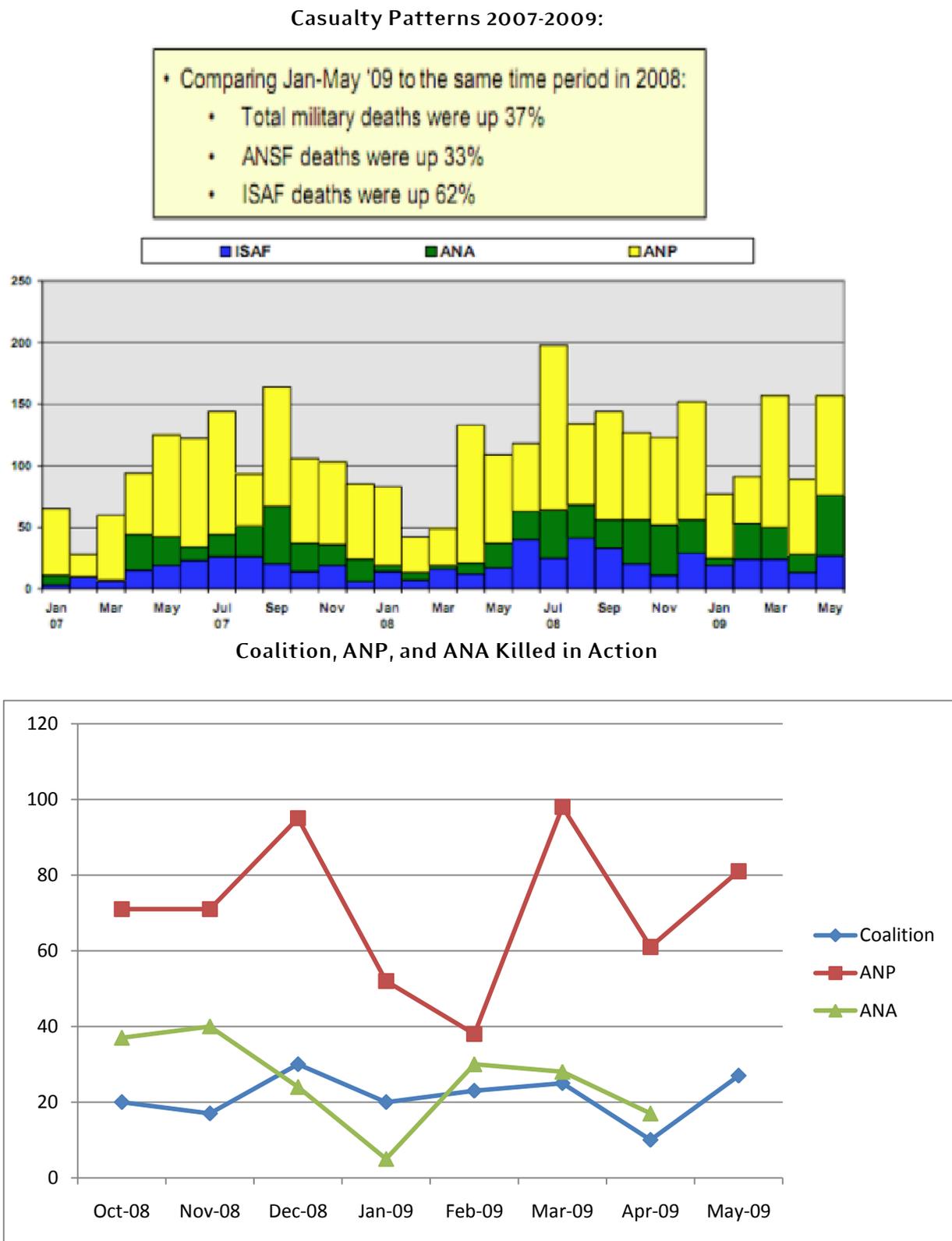


ATTACKS ON THE ANP BY PROVINCE, OCTOBER 2006–JUNE 20, 2009



Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the U.S. Congress*, June 2009 pp. 55, 60.

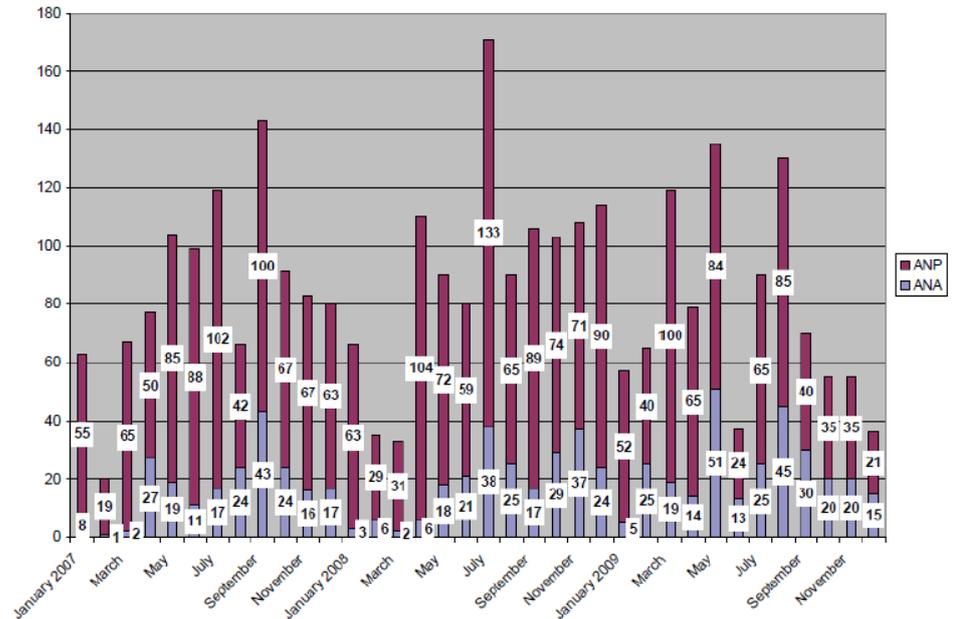
Figure 2.8: Killing the Underresourced and Underprepared—Comparative Patterns in ISAF and Afghan Casualties



Source: NATO JOIIS Database.

Figure 2.8, continued:

Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) Personnel Fatalities, January 2007-Present²⁵



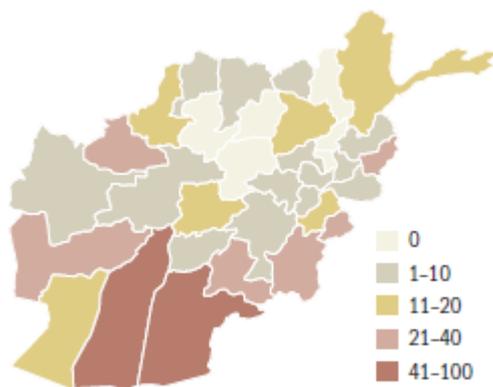
ANNUAL TOTALS

	2007	2008	2009
ANA	209	226	282
ANP	803	880	646

NOTE: Figures from 2007 through mid-2009 provided by NATO-ISAF and differ from those published in a January 2009 report released by the U.S. Department of Defense. This report estimated 332 ANA fatalities and 692 ANP fatalities for 2007, with 2008 figures shown only through October 2008. Graphical numbers for the second half of 2009 are estimated based on information from several sources.

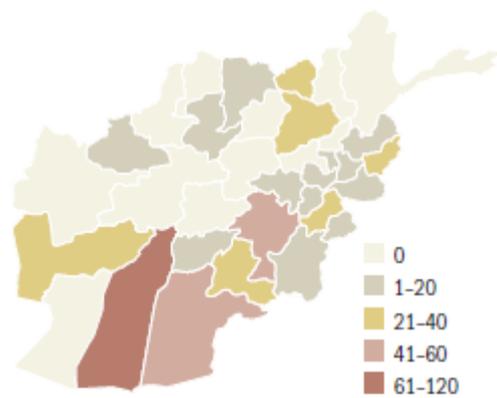
Source: Ian Livingston, Heather Messera, and Michael O’Hanlon. Brookings Afghan Index, June 29, 2010.

ANP CASUALTIES BY PROVINCE



Note: Casualties reported from 4/1/2010 to 6/30/2010.
Source: IJC, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

ANA CASUALTIES BY PROVINCE



Note: Casualties reported from 4/1/2010 to 6/30/2010.
Source: IJC, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010, p. 58.

Leadership and Policy Failures

These failures to resource ANSF development and provide the proper numbers of trainers and mentors were compounded by critical failures in policy and leadership. The United States made another series of mistakes that still haunt ANSF force development, and for which the U.S. must bear primary responsibility largely at the senior policy levels in Washington. Trainers, mentors, and partners were confronted with years of inadequate resources, constant changes in goals, pressures to rush out forces before they were fully ready, and political pressure to report levels of success that were not realistic:

- *Failure to try to seriously create Afghan forces that could be real partners to the United States and ISAF, and eventually replace the United States and ISAF in an extended insurgency that would require strong national security forces for a decade or more.* The United States waited some six years to take the force development effort seriously and then focused on rushing newly created small combat units—kandaks of battalion size—into the field. It was not until the summer of 2009 that the United States seriously addressed what partnering really meant, began to set goals for creating the kind of higher-level joint headquarters and operations that could truly make Afghan military and police forces real partners, and lay the groundwork for the eventual transfer of most military and paramilitary functions to Afghan forces.
- *False training standards:* Afghan- and contractor-rated training often granted virtually all those in training a passing grade regardless of actual competence and performance. “Quite literally, if you show up to most classes, and are there for the graduation ceremony, you pass.”
- *Promotions and positions were often sold, the result of political influence, or the result of sect and ethnic group biases without active and systematic resistance by the U.S. and ISAF officers.* These problems were compounded by a failure to systematically resist corruption, the influence of powerbrokers, ties to narcotraffickers and criminals, and links to insurgents at political and higher command levels. These were in addition to an inadequate effort to improve the capacity and integrity of key Ministries like the Ministry of Interior, and Afghan officials at the provincial, district, and urban levels.
- *Lack of meaningful training for entire units:* These problems have been compounded by a failure to provide adequate training for the entire newly formed unit. The trained parts are assembled without adequate training of the entire force element—in direct contrast to the key lessons of the importance of full unit training, even for mature forces, in places like the National Training Center at Fort Irwin.
- *Failure to see that mentoring and partnering of units, once they deployed, was the critical phase of force development.* It has only been in the course of 2009 that the United States has focused on the fact that newly created units get their primary training and combat capability after they leave the formal training center and go into the field. The tacit assumption—or at least de facto experience—has been that the Afghans are already “fighters” and that newly formed units can be treated as something close to mature, functioning units, rather than units that require at least a year of embedded mentoring and close partnering to develop the proven leadership and core competence needed. This approach often proved to under-resource mentoring and partnering, create major problems for new units, and encourage serious and rapid attrition.
- *Lack of honest readiness and combat capability assessments in the field—and of the impact of over-deployment, erratic leave policies, and inadequate pay and support—on real-world readiness.* Key problems developed in leadership, motivation, and retention that were understated or ignored through late 2009. It was only in the summer of 2009 that a systematic effort began to look beyond vague concepts like motivation and morale to examine Afghan perceptions of the problems shaping Afghan force readiness and critical retention problems. It took years to raise ANP salaries to levels that could make anything approaching an honest police force possible, and more than half a decade to introduce pay systems that help ensure that those serving were actually paid and that reduced abuses like “ghost” soldiers that were not actually present. It was only in

December 2009 that an effort under Lt. General William B. Caldwell found that ANP soldiers were then being paid \$180 per month versus \$250-\$300 a month paid by the Taliban.⁶¹

- *Failure to understand the linkage between police development and the combined needs of a society dependent on an informal justice system capable of promptly resolving civil disputes and preventing local and tribal violence*, and the need for police forces that had sufficient paramilitary capability to survive in an insurgency. The police and rule of law efforts remained largely decoupled through early CY 2009. While the consolidation of training under NTM-A/CSTC-A in late 2009 has led to improvements in some areas, no clear plan to develop and reform the justice sector was in evidence as of early 2010.
- *Failure to take the police training effort seriously for at least five critical years during the rise of the insurgency*. ISAF and the United States instead attempted to export responsibility. The training effort was turned over to an under-resourced and terribly managed German effort that focused on training European-style police officers for a country that had very different needs and resources. When the United States finally did react, the program was effectively transferred to an under-resourced, U.S.-run, State Department system that was over-dependent on contract support and also sought to create conventional police that could not survive in the emerging insurgency. It was not until 2007 that the police began to get effective paramilitary training from the U.S. military and the training effort remained under-resourced and secondary to the Afghan Army effort through early 2009.
- *The United States continued to treat ANSF development as if the key goal was the tactical defeat of the insurgency rather than securing population centers and denying the enemy control and influence over the Afghan population*. Even today, American commanders and strategists talk about “clear, hold, build, and transfer” without a real definition of what this means, much less any public and credible plan for shaping ANSF development to perform the necessary civil-military functions in the “hold” and “build” phases.
- *Unrealistic emphasis on border security efforts*. As was the case in Iraq, far too much emphasis was placed on trying to create border and port of entry forces that could not credibly cover the areas required, did not have the firepower and mobility required, and were subject to constant Taliban threats and pressure and vulnerable to bribes and corruption. These problems were further compounded by the fact that Pakistan was often treated as if it would be a reliable partner in such efforts when U.S. experts clearly knew this was not, and would not, be the case.
- *Failure to effectively exercise its de facto leadership role in the alliance to develop a coordinated ISAF/Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) effort*. In practice, much of the ANSF development and deployment effort has put Afghan military and police forces in the field under conditions where each leading country uses Afghan forces somewhat differently and where the lack of any standard for the operation of national ISAF forces—coupled to a lack of any standard for coordination of such forces with related PRTs—has left deployed ANSF forces without an effective ISAF partner.
- *Failure to ensure proper continuity and management of the partnering effort*. These problems were compounded in the field at every level by the rapid rotation of U.S. and ISAF forces and aid workers, a lack of continuity of effort, a failure to prepare and rate commanders properly on partnering, and erratic handoff or transfer of this function during the rotation of field commanders and combat units.
- *Having trainers rate their own success, and inadequate and inaccurate rating systems*. The United States should have learned from the battle of Kasserine Pass and Task Force Smith that trainers should not be allowed to rate those they train without independent verification. Unit readiness and performance need to be independently validated. More broadly, however, the United States has developed a statistically-based rating system in both Iraq and Afghanistan that

⁶¹ Elizabeth Bumiller, “Afghan Army Offers Raise, and Recruits Flock to Join,” *New York Times*, December 10, 2009, p. A16; Glenn Kessler, “Pay Increase for Afghan Troops Boosts Influence,” *Washington Post*, December 10, 2009, p. A10, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/09/AR2009120901900.html>

is useful in providing some key indicators, but not in measuring actual levels of combat performance, loyalty, quality of leadership, and the impact of key problems like attrition. This had led to the sharp overrating of army units as being truly “in the lead.”

- *Unwillingness to deal with the reality of corruption and power brokering:* The United States was extremely slow to make serious efforts to deal with the complex impact of corruption and power brokering that affects ANSF development, operations, and force allocation at many levels—particularly the police. It often complained but rarely acted decisively. It did not set a clear and predictable set of ground rules and behavior for outing the incompetent and corrupt, dealing with powerbroker interference, and making anti-corruption efforts effective. It was only in the summer of 2009 that the United States really began to address these issues, particularly how to allocate resources in ways that reward honest and effective performance and deny aid, contracts, and U.S. support to the ineffective and corrupt. It is still unclear this will lead to effective and sustained U.S. action that will support ANSF development.
- *Delays in realistic assessment of manning, quality of facilities, adequacy of pay and privileges, and other key factors affecting attrition and combat performance.* The United States has been remarkably slow to act on past lessons and to constantly evaluate the reasons for attrition, actual levels of Afghan morale and motivation, and the real-world adequacy of key factors like pay, privileges, facilities, medical care, leave, retirement, and death and disability benefits. Efforts to establish effective systems are still works in progress.
- *Uncertain selection and career paths for U.S. trainers and mentors:* The United States was slow to properly train the trainers, mentors, and partners; and it is still not clear whether playing this role will put the U.S. officers involved on the kind of competitive career track they deserve.

Future U.S. efforts must take responsibility for years in which the United States failed to act as if Afghanistan faces a serious and growing insurgency, under-resourcing every aspect of the war in ways that allowed the insurgents to take the initiative.

3. MEETING ANSF FORCE GOALS— IMPROVING QUALITY AND QUANTITY WITH PRIORITY TO QUALITY

ISAF, the United States, and the Afghan government continue to adapt their goals for future Afghan forces to the evolving conditions on the ground, and it will be several years before the success of the new strategy is clear enough to set stable force goals. Even the best plans must be altered to reflect the realities in the field, and these are far from clear.

There have already been major increases in the size and pace of plans for ANSF force development, but they raise serious questions about whether it is possible to meet such goals with the required levels of force quality. **Figure 3.1** shows the size and structure of Afghan forces as of June 2009:

The ANA will reach its objective of 134,000 personnel by the end of 2011 if required resources are provided. The 134,000-man force structure calls for 20 brigades, a new division headquarters in the capital, Corps-level artillery, engineer and Quick Reaction Force assets, as well as a commensurate increase in institutional support.⁶²

The target for the ANP is to build a reformed force of at least 86,800 personnel. The ANP consists of the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP), the Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP), the Afghan Border Police (ABP), Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), and additional specialized police with responsibilities that include criminal investigation, counterterrorism, and customs. Development of existing ANP forces continues at a slow pace because of the shortage of Police Mentor Teams.⁶³

The MoI is instituting the Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3) as a pilot initiative in Wardak province. As of March 2009, the AP3 comprises 243 candidates and empowers and encourages local community leaders and communities to take responsibility for their own security.⁶⁴

Current plans have set dramatically higher goals. NTM-A/CSTC-A anticipates a major expansion of the ANA and ANP by 2014-2016. Lt Gen Caldwell discussed such expansion plans in January 2010. He announced that the ANA would grow to 171,600 by October 2011, with the police growing to 134,000.⁶⁵ NTM-A/CSTC-A has since announced tentative plans to grow the ANA to 240,000 by 2013 and to grow the ANP to 160,000 by 2013. These plans would raise total ANSF strength from 223,500 in April 2010 to 305,600 by October 2011 and to 400,000 by 2013, although early success in the war could make full implementation of such plans unnecessary.⁶⁶

⁶² DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2009, p. 26.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Nordland, "U.S. Approves Training to Expand Afghan Army."

⁶⁶ Background briefing, December 11, 2009

Figure 3.2 shows a slightly different Department of Defense estimate issued in January 2010. While the end goal may keep changing for at least several years, it is virtually certain that Afghan force strength deployments will steadily increase to put more Afghan forces into the areas where they will face serious threats and fighting. This means resources need to be committed quickly both to solve key problems in quality and to lay the groundwork for a larger expansion of the ANSF after 2010 without sacrificing quality for quantity. If the U.S. and other ISAF forces are to make even token withdrawals beginning in mid-2011, time is critical in making the ANSF ready for large-scale transfers of responsibility.

Figure 3.1: Size and Current Force Goals for the ANSF

Force Levels and Goals in June 2009 (DoD)

Component	Authorized	Assigned	Date Completed
Ministry of Defense Forces			
MoD/GS	3,246	2,651	Sep 2011
Sustaining Institutions	1,519	1,259	June 2011
Intermediate Commands	15,484	15,048	June 2011
Detainee Operations	554	520	TBD
CN Infantry Kandak	854	780	TBD
ANA Combat Forces	66,406	53,417	41,061
ANA Air Corp	3,412	2,562	42,522
TTHS	12,000	13,284	N/A
Total MoD	103,475	89,521	41,061
Ministry of Interior Forces			
Mol Headquarters	5,059	4,273	40,238
Counternarcotics	2,519	3,572	40,878
Customs Police	600	603	39,783
Uniformed Police	47,384	51,406	Dec 2011
Border Police	17,621	12,792	TBD
Anti-Crime	5,103	4,013	Dec 2012
Civil Order Police	5,365	2,462	Mar 2011
Fire/Medical/Training	3,149	2,388	TBD
Total Mol	81,956	81,020	Dec 2012

Force Goals in September 2010 (SIGAR)

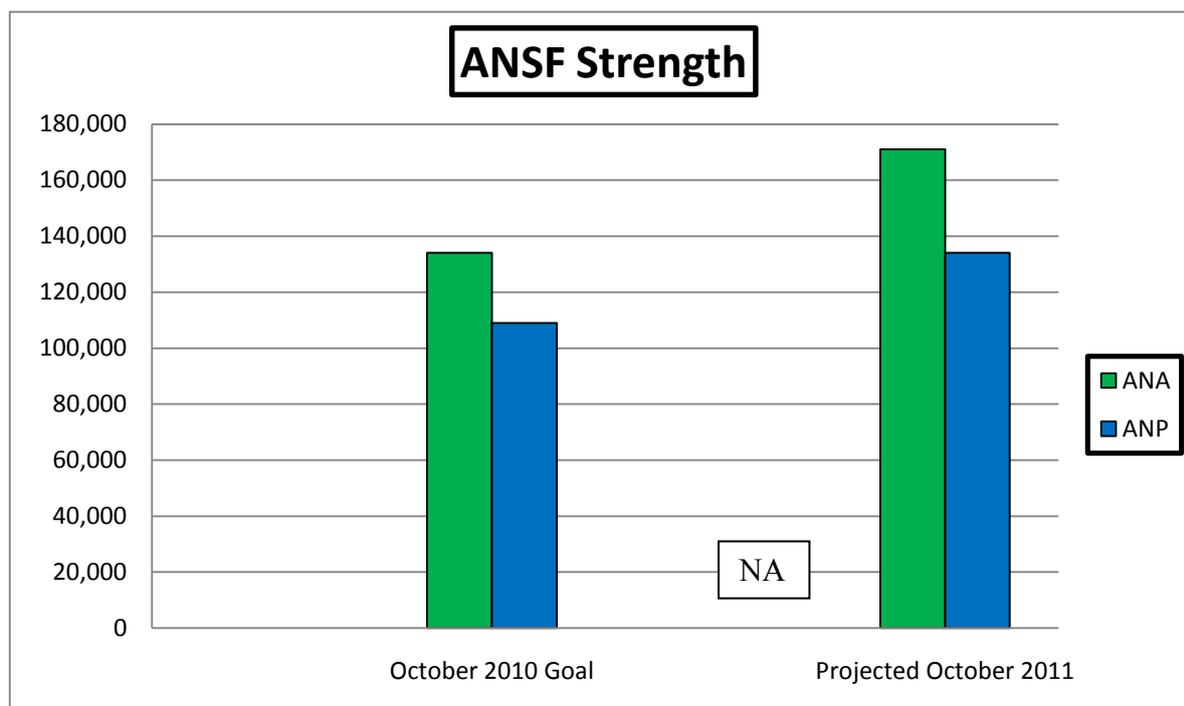
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR SECURITY				
Priority	ANDS Target	Current Target	Status	ANDS Completion Date
Afghan National Army	80,000 troops (plus 6,600 in training)	134,000 troops (by 10/2010) 171,600 troops (by 10/2011)	129,885 troops (as of 6/20/2010)	End of 2010
Afghan National Police	82,180 police officers	109,000 police officers (by October 2010) 134,000 police officers (by 10/2011)	105,873 police officers (as of 6/20/2010)	End of 2010
Disarmament of Illegal Armed Groups	All illegal armed groups disbanded in all provinces		98 of 140 DIAG-targeted districts declared compliant	March 20, 2011
Removing Unexploded Ordnance	Land area contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance reduced by 70%		UN: Land area contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance reduced by 47%	End of 2010
	90% of all known areas contaminated by mines or explosive remnants of war cleared			2012
	All emplaced anti-personnel mines cleared		DoS: 665 million square meters of contaminated land remain	2013

Notes: Numbers affected by rounding. Priorities were originally based on Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) targets.

Sources: GfRoa, "Afghanistan National Development Strategy, Executive Summary," 6/2008, p. 6; NTMA/CSTCA, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010; UNDP "Afghanistan's New Beginning Programme: DIAG Fast Facts," 7/3/2010; UN, "Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan Newsletter: May 2010," 5/2010, p. 4; DoS, response to SIGAR data call, 6/30/2010.

Source: DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2009, p. 26; SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010 p. 56.

Figure 3.2: Force Goals in January 2010*



*Note: ANA reached 134,028 by August 1, 2010.

Source: Adopted from DoD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, Report to Congress in accordance with section 1231 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181), April 2010, p. 93.

Building the Entire Force: Quality and Ability to Carry Out Transition Come First

There is no time to wait and shape an ideal force development effort. Given current political and military pressures, and the lead times involved, the effort to double the ANSF must begin now—even if much of 2010 is spent on solving the problems in meeting existing force goals. This means the growth of key elements of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) must be accelerated and better resourced as soon as possible. It also means making new efforts to improve recruiting and retention. If attrition rates among ANA and ANP remain high, rapid force expansion will be extremely difficult, and will require huge numbers of recruits. Moreover, the total force authorized numbers for the ANSF disguise the fact that many of them are non-combat personnel, and among combat personnel attrition rates are so high that the number of combat forces actually in the field is surprisingly low.

No one can visit Afghanistan without learning that ISAF commanders at every level agree that there are too few ANSF forces in their areas to accomplish the mission; and

they feel the proposed timelines for fielding additional ANSF to their areas are too slow. At the same time, there is equal agreement that both larger and *higher quality* Afghan forces will be needed if any “population-centric” strategy is to work—particularly if ISAF and U.S. allied forces are to decline after mid-2011. As ISAF and ANSF forces clear key population centers, Afghan forces must assume the task of keeping these centers cleared (*hold*) and to performing the mix of COIN and regular policing activity necessary for hold and build. It is the ANSF, working with local Afghan officials, which will ultimately give the critical “hold” and “build” phases of ISAF strategy effectiveness and win popular support.

Moreover, quality needs to be improved from the top down—not just at the level of units in the field. The Ministries of Defense and Ministries of Interior are not yet able to manage the level of force development required. There are critical leadership and attrition problems. The capabilities of current ANSF forces, specifically the ANP and ABP, are inadequate. And some of the ANSF, predominantly the ANP and ABP, are riddled with corruption which leads to popular alienation as well as ineffectiveness.

These needs are reflected in the broader range of goals that NTM-A and CSTC-A set for developing Afghan forces in December 2009:⁶⁷

- Develop and grow leaders for tomorrow,
- Generate professional, competent, capable ANSF,
- Accelerate ANA growth to 134,000 by October 2010 [this goal was met in August 2010],
- Reform and grow the ANP to 96,800, and continue to 109,000 by October 2010— pending Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) approval,
- Partner with and grow the ANA Air Force,
- Develop Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI) systems,
- Develop the institutional base (training and education for force generation), and,
- Resource the fielded force.

“Zero-Basing” ANSF Funding Profiles

As the analysis of past funding issues in the previous chapter has shown, none of this can happen without sustained U.S. and allied funding to create the larger ANSF forces and then to sustain them as long as Afghanistan must fight a major insurgency. There is no near- to mid-term prospect that Afghanistan can either create or support the ANSF it needs to deal with the insurgent threat, and any effort to do so would cripple the expansion of government services and efforts to make the present economy function.

Some of the required resources have already been made available. As Chapter II has shown, the ANSF force development effort is already receiving better funding, although the force development’s budgeting and accounting capabilities remain understaffed and somewhat uncertain. Recent disbursement patterns have made significant improvements,

⁶⁷ Ibid.

as seen in **Figure 3.5**. The ANSF received some \$5.6 billion in FY 2009 and will receive \$9.4 billion in FY 2010 (the FY 2010 figure includes a 2.6 billion supplemental that is not included in **Figure 3.4**).⁶⁸ ANSF funding for FY 2011 appears to be a generous \$11.6 billion.⁶⁹

While the short-term funding environment seems adequate, DoD reporting in its April 2010 report *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* indicates that the long-term ANSF funding situation is not apparent:⁷⁰

- For FY 2010, Congress appropriated \$6.6 billion for ASFF [the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund]. This money is two-year funding and will be used to directly support the president's objectives and it supports the end-strength goals of growing the ANA to 134,000 and the ANP to 109,000 by October 2010.
- In February 2010, DoD submitted the FY 2010 ASFF Supplemental request of \$2.6 billion and the FY 2011 Overseas Contingency Operations ASFF request of \$11.6 billion. After October 2010, both the ANA and ANP will, in accordance with the JCMB [Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board] decision in January 2010, grow to 171,600 and 134,000, respectively, by October 2011.
- The FY 2011 ASFF budget request supports the accelerated growth of the ANP to generate, employ, and project a force that can conduct and sustain independent law enforcement, counterterrorism, COIN, and other operations. The budget request also supports expansion of the ANCOP [Afghan National Civil Order Police] and the ABP as well as supporting the development of MoI enablers. Additionally, it provides for construction of 88 ANP district headquarters, expands seven border police facilities, and provides protective vehicles and fire department capabilities.
- A significant policy change to the flow of ASFF was approved by the Deputy Secretary of Defense in November 2009, which allows CSTC-A to receive ASFF funding directly and gives the CSTC-A commander the authority to decide which DoD organizations would be used to provide CSTC-A contract support. Previously, all ASFF execution was managed through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. The new policy provides CSTC-A increased flexibility, shortens acquisition timelines, and is expected to save money both in the short and long term.

No Credible Estimates of Force Costs, the Cost of Fixing Force Quality, and the Cost of Transition

There is little public reporting that addresses the cost of giving the ANSF the right size and quality. Senior officials have said that these goals and the exact costs of the changes necessary to implement the strategy the President announced on December 2 are still being examined. They have also said that the goals for each element of the ANSF are now to be regularly re-examined and adjusted on the basis of progress over time. While timelines for ANSF growth are frequently discussed and released by NTM-A, the amount of funding, trainers, and mentors for ANSF development need to be depicted in timelines as well to ensure that resources are matched with force goals.

⁶⁸ SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 2010, pp. 46-47.

⁶⁹ Nordland, "U.S. Approves Training to Expand Afghan Army."

⁷⁰ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2009, p. 26.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen made the following comments in an interview on December 2, 2009 after the President's address:⁷¹

So we train the Afghan security forces to take the lead and take responsibility for their own security and achieving a stable country. That's not going to happen overnight. We know that, and it isn't going to happen instantly all across the country. That's the main focus. We move from a lead to a, if you will, side-by-side. And then, they will take the lead tactically, and then we go into an over-watch kind of situation, not unlike we are in Iraq right now. And then we are able to have those combat forces depart.

...we had focus on developing Afghan forces for some time. But not unlike the combat forces, it just had not been resourced. So we had a few months ago, the first full brigade—the fourth and the 82nd—gone into exclusively conduct training missions. We've got another brigade in this 30,000 that is focused exclusively on that. So we recognize we have to accelerate it. This is a high-risk part of the strategy, we know that....And it's a much higher risk with the police, as it was in Iraq, than it is with the army.

...One of the questions I got today on the Hill is, 'How do you know this is going to work? What lessons have we learned?' ...We need good leaders in the Afghan security forces. That it really doesn't turn until we have leadership at the non-commissioned officer level in the police as well as the army. And, that we need leaders at the mid-grade and senior officer level. That's probably the long pole in the tent. They got to be equipped.

The armies—they are good fighters. They want to get this right. The challenge—probably the greatest challenge—we have is in the police and in the corruption that has existed there. Now we've got a minister—a government and a minister very dedicated to rooting out this corruption. We also know that this is going to take some time.

...In addition, General McChrystal will focus on raising up...security in local villages. Now, there's a very delicate balance here, because we're not to go back to the warlord years. But that's a very—historically that's a very strong part of Afghan security...

“Guesstimates” Show a Continuing Need for Major Outside Aid

The truth is that all involved know that the United States must continue to make a massive investment long beyond 2011, and the ANSF effort will depend on major outside aid for as long as serious fighting continues and two things are clear: First, the cost will not be cheap. Second, the appropriation of future funds, and actual disbursements, cannot be allowed to lag behind the demands imposed by a steadily intensifying conflict.

Doubling means massive increases in cost, although the size of these increases will depend heavily on the exact rate of force expansion, standards for force quality, and a host of other factors that will be shaped by how successful the ANSF development effort proves to be in the future, as well as by the need to begin transferring more responsibility to the ANSF beginning in July 2011.

As a guesstimate, the range could be an increase from the present \$5.6 billion to some \$9 billion to \$13 billion a year. But it is only a very rough guesstimate. Moreover it was only in December 2009—after President Obama's speech—that a serious discussion of the

⁷¹ Transcript, “The Charlie Rose Show,” PBS, December 2, 2009.

issue even began. This is in line with the FY 2011 ANSF funding at this level.⁷² President Karzai warned on December 8, 2009 that Afghanistan would not be able to pay for its own security until at least 2024 in a joint press conference with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. Karzai noted that “Afghanistan is looking forward to taking on our own responsibilities in terms of paying for its forces with its own resources, but...for another 15 to 20 years, Afghanistan will not be able to sustain a force of that nature and capability with its own resources.”⁷³

Secretary Gates responded to these comments by stating that the United States had a tentative goal to increase the Afghan army to 134,000 soldiers at the end of 2010, with an ultimate size of 240,000, and that “there is realism on our part that it will be some time [before Afghan security forces can stand on their own].”⁷⁴ He also described the development and resourcing of the ANSF in an interview. He stated that the United States now was planning ANSF development on a step-by-step basis and had no clear way to predict its size or future cost,⁷⁵

There are a couple of problems that need to be addressed. One is we have found that they—the army and the police in Afghanistan are actually more poorly paid than the Taliban they're fighting, of all things. And so one thing we can address almost immediately is increasing the pay of the police and the army. One of the problems that we've had and that they've had is that, particularly those that are sent in to areas where there's a lot of combat, there aren't enough of them to rotate. And so they basically are sent there to fight until they either desert or are killed or wounded.

LAUER: But is that 400,000 number realistic? Can you accomplish that in two years?

GATES: Well, I think what the president has said—you know, maybe that's an aspirational goal, but what we need are annual goals. So the goal for the army is to go from about 96,000 right now to 134,000 at the end of 2010. So let's get to 134,000 instead of looking immediately to the 240,000 ultimate size of the army or that people have talked about and General McChrystal has talked about. Let's talk about getting to 134,000 first.

... In terms of lighting a fire under the Afghan government to get on with recruiting the size forces they need and getting them trained and getting them into the field, I don't know a better way to do that than what we have. By the same token, in terms of an assertion of providing confidence of our commitment, I think that the conditions-based way of approaching the drawdowns after July 2011 is also exactly the right way.

Then-Lt. General David Petraeus provided a rough estimate of \$10 billion a year or more and said that it would be years before the ANSF “can handle the bulk of the security tasks and allow the bulk of our troopers to redeploy” and that they would “require substantial

⁷² Nordland, “U.S. Approves Training to Expand Afghan Army.”

⁷³ Opiel and Bumiller, “Afghan Says Army Will Need Help Until 2024.”

⁷⁴ Mark Landler, “Petraeus Warns of a Long and Expensive Mission in Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, December 10, 2009, p. A16; Anne Flaherty, “Afghan Leader: Help Needed to Pay for Larger Army,” *Washingtonpost.com*, December 8, 2009; “Gates Tells NATO Troops Afghan Success in Reach,” *Yahoo.com*, December 9, 2009; CBS News, “War Plan,” December 9, 2009.

⁷⁵ Matt Lauer, interview with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, NBC, December 8, 2009.

international funding for years to come in a host of different areas, not the least of which is their security forces.”⁷⁶

In fact, as shown in **Figure 3.5–Part Two**, DoD requested \$9.2 billion in FY 2010 for the ANSF fund, including \$2.6 billion in a supplemental request, and requested \$11.6 billion (not including any supplemental requests) for the ANSF fund for FY 2011.⁷⁷

What is clear is that the Afghan government has no near- to mid-term capability to pay the costs of the ANSF it needs. It is also clear that from the outside, they will need to be sustained for some five to ten years, and allied contributions will be limited at best. According to President Karzai, the Afghan government will not be capable of paying for its army or police force until 2024.⁷⁸ As a result, the United States will probably have to pay some \$5 billion to \$10 billion of the costs for the ANSF as long as there is a serious insurgent threat.

Fixing AWOL and Retention Rates After Eight Years of Neglect

Meeting these goals will be impossible if the ANSF development effort does not put an end to persistently high attrition rates. The ANA lose 25 percent of their force annually according to the DoD, although independent experts believe this number may be much higher. Even so, the ANA fare better in comparison with the ANP. The ANA faces high dropout rates during training, although reliable numbers are not available.

Attrition in the ANP

ANP attrition rates vary and are hard to determine with any accuracy. The ANP have lost around 20 percent of their manpower to attrition annually in recent years, although this again may be an underestimate. As of May 2010, the overall attrition rate for ANP was over 17 percent.⁷⁹ According to General Caldwell, the overall attrition rate for the ANP was 47 percent in August 2010, down from a high of 70 percent.⁸⁰ The heavily used elite ANCOP force has lost as much as 75 percent of its force annually. The year-to-date attrition for February 2010 was 73 percent, with one ANCOP battalion suffering 140 percent attrition over the same period.⁸¹ A startling 67 percent of ANP recruits have left before completing training or shortly thereafter. If these rates are not brought down, over the next two years the ANSF will need to recruit over 291,004 new troops in order to expand to and maintain a force of

⁷⁶ Landler, “Petraeus Warns of a Long and Expensive Mission in Afghanistan”; Flaherty, “Afghan Leader: Help Needed to Pay for Larger Army.”

⁷⁷ DoD, “Overview,” *Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request*, February 2010, pp. 6-8, http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2011/fy2011_BudgetBriefing.pdf.

⁷⁸ Opper and Bumiller, “Afghan Says Army Will Need Help Until 2024.”

⁷⁹ SIGAR, “Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments.”

⁸⁰ Bumiller, “U.S. General Cites Goals to Train Afghan Forces.”

⁸¹ SIGAR, “Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments.”

300,000, as seen in **Figure 3.3**. According to General Caldwell, 141,000 new soldiers and police officers will need to be recruited by the end of 2011 in order to both expand the force and offset attrition.⁸²

Several factors have contributed to the systemic attrition problem within the ANP. They include the high casualties, high operational tempo, and damage caused when units are not properly trained from inception and mentored once in the field. Since his arrival in November, Lt Gen Caldwell has addressed the lack of collaboration and coordination within the ANP training program. As of March 2010, more standards and policies had been implemented such as mandatory literacy training and mandatory formal basic training. Yet the rapid pace of expansion and operations may still take their toll. Transforming the culture of corrupt and poor perceptions of the ANP will take time and steps taken by Lt Gen Caldwell have only begun to turn the tide.

The Impact of Higher Pay

Pay increases took place in 2009 that have provided new incentives to stay in both the ANA and ANP and made military pay as attractive as Taliban payments for the first time. The new pay rates are shown in **Figure 3.4**. This increased pay had an immediate impact on recruiting for the ANA. The starting pay for an ANA soldier was increased by \$45 to \$165 per month. Additionally, an incentive program was introduced in which soldiers serving in hostile areas receive a monthly hazardous duty allowance. The amount varies depending on the threat.

Soldiers in Helmand and Kandahar (high risk) receive \$75 per month versus that of soldiers in Konduz (medium risk) who will receive \$65. December 2009 recruiting resulted in 8,000 new recruits, over double what is normally brought in each month.

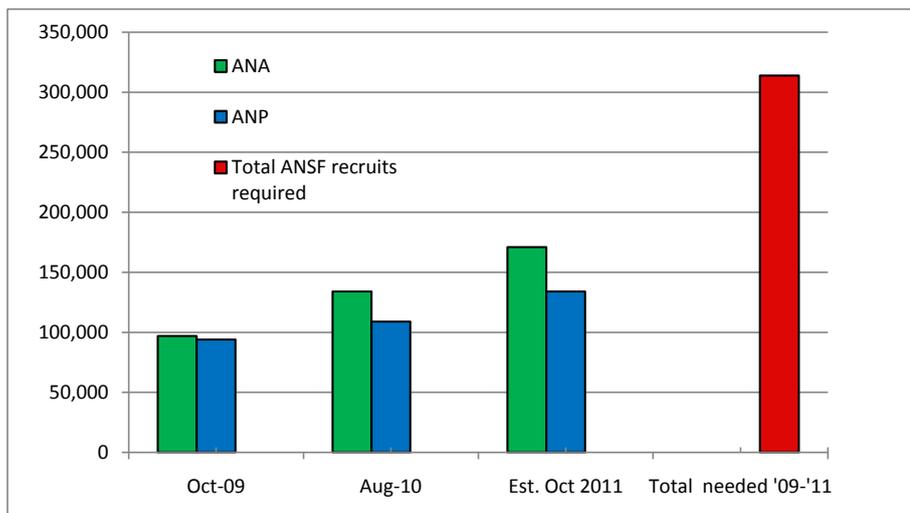
The ANP also announced an increased monthly payment to the same pay scale. Police recruiting immediately soared as about 2,700 applications (half of the overall monthly goal) were received in the first seven days. Similar to the ANA, the ANP will also have a variable pay scale based on hazardous locations.⁸³ While these pay increases have resulted in recruiting gains, it is not clear that they have had the necessary and lasting impact on retention.⁸⁴ Unless both recruiting and retention can be increased, it is unlikely that the ANSF can sustainably grow to meet force goals.

⁸² Bumiller, "U.S. General Cites Goals to Train Afghan Forces."

⁸³ Kessler, "Pay Increase for Afghan Troops Boosts Interest."

⁸⁴ Walter Pincus, "To Bolster Afghan Ranks, U.S. Encourages Ethnic Balance, Pay Raises," *Washington Post*, February 23, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/22/AR2010022204509_pf.html.

Figure 3.3: Afghan Force Goals and Recruits Needed to Reach Them*



Afghan National Army (ANA)

Year	ANA Strength	Troop Increase	Force AWOL rate (25%)	Recruiting Attrition N/A	Actual recruits req.
April 2010	119,000		14,875*	N/A	14,875~
August 2010	134,000	15,000*	33,500	N/A	48,500~
October 2011	171,000	37,000	42,750	N/A	79,750
Total ANA Recruits					143,125

(continued next page)

Figure 3.3, continued:

For April-October 2010
Afghan National Police (ANP)

Year	ANP Strength	Troop Increase	Force AWOL rate (20%)	67% Recruiting Attrition	Actual recruits req.
April 2010	104,500		10,450	7,002	17,452
October 2010	109,000	4,500	21,800	17,621	43,921
October 2011	134,000	25,000	26,800	34,706	86,506
Total ANP Recruits					147,879
Total ANSF Recruits Req. to Meet Oct 2011 Goals:					291,004

*These numbers are an estimate and do not account for ANA Recruiting Attrition rates (N/A) and include lower than estimated AWOL rates. Attrition and AWOL rates are variable and may not remain constant through October 2011.

Source: Adopted from DoD FY 2011 Budget Request, February 2010, p. 40; AFP London, "70 Percent of Afghan Police Recruits Drop Out: U.S. Trainer," March 2, 2010; Miller, "How Many Cops on the Beat," ProPublica.org, March 20, 2010; Thomas Johnson and Chris M. Mason, "Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template," *Military Review* (November-December 2009); COMISAF Campaign Overview, June 2010.

Figure 3.4: Part One, New Pay Scale for Afghan Forces and Justice Officials Introduced in 2001

CPD Pay Chart (Dollars per Month)

ANA Rank	ANP Rank	Grade	<1 to								
			3	>3	>6	>9	>12	>15	>18	>21	>24
GEN	GEN	O-10	945	990	1,005	1,020	1,035	1,050	1,065	1,080	1,095
LTG	LTG	O-9	845	890	905	920	935	950	965	980	995
MG	MG	O-8	745	800	815	830	845	860	875	890	905
BG	BG	O-7	645	700	715	730	745	760	775	790	805
COL	COL	O-6	495	530	545	560	575	590	605	620	635
LTC	LTC	O-5	445	480	495	510	525	540	555	570	585
MAJ	MAJ	O-4	395	430	445	460	475	490	505	520	535
CPT	CPT	O-3	345	350	365	380	395	410	425		
1LT	1LT	O-2	295	310	325	340	355	370			
2LT	2LT	O-1	275	290	305	320	335				
Sergeant Major	Chief NCO	E-9	275	310	325	340	355	370	385	400	415
Master Sgt	1st Sergeant	E-8	255	270	285	300	315	330	345	360	375
Sgt First Class	2nd Sergeant	E-7	235	245	260	275	290	305	320	335	350
Staff Sergeant	3rd Sergeant	E-6	210	230	245	260	275	290	305		
Sergeant	1st Patrolman	E-5	180	215	230	245	260	275			
Soldier	2nd Patrolman	E-4	165	200	215	230	245				

CPD Pay Chart (Dollars per Month)

Rank	Current Salary	Number of Soldiers
Lieutenant General	800	1
Major General	700	3
Brigadier General	600	6
Colonel	450	60
Lieutenant Colonel	400	193
Major	350	509
Captain	300	693
1st Lieutenant	250	169
2nd Lieutenant	230	20
Senior Sergeant/1st Sergeant	210	1237
2nd Sergeant	190	Not Available
3rd Sergeant	165	Not Available
Soldier	120	2164

Figure 3.4: Part Two, New Pay Scale for Afghan Forces and Justice Officials Introduced in 2001

Supreme Court Pay Chart (Dollars per Month)

Title	Current Salary	Number of Judges
Chief Justice	1,625	1
High Council Members	1,463	8
General Administrator Director of the Judiciary	1,138	1
Supreme Court Advisors	1,300	36
Appeals Court Directors	1,138	34
Supreme Court Department Directors	1,138	11
Appeals Court Dewans Directors	950	102
Appeals Court Members	650	192
Primary Court Dewans Directors	585	56
Urban Court Directors	520	28
District Primary Court Directors	455	230
Supreme Court Department Professional Members	390	57
Primary Court Judicial Members	325	625

MOJ Legal Aid Department Pay Chart (Dollars per Month)

Title	Current Salary
Directors of Legal Aid	260
Legal Aid Providers	200
Legal Aid Providers hired by World Bank	520
Advocates	???

Attorney General Prosecutor Pay Chart (Dollars per Month)

Title	Current Salary
Average Prosecutor	86

Source: ISAF, May 17, 2010.

Figure 3.5: Recent Disbursements for the ANSF

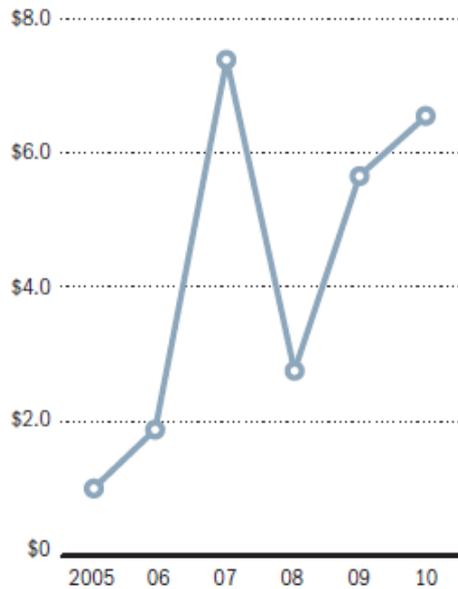
Current Funding	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2010 (With Supplemental)	FY 2011
Totals	\$5.6B	\$6.6B	\$9.2B	\$11.6B

Source: Adapted from data provided by Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Afghanistan, Iraq and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, Congressional Research Services (RL33110), July 16, 2010, p. 24; and “H.R. 4899, Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2010,” http://dpc.senate.gov/dpcdoc.cfm?doc_name=lb-111-2-90.

Figure 3.5, continued:

ASFF AVAILABLE FUNDS BY FISCAL YEAR

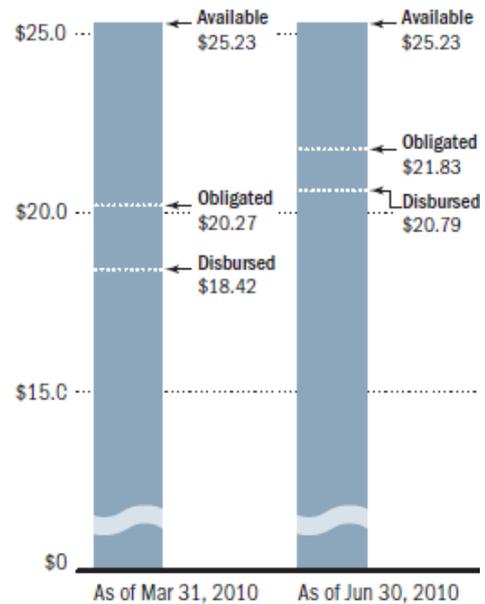
(\$ BILLIONS)



Note: Numbers affected by rounding.
Source: DoD, response to SIGAR data call, 7/14/2010.

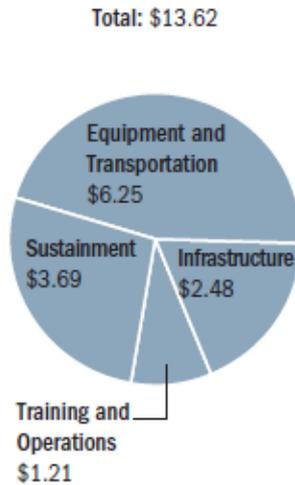
ASFF FUNDS, CUMULATIVE COMPARISON

(\$ BILLIONS)



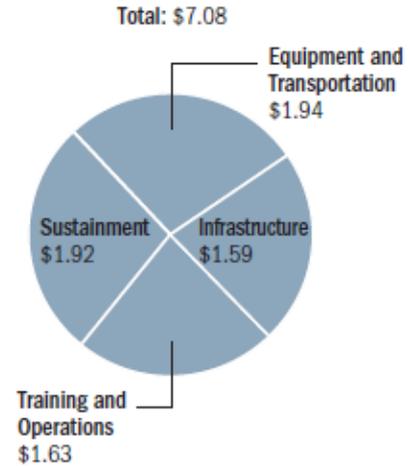
Notes: Numbers affected by rounding. Amounts reported as provided by DoD.
Sources: DoD, responses to SIGAR data call, 7/14/2010 and 4/13/2010.

**ASFF DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE ANA
By Sub-Activity Group,
FY 2005–June 30, 2010 (\$ BILLIONS)**



Note: Numbers affected by rounding.
Source: DoD, response to SIGAR data call, 7/14/2010.

**ASFF DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE ANP
By Sub-Activity Group,
FY 2005–June 30, 2010 (\$ BILLIONS)**



Note: Numbers affected by rounding.
Source: DoD, response to SIGAR data call, 7/14/2010.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the U.S. Congress*, July 30, 2010 pp. 44-45.

The Need for Honest Assessments of Progress: How a Flawed CM Rating System Made Realistic Assessment of the ANSF Impossible

The Capability Milestone system for rating ANSF units was deeply flawed and greatly exaggerated ANSF capabilities. Reports indicate that some ANA units rated CM1 had not received field training as a full unit. Units rated CM1 were supposed to be able to conduct independent operations with only liaison and air support or other support elements from ISAF forces. While this practice appears to have stopped in 2009, giving a unit the highest capability rating before it has ever been trained together as a full unit was clearly inaccurate and reflected poorly on the entire CM system.

Even when a unit has been given a chance to operate in the field before receiving its CM rating, its capabilities could still be ‘spun’ to a higher rating than it deserves. One Canadian OMLT member observed a number of serious shortcomings in the ANA brigade he was mentoring only to have it declared CM1, the highest rating possible. These observations make a sharp contrast with the official requirements for a CM1 rating in **Figure 3.6**.

On June 29, 2010, SIGAR released an audit of the CM rating system used to rate ANSF units throughout their lifespan. The audit found that fundamental flaws in the CM system made the reported numbers of rated ANSF personnel, even at CM4, highly disingenuous:

- *Regression after graduation:* Of the units surveyed, 20 of 51 CM1-rated ANA kandaks and 22 of 31 CM1-rated ANP districts had regressed at least one level from February 2009 to January 2010.
- *CM as a relative measure, not an absolute one:* Units at a given CM rating generally performed better than those with a lower rating. However, units with the same CM rating varied widely in capability. This is partly the result of national caveats that restrict assessment opportunities.
- *The rating system’s reliance on quantitative input measures sometimes obscured operational capability:* As illustrated in **Figure 3.6**, well-supplied and manned units that were not combat effective were given a high rating. One police mentor in Regional Command North (RC-North) stated, “The CM report spits out a rating that to me indicates a much higher level of competence than I am trying to report...If your numbers are good, the form will spit out a high CM rating.”
 - Personnel inputs have overstated operational capabilities: ANA Personnel inputs were based on the available number of personnel, not the number *present for duty*. One kandak assessed by SIGAR had a CM1 rating based on a 99 percent fill rate. However, as of March 2010 only 59 percent of the personnel were present for duty. Personnel present for duty were even harder to assess in the ANP due to its decentralized structure and because personnel were frequently reassigned to provincial headquarters while remaining on the district rolls.
- *CM definitions lacked consistency:* As shown in **Table 3.8**, SIGAR found that parallel guidance issued by IJC and NTM-A/CSTC-A on November 29, 2009 offered different definitions of CM1.
- *Weaknesses in Evaluation Tools:* According to SIGAR, “Mentors and partners stated that they often did not have a clear understanding of what was intended by each CE [Capability Evaluation] assessment question and were concerned that this may have affected assessment results. They also noted that high levels of non-response within the assessment tool did not

prevent the generation of a CM rating level and were not noted in summary reports.” Also, the CE checklist designed for ANP assessments was then assigned for use in ANA evaluations while still containing questions purely relevant to ANP. One such question was, “Does the ANP follow Afghan criminal law and crime procedure requirements for processing crime?”

- *Police units have not been independently evaluated:* ANA evaluations were independently validated by the Validation Transition Team (VTT) as an oversight measure. However, ANP unit assessments were not subject to similar oversight.
- *Units not assessed were rated anyway:* DoD’s reports to Congress included CM4 ratings for up to 559 ANP units when, “as of March 2010, only 229 ANP units were being mentored or partnered and assessed using the CM system.”
- *ANSF capability reports included outdated data:* SIGAR found that, “From September 2009 through February 2010, as many as 44 percent of police district reports had been missing in a single month” due to a lack of mentors/trainers, high turnover rates for mentor/trainer teams, technical problems in reporting from certain areas of the country, and the reluctance of some NATO POMLTs to mentor units in the face of security risks and national caveats.
- *IJC performed limited quality control:* As shown in **Figure 3.7**, IJC was unable to analyze ANSF assessment results due to a lack of resources. In fact, when SIGAR noted that when they requested ANA assessment files for October 2009 and January 2010, “IJC was unable to obtain a full set of files.”⁸⁵

In April 2010, IJC adopted a new ANSF assessment system called the Commanders Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT), but public reporting on the efficacy of the system has not been made available.⁸⁶ It is possible for NTM-A/CSTC-A trainers and mentors to create islands of competence in the ANSF with the aid of individual talent and the luck of the draw. However, until a proper assessment system has been adopted in headquarters and in the field, systematic training and development of the ANSF cannot even be said to have begun.

⁸⁵ SIGAR, “Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments.”

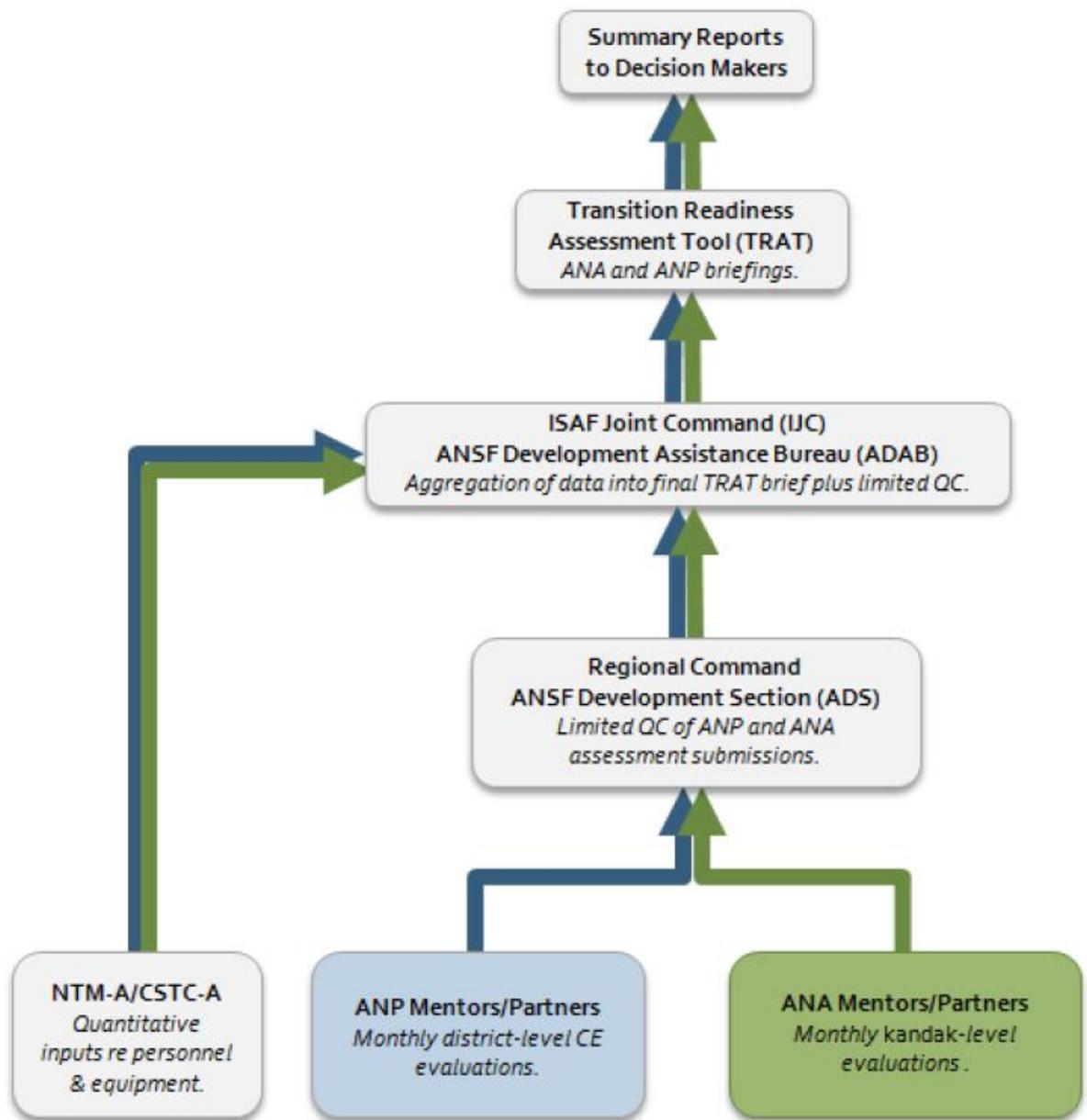
⁸⁶ Ibid.

Figure 3.6: CM1 Rating Requirements versus Observations from OMLT

CM 1 Criteria	S2 Mentor's Evaluation
Develop humint sources and fuse humant into operations	Limited (personal sources)
Provide situational understanding of the enemy to higher, lower, own HQs	Limited (no plotting, analysis)
Provide reasonably accurate understanding of enemy capabilities	Limited
Track historical and background information on threats within their sector	Limited
Determine threat patterns and trends	Limited
Employ and manage the brigade recce company effectively	Not observed
Provide intelligence to enable ops through IPB	Not observed
Develop enemy COAs as part of planning	Not observed
Conduct intelligence gathering from detainees	Not effective

Source: Capt. G. B. Rolston, "Military Intelligence Mentorship in Kandahar Province: Limitations of the 'Afghan Face' Approach," speech to the Conference of Defense Studies Institute, Ottawa, ON, Canada, October 7, 2009, p. 7.

Figure 3.7: CM Assessment Procedures as of March 2010



Source: SIGAR, “Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments,” June 29, 2010.

Table 3.8: Inconsistent Definitions of CM1

Source	Date	Document	CM1 Definition
IJC	Nov. 30, 2009	FRAGO 042-2009	"CM 1 unit is fully capable of planning, executing, and sustaining counterinsurgency operations at Battalion Level with coalition support required in Close Air Support (CAS) / Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) / Indirect (ID) Fires only."
NTM-A/CSTC-A	Nov. 30, 2009	Capability Endorsement checklist form version 5.15	"CM 1. (Full Operational Capability - FOC) The unit, agency, staff function, or installation is capable of conducting primary operational mission(s). Capability, in terms of DOTMLPF, is defined at >85%." ¹³
Regional Command West	Jan. 10, 2010	ANA <i>kandak</i> assessment submission	"Level 1 unit is fully capable of planning, executing, and sustaining independent counterinsurgency operations. Battalion Level."

Source: SIGAR, "Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments," June 29, 2010.

"Spin" as the Enemy of Victory

No army has ever shown that its trainers can objectively evaluate their own work, or the quality of the forces they train. Governments also continue to demonstrate at every level that a lack of transparency almost inevitably disguises key problems and leads to mediocre or inadequate performance. Spin of force development was observed among U.S. officers training the Iraqi Army and is due to a number of factors from loyalty to those being mentored to a desire to demonstrate progress.

Honesty in ANSF reporting has improved since Barack Obama took office and also under Gen. McChrystal's tenure. The drop in the number of units rated CM1⁸⁷ is an example of such increased objectivity in the assessments.⁸⁸ So are the statements admitting the limits of the CM system in the DoD Quarterly Report on Afghanistan issued dated September 2009. The scrapping of the CM system altogether in early 2010, and its replacement with the CUAT system can also be seen as a step in the right direction. The fact remains, however, that this deceptive and dysfunctional system was used in far too many briefings, and no adequate substitute that rates actual performance in the field has yet emerged for either the ANSF or ISAF.

Adequate partnering cannot take place unless metrics and progress reporting are ruthlessly honest and objective, and career-ending penalties need to be imposed for exaggerating success. Unfortunately, past official reporting on the ANSF (much like official reporting on the Iraqi Security Forces) has been less than honest. Officials quote 'trained and equipped' manpower numbers as if these reflected the actual number of men

⁸⁷ Thom Shanker and John H. Cushman, "Reviews Raise Doubt on Training of Afghan Forces," *New York Times*, November 5, 2009.

⁸⁸ Antonio Guistozzi, "The Afghan National Army," *RUSI Journal* 154, no. 6 (December 2009): 41.

in the field, which may be as low as 60 percent of these numbers.⁸⁹ The recent revelation that 78 percent of the ANP had never received *any* training was shockingly at odds with past official numbers on police training. Higher ANA and ANP recruitment numbers are trumpeted, without noting that as much as 25 percent of the ANA disappears annually due to low re-enlistment, desertions, casualties, etc.⁹⁰ As of February 2010, solar-year-to-date attrition in ANCOP was 73 percent, with one battalion in RC-West experiencing 140 percent attrition.⁹¹

Honest use of such ratings may provide a useful snapshot metric for measuring the resources that go into a unit's manpower and training, but even the most honest attempt cannot come close to being an adequate or honest measure of a unit's effectiveness in the field. Unit histories and metrics of actual combat performance are much more useful in this regard. However, analysts and officials quote CM ratings as if they were accurate representations of a unit's abilities, despite the many cases where CM1-rated units operated poorly.⁹² When SIGAR pointed this out in its June 2010 audit, DoD protested that "CM ratings simply depict the manning, training and equipment of a unit." SIGAR reiterated that "In fact...CM rating assessments evaluated a variety of other factors, such as facilities, sustainment, and command and control."⁹³ Furthermore, there are strong indications that the CM rating standard had been lowered or ignored in order to report more CM1-level units.⁹⁴

The New ANSF Rating System

In response to mounting criticism of the CM system, NTM-A/CSTC-A instituted a new system for measuring ANSF capabilities in early 2010. The new system, called the Commanders Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT), was designed to give a more accurate picture of ANSF capabilities. Only two six-week cycles of CUAT ratings had been processed as of July 2010, and overall unit ratings had not been made public.

The CUAT system rates ANSF units using a 5-level scale, as opposed to the old CM system's four levels. The five CUAT levels are:

1. Independent:

ANA and ANP: Unit is capable of planning, executing, and sustaining the full spectrum of its missions without assistance from Coalition Forces.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 40.

⁹⁰ Thomas Johnson and Chris M. Mason, "Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template," *Military Review* (November-December 2009): 6.

⁹¹ SIGAR, "Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments," June 29, 2010, p. 18.

⁹² Capt. G. B. Rolston, "Military Intelligence Mentorship in Kandahar Province: Limitations of the 'Afghan Face' Approach," speech to the Conference of Defence Studies Institute, Ottawa, ON, Canada, October 7, 2009, p. 10.

⁹³ SIGAR, "Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments."

⁹⁴ Guistozzi, "The Afghan National Army," p. 40.

2. Effective with Advisors:

ANA: Unit capable of planning, executing, and sustaining independent operations within their own battle space and maintaining Regional Security. Leaders plan, direct, and synchronize operations; unit executes assigned tasks, coordinates for non-organic support, and works as a team to accomplish the mission. Partnered Unit support does not exceed limited guidance role.

ANP: Capable of independently enforcing Rule of Law, Provincial / District Security and sustaining operations. Leadership plans, directs, and synchronizes district operations; unit coordinates for and distributes resources. Partnered Unit support does not exceed limited guidance role.

3. Effective with Assistance:

ANA: Unit capable of planning, executing, and sustaining independent operations and maintaining Regional Security with limited partnered unit assistance only. Leaders direct and synchronize actions; however, military knowledge and / or experience is insufficient to operate without partner assistance.

ANP: Capable of enforcing Rule of Law, Provincial / District Security, and sustaining operations with limited partnered unit assistance. Teamwork exists at HQ level; leaders direct and synchronize operations; adequate resources for police operations.

4. Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success:

ANA: Unit capability dependent on partnered unit presence / assistance to execute and sustain operations and maintain Regional Security. Teamwork is limited; leadership military knowledge and / or experience is insufficient to operate without routine partner presence / assistance.

ANP: Capability dependent on partnered unit presence / assistance to enforce Rule of Law and Provincial / District Security and sustain operations. Teamwork limited; leaders unable or unwilling to control operations; limited resources for police operations.

5. Ineffective:

ANA: Not capable of executing or sustaining operations and maintaining Regional Security even with partnered unit presence / assistance. No synchronization or teamwork; non-existent leadership; unable to perform; inadequate resources for operations

ANP: Not capable of enforcing Rule of Law and Provincial / District Security or sustaining operations even with partnered unit presence / assistance. No synchronization or teamwork; non-existent leadership at all levels; inadequate resources for police operations

The CUAT assessor system rates a unit, using the above scale, in the following areas: Overall assessment, leadership, operations, intelligence, logistics, equipping, personnel, maintenance, communications, training and education, and partnering. The CUAT uses narratives much more than the old CM system, allowing assessors to write short descriptions of each of the above areas, as well as having blank boxes in which to raise “key issues.” The CUAT also keeps track of a unit’s equipment, manning (which includes the number of personnel authorized, assigned, on leave, AWOL, in school, on medical, available, and present for duty), and training. The CUAT also has a “proficiency-based assessment” of a unit’s most recent operations.

The CUAT is a step in the right direction and represents an improvement over the old CM system. It tracks more issues, puts more emphasis on leadership, and focuses more on narrative than the old CM system, which was purely quantitative. The addition of partnering as a metric to be tracked is a great improvement over the CM system, which ignored this altogether. Moreover, as it is a new system, it has the potential to evolve into a much better alternative to the CM system. Unfortunately, the CUAT still does not correct many of the main problems of the old system, and may even have created some new ones:

- The CUAT system is now more a concept than a well-defined operational program. It is more narrative-based than the CM system, and allows more room for assessors to express their opinions and subjectively rate their units. This is not a problem in and of itself, if all the assessors have a common understanding of the rating levels and what a unit should look like at each level. Indeed, if assessors have this common understanding, the narrative and subjective elements of the CUAT could make the system much more flexible and accurate than the old system.

Unfortunately, the briefing materials that accompany the new system appear to be slim, and assessors do not seem to have a common understanding of the rating levels. Real-world examples need to be provided of what units look like at each level. At present, a few short PowerPoint presentations and Word documents are all the briefing materials assessors get when adopting the new system.

- There are problems in the CUAT system's rating levels. At this point in time, there may not be a single unit in Afghanistan, ANA or ANP, that should be rated level 1 ("Independent") in the strict sense of the term. The struggling ANA and ANP logistics system alone virtually ensures that even high performing units cannot be fully independent. If many units are given a level 1 rating in the near future, the credibility of the whole CUAT system will be in doubt.
- The CUAT system collects more information on manning than the old system. Yet it is not clear where most manning data comes from. Many assessors still just ask the ANA or ANP commander for their manning data – a straightforward and easy solution, which unfortunately results in inaccurate information. Many commanders collect paychecks from "ghost" soldiers and policemen and have no incentive to give honest manning data to NTM-A/CSTC-A assessors.
- The CUAT system places a needed emphasis on current operations and how well or often units conduct them. While this is clearly important, the imperative to conduct operations has in some cases superseded the imperative to properly train the ANA. An ANSF metrics system should alert senior officials when units are being "used up." Units that have conducted operations "independently," but have a massive AWOL rate, no leave policy, terrible equipment accountability, and low re-enlistment rates will eventually be destroyed in the process and lose any capacity to eventually take over the security mission from ISAF.

The CUAT system does seem better than the CM system in this regard, but ANSF metrics must also focus on whether a unit is making sustainable progress toward independence. NTM-A's mission is not to create units that can conduct operations *right now* and have no long-term viability, but to train units to be able to conduct successful independent operations years from now, when the United States has withdrawn. The supposedly capable ANCOP are a case in point, with high capability ratings but close to 80 percent attrition rates. A unit that is almost completely destroyed and rebuilt every year should not be highly rated.

- The CUAT system, like the CM system, does not track unit loyalty. While this is admittedly very difficult to track, it is also of enormous importance. What is the point of rating a unit as highly capable, fully manned and equipped unit if it is infiltrated by insurgents, has divided loyalties, serves the interests of some local powerbroker or official, and/or if the commander uses his command to his own profit? Or if loyalties and tensions between units, branches, and services affect its performance? These have been critical problems in unit effectiveness in virtually every COIN environment, and such network analysis proved critical in Vietnam and Iraq. However, the CUAT system makes no mention of this critically important factor.
- More broadly, the CM system does not deal with civil-military operations or measure how well a unit does in these aspects of the clear, hold, and build functions. These are critical aspects of a population-centric strategy for all elements of the ANA and ANP. Tactical and security operations are only part of the mission, but the CM system is almost exclusively “kinetic” in character.
 - This may be a fatal flaw in using CUAT for the ANP. The rating of the ANP cannot be separated from its effectiveness in a functioning local justice system. The ANP are also far more vulnerable to outside pressure and the corrupting influence of powerbrokers, narcotraffickers, militias, factions, and organized crime. A system that does not explicitly examine how they operate in a civil military environment, deal with the overall justice system and other civil-military operations, and explicitly analyze corruption and outside influence may be little more than useless.

Finally, the new CUAT system has not been accompanied by new guidelines on the importance of ruthless honesty and the history and problems associated with the overinflated capability ratings of the Iraqi and Vietnamese armies. Without this, the more subjective nature of the CUAT system may lead to even more inflated capability ratings. The old CM system (like the Operational Readiness Assessment rating system for the Iraqi army) was deeply flawed, and resulted in exaggerated capability ratings for ANSF units. Quite simply, if the new CUAT system does not result in an immediate fall in the capability ratings of ANSF units, then it is not a more accurate system, and should be treated just as skeptically as the old system.

4. CREATING AN EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

Creating a meaningful partnership that can endure beyond the current military crisis imposes further requirements on the Afghan force development effort. It also means that the ISAF and the United States cannot succeed in developing the ANSF in the ways required unless they meet two tests:

- First, every aspect of force development must be tied to clear demands that the ANSF serve the nation and the Afghan people in ways that minimize corruption, power brokering, the interests of given national and regional leaders, and tie the aid and force development efforts to commanders and the use of the ANSF to valid military requirements. It must be clear to Afghan officials, officers, and powerbrokers at every level that they will be pushed out of their positions, bypassed, or blacklisted when they serve their own interests and not those of the nation.

It will be particularly critical to expand every element of ANSF forces at an Afghan pace that will produce adequate numbers of properly trained officers and NCOs, to ensure that those who prove competent are promoted and put in key command positions, and to remove those who are not competent, corrupt, or that respond to informal powerbrokers and political favoritism.

- Second, the standard for force development must be that ISAF and the United States accelerate force development with adequate funds, mentors, and partners, in ways that limit casualties and the strain on Afghans to levels approaching those that allied forces face. Short-term tactical expediency is not a substitute for real and lasting partnership, or using up Afghans as a substitute for coalition forces.

ISAF and the United States must also look beyond the short-term needs of force expansion and the shape and clear phase of the fight. It must develop plans to make the ANSF a force that can independently defend the nation, and to deal with probable force cuts once the insurgency is defeated.

ISAF and U.S. officials, commanders, and advisers now seem to understand these requirements and that no transition to reliance on Afghan forces can be successful unless they are met. It is far less clear that capitals have the same understanding of such priorities or are presently prepared to act and set the proper standards for action. Everyone involved in the ANSF development effort must understand that more resources and more realistic force goals will not be enough unless the ANSF is made a true partner in every ISAF and U.S. operation.

The Afghan Commitment to the Fight

Other changes are needed on both sides. Corruption still affects all aspects of the ANSF force development effort, even at the Ministerial level. Furthermore, the Afghan government currently pays lip service to the new strategy but often seems more committed to seeking some form of political settlement, regardless of how lasting any insurgent agreement to such a settlement will be. This has compounded serious leadership and capacity problems in both the Ministry of defense and Ministry of the Interior. No real partnership can exist unless the partners fight the same war.

Challenges at the Ministerial Level

All of the problems in the ANSF have been compounded by the need to deal with corruption and a lack of capacity in key ministries and throughout every level of the Afghan government and society. Corruption and the need for competence within the GIROA have created critical problems in developing and employing the ANSF, particularly the ANP and ABP.

The DoD Inspector General's office described the scale of the problem in September 2009:

Lack of accountability for funds, equipment, and personal actions remains problematic throughout the ANSF. Inspectors General and Internal Affairs personnel ranging from the Ministries of Defense and Interior, to ANA Corps and ANP Regional commands reported what they described as substantiated cases of corruption that resulted in little, if any, disciplinary action. Equipment has been consistently damaged, lost or diverted to other uses through noncombat actions without any systematic process to hold ANSF personnel accountable, when appropriate. Processes and procedures were generally not established to be able to determine individual accountability for equipment. Those accountability processes and procedures in place were generally ineffective or not followed.⁹⁵

It will not be enough to create Afghan forces that are effective in combat. ISAF and the United States will have to build capacity and integrity in the GIROA, and especially in the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of the Interior, and justice system. Afghan people must perceive the ANSF as legitimate and trustworthy in the “hold” and “build” missions. Corruption and the perception of corruption in both the Afghan government and the ANSF—particularly in the ANP—has shaken popular confidence and affected the Afghan people's decisions about their ability to trust Afghan forces. Worse, the broader corruption and influence peddling in the Afghan government, particularly the central government, has reached the point where it constantly interferes in the leadership, deployment, and use of Afghan forces in ways that sharply undermine their effectiveness and discredit them from the outside. Moreover, even the most honest ANSF cannot be effective without honest and effective partners in the civil side of government and in a *functioning* justice system.

Commitment to the Fight

Fortunately, the Ministry of Defense has emerged as relatively honest and effective, but the Ministry cannot be any more effective in prosecuting the war—or in being a partner—than Karzai and the Afghan government permit. This already has created serious problems in partnering with the Ministry of Interior. Both Minister Hanif Atmar and the head of the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Amrullah Saleh, had made significant advances in the effectiveness of the Ministry of Interior and Afghan intelligence before they were dismissed in June 2010.

While the excuse for such dismissals was that they did not prevent attacks on a “peace jirga” being held by the President, the real reason seems to have been their resistance to President Karzai's desired for a political reconciliation with the Taliban. Atmar and

⁹⁵ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. iii.

Saleh, widely regarded in the West as two of the most competent GIRoA appointees, were likely removed as obstacles to that reconciliation. Whatever the wisdom of high-level reconciliation with the Taliban, these high-profile dismissals could lead to a lack of ministerial coordination or prioritization that will make it difficult to effectively employ the ANSF, much less make them ready to assume full responsibility for security as ISAF forces leave.

There are good reasons to seek viable political settlements and bring insurgents back into normal Afghan civil life and the Afghan political system. Well-managed reconciliation has been a critical feature in a number of successful counterinsurgency campaigns such as the Dhofar Rebellion in Oman. The ANSF development effort becomes virtually pointless, however, if such efforts are not carefully designed to ensure that the insurgents do not capitalize upon them to win. The same is true if the top leadership of the Afghan government is not actively and fully committed to the same strategy as ISAF. Important as reducing corruption and making ministries fully effective may be, it is far less important than ensuring that GIRoA and ISAF are pursuing the same strategy and the same tactics in the field.

The ministerial dismissals also highlighted another Afghan challenge to effective partnership and development of the ANSF: the deepening ethnic tensions that have accompanied Karzai's tilt toward accommodation of the Taliban and, with them, the Pashtuns. Karzai sought to ease tensions somewhat by filling Atmar's MoI slot with fellow ethnic Tajik Bismullah Khan, former ANA Chief of Staff.⁹⁶ However, Khan's removal from the ANA has triggered alarm over the fact that it further skews the ethnic makeup of the relatively powerful MoD, whose Minister of Defense and Deputy Minister are both Pashtuns. At the same time, Khan has a longstanding patronage network that, along with other sources, fueled corruption and paralysis in the MoD and could undo much of Atmar's progress in reforming the MoI.⁹⁷ The alarm with which minority populations, who stand to lose far more in a power-sharing agreement with the Taliban than the GIRoA, greet this trend threatens to widen the ethnic fissures over which the ANSF are poised.

As JCS Chairman Admiral Mullen said on June 26, 2010, "It has the potential to really tear this country apart."⁹⁸ Whether to support President Karzai's leadership on reconciliation is an awkward choice for the United States and ISAF between, on one hand, degradation of the insurgency despite uncertain long-term prospects and, on the other, potential reigniting of a civil war.

Reforming the ISAF and NTM-A Training Effort

ISAF and the United States need to improve critical aspects of the partnering effort as well, and they already have made important reforms. The overall command structure of

⁹⁶ Dexter Filkins, "Overture to the Taliban Jolts Afghan Minorities," *New York Times*, June 26, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/27/world/asia/27afghan.html?th&emc=th>.

⁹⁷ International Crisis Group, *A Force in Fragments: Reconstituting the Afghan National Army*, Asia Report No. 190, May 12, 2010, pp. 11-13, 19-20.

⁹⁸ Filkins, "Overture to the Taliban Jolts Afghan Minorities."

ISAF and U.S. forces affecting the development of the ANSF is shown in **Figure 4.1**. ISAF and U.S. force training and generation efforts are now combined under one commander and into NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A). The recently set-up ISAF Joint Command (IJC), the 3 star operational HQ for the Regional Commands, will be in charge of commanding and controlling the ETT/PMT/OMLT/POMLTs. Essentially, NTM-A is now in charge of force training, generation, and resourcing, while IJC is in charge of fielded force development.

CSTC-A, which is an American command, has effectively merged with NTM-A, but some responsibilities remain solely under the CSTC-A purview. The vast majority of funding for the ANSF training effort comes from the United States, and thus goes through CSTC-A and not NTM-A. Furthermore, NTM-A did not take on the MoI and MoD development mission. These have remained under the CSTC-A. However, in most mission areas, and in the physical NTM-A/CSTC-A headquarters themselves, the two organizations, like their acronyms, have effectively merged.

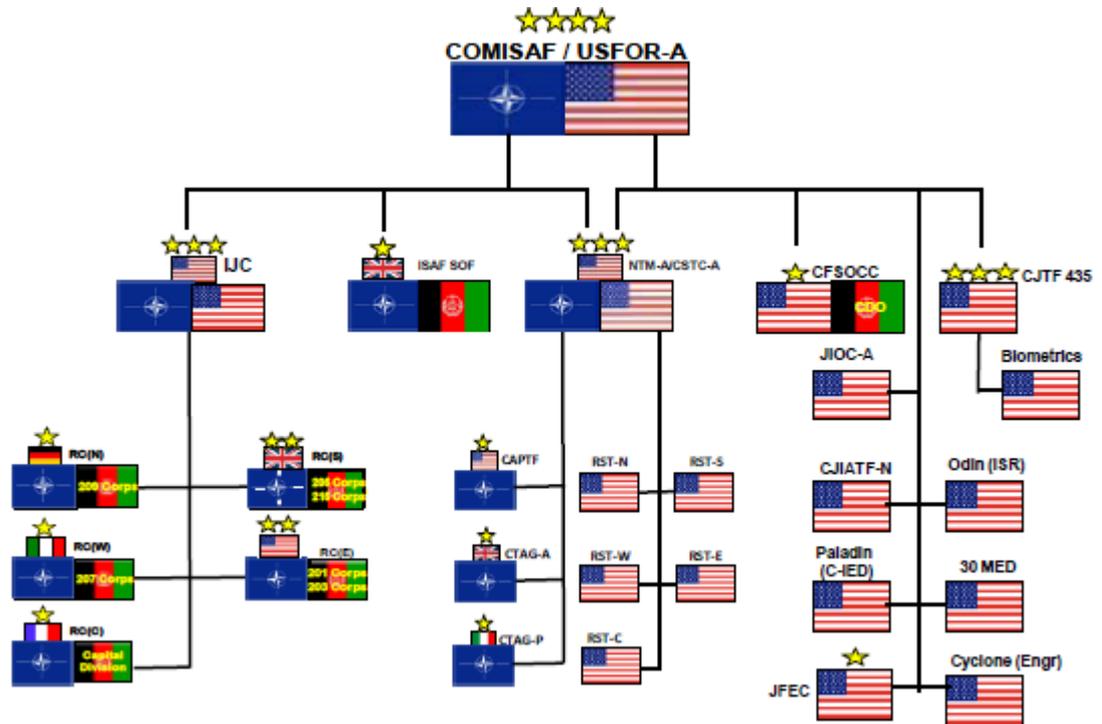
This restructuring was a critical step towards fully integrating the ISAF and U.S. training efforts into an effort that can build real partners. While separating the training and partnering responsibilities holds the potential for friction or miscommunication between IJC and NTM-A/CSTC-A, thus far this has not come to pass. Additional, more detailed improvements have taken place within the command and control (C2) structure and training processes since October 2009. These improvements are still in progress and may do much to correct the past problems of a poorly coordinated and inefficient effort.

It also seems likely that this reorganization will enable CSTC-A and NTM-A to focus more effectively on improvements in force development. The establishment of NTM-A, including the dual-hatting arrangement with CSTC-A, and the placing of the ETT/PMT/OMLT/POMLTs under IJC as seen in **Figure 4.2**, has the potential to help solve several major challenges that the ISAF has faced:

- First, the arrangement may help synchronize ISAF and U.S. approaches toward the ANSF mission. One caveat is that the transfer of Task Force (TF) Phoenix to IJC will require close integration among the dual-hatted NTM-A/CSTC-A and IJC on the ANSF mission, to ensure top to bottom integration from the ministerial to the ground level.
- Second, NTM-A/CSTC-A provides a readily available alternative for those TCNs that are ready to contribute but prefer not to provide combat forces.

NTM-A/CSTC-A was able to report some progress by May 2010. Their training capacity was doubled to handle the number of recruits required for growth objectives, NTM-A/CSTC-A manning had increased to 58 percent from 25 percent in November 2009, mandatory literacy training had been instituted for ANSF NCOs, and the instructor to student ratio had dropped from an average of 1:79 in November 2009 to 1:29.

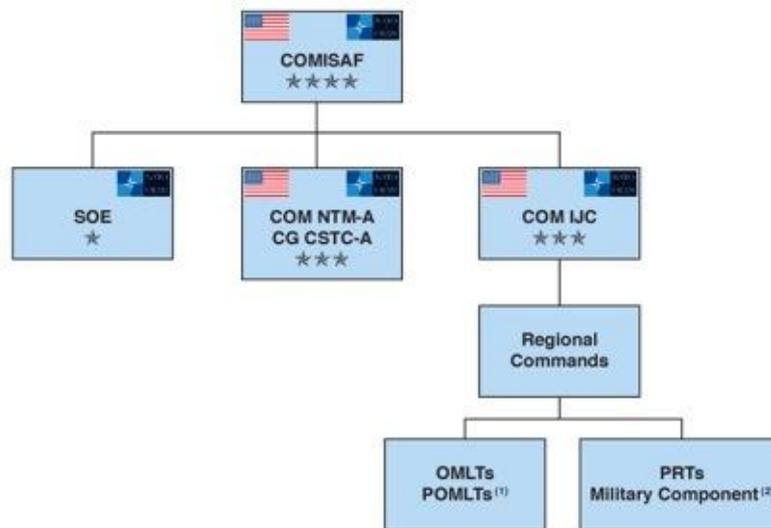
Figure 4.1: The Overall ISAF Task Organization



* Supports both ANA & ANP, report administrative to DCG ANA
 Source: DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 15.

Figure 4.2: Training Command Reform

ISAF Upper Command Structure



⁽¹⁾ Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (POMLTs)
⁽²⁾ The civilian component of a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRTs) is run by the ISAF nation leading the PRT

Source: ISAF, July 12, 2010.

The Critical Importance of Qualified Trainers and Mentors

Partnering is even more dependent on the support of the training and mentoring effort in the field. The lack of instructors for units in the field has been another serious factor contributing to both the ANSF's weaknesses, and the AWOL/retention rates in the ANA and ANP. As of March 2010, NATO faced a shortage of 500-600 ANP trainers.⁹⁹ Shortages of trainers often equates with corrupt and incompetent police. Brig. Gen. Lawrence D. Nicholson, the top Marine commander in the south stated that "I'd rather have no police than bad police, because bad police destroy local faith and confidence in their government and push [the locals] to the Taliban."

Shortfalls in ANA Trainers

CSTC-A provided the following summary of shortages in the mentoring effort of Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) in June 2009:

According to NATO requirements, 67 OMLTs are currently required

- 56 OMLTs on the ground, 46 validated
- Confirmed offers –13
- Unofficial offers -5

Projected Status – End of CY 2009

- NATO requirement –75
- CSTC-A projection – 62 OMLTs on the ground
- Deficit will be 13

Projected Status – End of CY 2010

- NATO requirement – 91
- CSTC-A projection – 66 OMLTs on the ground
- Deficit will be 25

This situation was still critical as of mid-2010. As of April, NTM-A/CSTC-A was facing significant shortfalls in both OMLTs and trainers.¹⁰⁰ A requirement of 2,325 institutional trainers who provide the ANSF both basic and advanced training fell short by 759 personnel. Further, IJC requires 180 OMLTs whom are embedded with the Afghan Army unit.¹⁰¹ As of March 2010, NATO was delinquent by 38 OMLTs or 1520 personnel (40 members per team).¹⁰²

⁹⁹ John Vandiver, "Afghan Police Now Must Be Literate to Serve," *Stars and Stripes*, March 23, 2010, <http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=68854>.

¹⁰⁰ DoD, Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, April 2010.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² SIGAR, "Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments."

Shortfalls in ANP Trainers

There were even more serious problems in providing adequate trainers and mentors for the Afghan police. In addition to the vacant 759 institutional trainers for the ANSF, the IJC reported a major shortfall in Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (POMLTs). NTM-A/CSTC-A provided the following summary of shortages in the mentoring effort of POMLTs in June 2009:

CSTC-A is requesting that NATO provide 38 POMLTs by end of CY 2009

- 14 POMLTs on the ground
 - Confirmed offers - 10
 - Unofficial offers - 8

Projected Requirements – End of CY 2010

- 98 additional POMLTs

Projected Requirements – End of CY 2011

- 46 additional POMLTs

CSTC-A is requesting that NATO provide 182 POMLTs and BMTs by the end of CY 2011

It is unclear how this situation will improve in the future, or if anyone agrees on exactly how many POMLTs are needed. In March 29, 2010, IJC reported that NATO was short 163 POMLTs.¹⁰³ In April 2010, DoD stated that there were 108 unfilled POMLT's or 4,320 personnel (40 members per team).¹⁰⁴ In June 2010, NATO stated that an additional 143 POMLTs would be required by October 2010.¹⁰⁵ NMT-A plans at the end of 2009 called for all ANP personnel to be trained by 2012. Current estimates for the percentage of untrained police run as high as 78 percent, and the 2012 timeline is dependent upon estimates of European trainer contributions that seem likely to prove overly optimistic.

Twice in 2010 alone, the United States has had to send more American soldiers to Afghanistan because of NATO trainer shortfalls. According to Secretary Gates, "The primary shortfall is about 750 trainers, and we're continuing to work on that."¹⁰⁶ However, as the ANSF expands, and its training becomes more specialized, the demand for trainers will increase substantially. It seems likely that the trainer shortfall will continue and probably expand for several years to come despite additional American personnel. If the European contribution of trainers falls short, the entire timeline will have to be reassessed.

The need for more trainers will only grow over the next few years, making the current shortfall even more damaging to the ANSF. NTM-A/CSTC-A is unable to meet current demand, yet the demand for trainers will almost double by 2012. As of August

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010.

¹⁰⁵ SIGAR, "SIGAR's Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams."

¹⁰⁶ Tom Bowman, "NATO Slack Forces U.S. to Send Afghanistan Trainers," NPR, August 13, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129163785>.

2010 NTM-A/CSTC-A fielded 950 trainers, with a need for 1,500. By August 2012, NTM-A/CSTC-A estimates that 2,796 trainers will be needed.¹⁰⁷ It is extremely unlikely that NTM-A/CSTC-A will be able to come up with the additional 1,846 trainers, even with large contributions from the U.S. military and optimistically high contributions from NATO countries. Furthermore, the figure of 2,796 trainers needed in August 2012 may rise due to a number of factors, including a rise in ANSF attrition rates.

While 1,876 is a lot of trainers compared to past ANSF training efforts, it is a paltry sum compared to the tens of thousands of combat personnel in Afghanistan, not to mention the thousands of contractors. The fact that ANSF development remains the “Strategic Main Effort” yet is so woefully undermanned is a sad contradiction that does major damage to the overall war effort.

Indeed, some analysts have suggested shaping ANSF growth timelines according to the numbers of trainers and partners ISAF is able to deploy, instead of according to the numbers of Afghans they are able to recruit. This would prevent the ANSF from expanding beyond the ability of ISAF to train it. However, the constant and increasing demands of the insurgency, as well as the tight timelines that the entire COIN effort faces, make this suggestion unlikely to be implemented.

The Impact of Quantitative Shortfalls

What is clear is that any continuation of such shortages in trainers and mentors will affect virtually every aspect of ANSF development. In September 2009, the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoD IG) found numerous examples of personnel shortages affecting the training and mentoring mission:¹⁰⁸

ARSIC-S [Afghan Regional Security Integration Command - South] reported that its operations have been stressed by the lack of personnel resources. For example, the minimum force protection requirement for movement off of a Forward Operating Base (FOB) by an ETT to conduct an outreach operation is nine personnel. However, some teams are comprised of as few as four soldiers.

Because of this, some ANA units in outlying FOBs in ARSIC-S have not received the ETT mentoring support required. Those FOBs were visited whenever possible, but the ETTs could not provide the over watch actually needed.

In ARSIC-E [Afghan Regional Security Integration Command - East], ETTs are at less than 50 percent strength, staffed with four to six personnel, far short of the required 16. ARSIC-C reported that ETTs have an average of only four of 16 personnel required and are forced to “borrow” the necessary support and security personnel from nearby U.S. combat units.

Staff from the Regional Corps Advisory Command (RCAC) in ARSIC-E stated that replacement individual augmenters’ were rarely assigned by CSTC-A to the billet against which they were requisitioned, apparently due to a combination of combat and noncombat losses, as well as the changing situation on the ground. And, in many instances, personnel who

¹⁰⁷ Colonel Joe Buche, conversation with author, August 26, 2010.

¹⁰⁸ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 39.

were trained at Ft. Riley did not know whether they would be assigned as ETTs or PMTs until arrival in-country.

CSTC-A staff assigned to the CFC noted that ETTs accompanying Afghan infantry battalions (kandaks) were invariably under-strength.

Many of the ARSICs reported that MOS [military occupational specialty] skills and specialties required of the ETTs/OMLTs and PMTs/POMLTs are not always analogous with the functions they are mentoring; personnel did not have the skill sets required for their positions.

In June 2010, SIGAR found that while DoD had submitted CM ratings for 559 ANP units, only 229 units were being directly mentored or partnered under IJC.¹⁰⁹

A Need to Improve Quality and Partnering

Fixing such problems requires far more than providing warm bodies to serve in a mentoring and partnering role. It cannot be solved by assigning personnel who lack the skills and desire for the job, or by contracting in ways that do not set valid requirements and get qualified personnel. The personnel involved must have motivation and competence—characteristics lacking in many of those who have been arbitrarily assigned to such roles in the past. These positions must be treated as what they are: At least as important to victory as command roles in ISAF forces. Mentors must be trained in how to train a foreign army or police force, something that is not easy to do.

As has been stressed throughout this study, the past lack of trainers and mentors has been a key reason why the ANSF has been more an auxiliary than a true partner. One Canadian OMLT member observed that,

As soon as one of your Coalition colleagues started talking about “putting an Afghan face on the operation,” you knew that meant that rather than engage in the frustrating process of ANA skills development involved in mounting a joint operation . . . they were going to grab a couple ANP officers from somewhere at the last minute and throw them on the helicopter to meet the ISAF ConOp [Concept of Operation] requirements. The gap in understanding between Afghans and Coalition was seen as simply too wide to rely on them in battle. And mentors, forced to fall back on personal diplomacy in the absence of any other leverage, were unable to bridge the gaps.¹¹⁰

Trainer and mentor quality, as well as a failure to properly prepare and monitor partner units, have been equally damaging issues. Newly formed forces do not have the ability of experienced units to absorb trained, but inexperienced, officers, NCOs and soldiers. There are few—or no—cadres that can pull units together into effective teams, deal with the fact that training is not practical experience, and help new personnel through the long process of acquiring practical expertise.

ANSF units need to be mentored in the field, to be partnered with ISAF units, and to fight or work on actual operations. They also need full support from partner units. Too often, the attitude among ISAF officers has been that the ANA are the mentor’s ‘problem,’ and mentors are used as an excuse to avoid contact with the relatively unreliable ANA.

¹⁰⁹ SIGAR, “SIGAR’s Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams.”

¹¹⁰ Rolston, “Military Intelligence Mentorship in Kandahar Province,” p. 16.

General McChrystal showed he was well aware of this problem and made dealing with it one of the pillars of his strategy to “improve effectiveness through greater partnering with ANSF. We will increase the size and accelerate the growth of the ANSF, with a radically improved partnership at every level, to improve effectiveness and prepare them to take the lead in security operations.”¹¹¹

Unfortunately, many of the mentors working with the ANA and ANP received little or no relevant training in the past. According to one First Lieutenant assigned to the KMTC in 2008,

This is how my entire team was selected during the middle of my tour: a random group of people from all over Kabul—Air Force, Navy, Army, active-duty and National Guard—pulled from their previous assignments, thrown together and expected to do a job that none of us were trained in any meaningful way to do . . . We are expected, by virtue of time-in-grade and membership in the U.S. military, to be able to train a foreign force in military operations, an extremely irresponsible policy that is ethnocentric at its core and which assumes some sort of natural superiority in which an untrained American soldier has everything to teach the Afghans, but nothing to learn . . . You’re lucky enough if you had any mentorship training at all, something the Army provides in a limited capacity at pre-mobilization training at Fort Riley, but having none is the norm . . . Soldiers who receive their pre-mobilization training at Fort Bragg learn absolutely nothing about mentoring foreign forces aside from being given a booklet on the subject, and yet soldiers who go through Bragg before being shipped to Afghanistan are just as likely to be assigned to mentoring teams as anyone else.¹¹²

SIGAR provided further support in June 2010:

ANP mentors stated that they found that they were unprepared for their duties and unfamiliar with MOI regulations concerning ANP operations. Mentors/partners reported that insufficient guidance and training made it difficult to assess police districts’ compliance with MOI decrees and guidance, as required in numerous questions on the CE checklist. In response to our written questions, mentors in RC-North reported, “The fundamental lack of training of [police mentor teams] in essential MOI decrees, procedures, and common problems hampers the [police mentor team’s] ability to provide meaningful information and the lack of a comparable standard creates a large degree of subjectivity from one team to the next.”¹¹³

Compounding the numerical shortfall in NATO and U.S. trainers is the qualitative shortfall. According to Colonel Joe Buche, NTM-A/CSTC-A Chief of Staff, very few personnel in NTM-A/CSTC-A had relevant experience or prior interest in either Afghanistan or ANSF development.¹¹⁴ Most NTM-A/CSTC-A trainers were detailed from other units that do not specialize in ANSF training, and finding personnel qualified to train the ANSF in many of the more specialized fields (medical, logistics, etc.) is difficult.

¹¹¹ Stanley McChrystal, “COMISAF Initial Assessment (Unclassified)—Searchable Document,” *Washington Post*, September 21, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/21/AR2009092100110.html>.

¹¹² Chris Hedge, “Afghanistan’s Sham Army,” *TruthDig.com*, November 9, 2009, http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/20091109_afghanistans_sham_army/.

¹¹³ SIGAR, “SIGAR’s Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams.”

¹¹⁴ Colonel Joe Buche, conversation with author, August 26, 2010.

NTM-A/CSTC-A will also need more than military and police trainers. For example, DoD IG found that CSTC-A exerted “insufficient contract oversight” due to a lack of trained contracting officers and contracting officer representatives in country.¹¹⁵ As ISAF and USFOR-A adjust their command structures, regardless of the specific decisions about command structure, it will be critical to retain both the mentoring and partnering components of *every aspect* of ANSF development. ISAF “mentors” must be able to support and coach ANSF units through training and advice, including “observer/controller-like” functions. Both functions will be critical, whether provided by the same or discrete coalition ISAF units. Minister Wardak and many ISAF commanders have stressed the impact top-flight partners have on raising the capabilities of ANSF units.

A needed partial solution is to give ANSF mentoring a higher priority in U.S. personnel selection. One ex-adviser recommends “We must pay the adviser bill with the best, brightest and bravest, even if it means diverting O-5 and O-6 command level talent to work with the ANA rather than their current service. This may meet fierce resistance from the services, but how much longer can we shortchange the adviser mission by filling only half the requirement?... While dozens of suitable officers inhabit the offices of ISAF and CJTF 82 [Combined Joint Task Force - 82] planning solutions for the Afghan people, with little or no contact with ordinary Afghans, too few are deployed with the adviser teams.”¹¹⁶

Another solution would be to force true unity of effort. ISAF cannot win if it pursues the fragmented, stovepiped, and under-resourced national efforts—and real-world lack of integrated civil-military efforts—that have helped cripple the ANSF development in past years. “Unity of effort” has been an awkward cross between a lie and an oxymoron. Far too many national efforts have acted as if the ANSF were not involved in a real war. This cannot continue if a very real war is to be won.

Correcting Shortfalls in the Past ISAF and U.S. Training and Mentoring Effort

Promises are not progress. As of June 16, 2010, properly resourcing “mentors/trainers” into newly graduated ANSF units continued to lag as General Petraeus confirmed that, including POMLTs, the resourcing shortfall for trainers and associated personnel in Afghanistan lay between 2,000 and 2,500 personnel.¹¹⁷ The recent deficiencies may signal a larger issue to come as ISAF are preparing to expand the ANSF by over 100,000 personnel to a total of 300,000. As the ANSF boost their ranks, thousands of additional trainers will be required. As attrition rates are high in both the ANP and ANA, many more than 100,000 personnel will need to be trained. If enough trainers cannot be found to serve the current ANSF force, it is hard to see how a force of 300,000 will be trained,

¹¹⁵ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 17.

¹¹⁶ Jeff Haynes, “Reforming the Afghan National Army,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes*, November 2009, <http://www.glevumassociates.com/files/ReformingAfghanArmy.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ David H. Petraeus, “Situation in Afghanistan,” statement before U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C., June 16, 2010.

let alone how it will be adequately mentored in the field and maintained in the face of high attrition rates.¹¹⁸

No matter how successful the improvements in the formal training process become, they will not be enough. It is unrealistic to expect that newly graduated ANSF units have the capacity to put effective soldiers into combat, manage supplies and budget, and respond effectively in joint operations with ISAF forces. While pay deficiencies have been addressed with a raise to \$140 in January 2010, providing mentors in the field remains a vital component of ANSF development.¹¹⁹

Moreover, an effective force development effort requires transparency and honesty on the part of trainers and mentors. That is a product of both experience and a level of tasking that can only come with adequate numbers and quality. As already mentioned, past efforts to build and develop the ANSF have been hampered by a consistent tendency by U.S. and ISAF personnel to exaggerate their success and the capabilities of their soldiers.

Using Afghan Forces with Care and Concern for Casualties

Finally, ISAF and the United States must take more care in the ways Afghan forces are used. The expansion of Afghan forces has involved too many past experiments in training cycles, force expansion, and partnering as substitutes for military experience that are high risk efforts and will need to be constantly evaluated and recalibrated.

Such efforts have a moral and ethical dimension as well as a military one. The desire to demonstrate significant progress by summer 2011 in accordance with President Obama's strategy may lead ANSF units into rushed deployments. It is one thing to push the development of Afghan forces in the face of a military crisis. It is another to overstretch them, rush them into service, and use them up.

This will be as true in the future as it was in the past. Effective partnership means giving ANSF lives the same priority as those of ISAF forces. This part of the COIN campaign will be one of the most difficult to implement, both in terms of the logistical burden and of domestic perception in donor nations. However, it is one of the most critical; leadership on this issue can no longer be avoided if the campaign is to be a success. Afghan forces must not be rushed into the field in ways in which ISAF and the U.S. sacrifice Afghan soldiers and policemen in the interest of victory, or ask them to take unreasonable risks that ISAF and U.S. forces will not take. Current operational tempo for the ANSF—including developing and fielding a force while simultaneously fighting an insurgency—has left little room for forces, chiefly the ANA, to maintain a balanced cycle of combat, training and leave time. Afghan forces need to be put on such a cycle even as

¹¹⁸ Reuters, "NATO Falls Short in Push for New Trainers," February 24, 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE61N5D520100224>.

¹¹⁹ Keith Richburg, "U.S. Makes Small Strides in Getting Afghan Army Fighting Fit, but Hurdles Remain," *Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/31/AR2010013101933.html>.

some aspects of the training process are accelerated. If continued without respite, that operational tempo is likely to exhaust the force, have a deleterious impact on retention and allow no room for the critical additional training required.

5. MOVING TOWARD JOINT COMMAND

If Afghan forces are to become full partners with ISAF and the United States and eventually replace them, the ANA, the ANP, and other elements of the ANSF must become part of joint headquarters and joint operations at every level from regional commands on down. The provision of adequate numbers of mentors, partners, and enablers must be tied to joint planning, intelligence, and operations that steadily move the ANSF from a role where ISAF is effectively in the lead to the point where ANSF are in the lead and then largely replace ISAF forces.

Both Afghans serving in the ANSF and the Afghan people must see that ISAF is building up a fully independent ANSF, will leave as soon as Afghan forces are ready, that ISAF respects Afghan sovereignty the moment Afghan governance is capable and honest, and that Afghans are steadily increasing their role in deciding where military force should be used and how best to protect Afghan civilians.

Some experts have suggested that this can be accomplished at the regional level by embedding elements or all of a brigade or brigade combat team with the regional command center and forces of the ANA and ANP. This is a decision for the ISAF command, but it is clear that any workable solution means expanding partnership at each major echelon of operations and not simply the top. It is equally clear that such efforts must be supported at every level by active ISAF enablers and partner units until the ANSF is ready to fully take over all aspects of the mission. And that the timing of success in this area can only occur during 2012-2015 and not in 2011.

Progress is already being made. The need to coordinate a wide range of ANA, ANP, and NDS operations is also a reason for bringing the new Operational Coordination Centers (OCC) system—which is now beginning operations at the regional level—to full operational capability. It is a reason for strengthening its coordination functions, for providing the OCCs with better communications and display systems, and for providing mentors and partners. Giving the OCCs added command and control functionality could make them a key tool in ensuring that Afghan forces can take the lead when they are ready, and shift from the remaining areas where ISAF is in the lead to operations centers where the ANSF is in the lead and ISAF is in support.

These steps will require a change in the U.S. and ISAF military culture, as well as efforts to create effective ANSF capabilities. ISAF commanders and troops must uniformly treat the ANSF units they work with as real partners, and see their development as having equal or greater priority than day-to-day kinetic operations against the insurgents. There must be a common feedback loop to the NTM-A and CSTC-A. This process will constantly improve the training process in conjunction with the Afghan Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, and ISAF top command to keep altering the equipment mix and supply system for each type of ANSF force. In doing so, it can both fight effectively beside ISAF units and develop a force structure that is tailored to Afghan needs and the eventual creation of independent ANSF units that Afghanistan can afford and sustain.

Once again, any rigid adherence to a 2011 “deadline” is more likely to lose the war than win it. Partnering also means that Afghan force development must occur in “Afghan Time.” ISAF and the United States must also learn there are times when they must move at an Afghan pace and respect Afghan priorities and values. ANSF force development cannot be managed on the basis of ISAF priorities and standards of efficiency. Issues like leave and operational tempo need to take into account the need Afghans have to deal with their families and to avoid breaking units by overusing them. Efforts to create Afghan officers and NCOs that mirror Western military systems have to be tempered with the understanding that there are limits to how quickly Afghan concepts of military training and operations can be changed—if at all. The task is to help the Afghans become more efficient in doing it their way, not to try to transform them.

At the same time, ISAF and the ANSF must work together to avoid “over-partnering,” cases in which the ANSF has been constantly controlled and commanded by ISAF mentors and advisers and used only as a minor adjunct to NATO forces. According to one ex-adviser, “When the ANA feel they own the problem, they excel. When we push them to the back or when we do too much for them, we stunt their growth or stifle initiative. When the ANA are living too close to the coalition, they are more apt to become stale and are all too ready to let the coalition do the heavy lifting . . . ‘partnering’ will be most effective under the following conditions: 1) early in the ANA unit lifecycle, 2) of limited duration until the ANA unit reaches an ability to operate independently, and, most importantly, 3) with a focus on improving ANA effectiveness as the purpose of the partnership. In addition, a partnered unit should not be a substitute for embedded advisers.”¹²⁰

This “over-partnering” seems to have shaped some of the past exaggerated assessments of the ANA’s capabilities. The high number of joint and “independent” operations the ANA has carried out is often used by ISAF officials to demonstrate their growing competence. Yet, “in reality, the overwhelming majority of the ‘operations’ were carried out at the company level, which given the understaffing of most battalions meant fifty to sixty men. Occasionally a brigade-size operation was mounted—even successfully, like a much-praised offensive in Tagab Valley (Kapisa) in 2008. In fact the overwhelming majority of these ‘operations’ were simple patrols. The larger ‘independent’ operations were supervised and assisted by the embedded mentoring teams and relied on the presence of supporting foreign troops and air support, a major morale booster.”¹²¹

Finding the right balance of partnering will be equally important at the top. There has long been a need for more effective and comprehensive ministerial advisory support, a mission currently led by CSTC-A. While such efforts sometimes have less visible impact than building combat power, building key systems at the Ministry and service level—personnel management, logistics accounting, etc.—are essential to ensuring that the ANSF can eventually stand on their own. This mission also requires appropriate resourcing, including sufficiently senior-level advisers who have actually helped run ministries in their own countries.

¹²⁰ Haynes, “Reforming the Afghan National Army.”

¹²¹ Guistozzi, “The Afghan National Army,” p. 40.

Providing Proper Equipment and Funding

Success also means eliminating other shortfalls while force levels continue to sharply expand. ANSF forces must acquire the necessary enablers and equipment, in as timely a manner as possible. The DoD Inspector General found that the ANSF had shortages of essential unit equipment, including howitzers, mortars, communications, and engineer.¹²² Work by CSTC-A shows that it will be critical to provide the equipment for ANSF units that is interoperable with ISAF forces and weapons, and to ensure that such weapons are delivered as soon as ANSF forces are ready to absorb them. This does not mean that all equipment has to come from the West. There are systems like the Mi-17, D-30, SPG-9, and RPG-7 that are cheap and meet Afghan needs. A partner force, however, must be able to draw on ISAF support and sustainment and work directly with ISAF forces. It also cannot wait on time-consuming delays in the U.S. FMS process or financial rules that block force development.

More flexibility is needed to rapidly provide existing funds to meet immediate needs. Equipment procurement and delivery need to be made more rapid. ANA trust money should not be rigidly limited to the ANA when helping the ANP is critical.

Costly as this may be, ANSF force development is still far cheaper than providing equivalent ISAF forces. According to the DoD IG, “CSTC-A estimates the cost (in 2010 dollars) to generate ANA forces to be \$1B/10,000 personnel, and the cost to generate ANP forces to be \$.35B/10,000 personnel. They also estimated that the annual sustainment costs for the ANA would be \$210M/10,000 personnel; and the ANP would be \$182M/10,000 personnel. By contrast, the Congressional Research Service in 2005 estimated that the annual cost to field and sustain U.S. forces in Afghanistan was \$267,000 per soldier, which amounts to \$2.67B/10,000 soldiers.”¹²³

Consistency will also be important. Funding for the ANSF development effort cannot be allowed to swing from year-to-year on a “feast and famine” basis that makes effective management of the effort impossible. While much attention has been paid to the stability of funding to the ANSF development effort, delays in providing funds continue. The FY 2009 Bridge Appropriation was not made available to CSTC-A until the second quarter of FY 2009.¹²⁴ ANSF funding for FY2011 was set at \$11.6 billion, which will be adequate if provided on time.¹²⁵ However, if this \$11.6 billion dollar “feast” is followed by a 2012 “famine,” ANSF development will suffer. ISAF members need to carefully review their own near- and longer-term commitment to the ANSF. This includes ensuring that ANSF development and operations are funded by alliance nations on a sustained basis until the war is won and Afghanistan has moved solidly towards security, stability, and development.

¹²² DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. ii.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Nordland, “U.S. Approves Training to Expand Afghan Army.”

Developing Sufficient Afghan Logistics Capability

Developing ANSF logistics capabilities has previously had a low priority relative to the quick development of combat capabilities. The ISAF logistics system has often had to step in to provide the ANSF with needed materials. If the ANSF is to take the lead, and take over security in Afghanistan, it will need an independent logistics capability.

The DoD Inspector General's office found major problems with the quality of ANSF logistics:¹²⁶

The Afghan National Security Forces' logistics systems that support the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP), respectively, remained institutionally immature and insufficiently effective. Army and Police personnel have not become proficient in applying the established logistical model and did not demonstrate a high degree of confidence in the logistics system's capacity to perform as designed. To ensure the supply system worked somewhat effectively, the ANA and ANP often depended upon U.S. mentors and trainers to "push" them needed equipment and supplies by mobilizing the support of U.S. counterparts in the ANSF supply chain.

This occurred because the ANA and ANP logistics functions were still in an early stage of development, with the ANP significantly lagging the ANA. Neither the ANA nor the ANP had enough trained and experienced logistics personnel to make their logistics processes and procedures function properly. Moreover, trained logistics personnel and units had been periodically diverted to "front line" security roles, which has been the ANSF and Coalition forces' priority.

In addition, CSTC-A did not have an overarching strategic plan with corresponding operational implementation plans for developing logistics capability within the ANSF, and has not, until recently, sufficiently emphasized the importance of developing a sustainable ANSF logistics function appropriate to its growing operational capability. In addition, CSTC-A did not have enough mentoring personnel to address effectively both security forces expansion and logistical development issues.

Finally, establishing modern military and police logistical systems will require overcoming the still strong legacy among ANSF leaders of the former Soviet-style, highly centralized, logistical mindset, as well as the cultural tendency to hoard, resulting from the countries prolonged experience with poverty. Corruption, which has been endemic in the ANSF supply system and continues to be problematic, undermines the potential effectiveness of the Army and Police logistical systems.

As a result, the ANSF systems were unable to reliably meet army and police logistical needs. Moreover, a widening gap has developed between the logistical and operational capabilities of the ANSF. This has limited the capacity of the ANSF to support its current force size, which could lead to a growing logistical gap, prolonged ANSF dependence on the U.S. and ISAF/Coalition, and delayed building of a logistically sustainable Afghan security force.

CSTC-A also had a critical shortage in logistics mentors. Before 2007, logistics mentoring was provided only at the senior levels of the MoD and MoI, with some logisticians in the Embedded Training Teams (ETTs) providing limited assistance at the Corps and level.¹²⁷ Logistics mentoring below the MoI level was not provided before 2008 due to personnel shortages. "It was not until 2008 that CSTC-A began to organizationally coordinate and synchronize its logistics mentoring resources, with the

¹²⁶ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 25.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

objective of establishing a logistics mentoring organization capable of integrating and focusing logistics training for the ANA and ANP. As of June 27, 2010, NTM-A/CSTC-A had a shortfall of 60 acquisition specialists, and was requesting additional Contract Oversight Representatives as well.¹²⁸ The continuing shortage of logistics mentors—particularly for the ANP—has limited the impact of this effort.”¹²⁹

The high operational tempo of units in the south and east, combined with overly optimistic assumptions about ANA manpower (as covered elsewhere, official manpower numbers are often highly inaccurate) have occasionally forced commanders to occasionally send logistics and administrative units to the front.¹³⁰ This has severely harmed morale.

The MoI logistics system has been ever less capable than that of the MoD. According to one U.S. officer, they were reduced to “convincing the Afghans to submit supply requests through their own system even though the requests rarely produce anything....In the end, U.S. troops often end up providing essential supplies, but only after the Afghans have submitted a request through their own lines.”¹³¹

“Stovepipes” and over-complex systems have also been a factor. **Figure 5.1** shows the official logistics processes for the MoI and MoD are complex, even when they function correctly. Yet these systems rarely function correctly. They are based upon Western models that do not seem appropriate for Afghanistan, and allow each step in the chain of command to become an obstacle. CSTC-A advisers reported that “because there was little transparency in ANSF supply distribution, each step in the requisition and distribution process was vulnerable to significant inefficiency, as well as outright blockage of supplies due to corruption from bribes or from pilferage.”

This has led to chronic supply delays or failure to receive ordered supplies as shown in **Figure 5.2**. U.S. mentors to the ANA and ANP chains of command have sometimes been able to determine the cause of a supply problem and address the issue. However, because supplies were often not delivered to ANSF units in a timely fashion, if at all, CSTC-A and ANSF personnel reported widespread frustration with the supply requisition and issuance process and a lack of confidence in using it as designed.”¹³² These problems are all compounded by a lack of Afghan personnel with logistics training.

¹²⁸ NTM-A, “Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army Weekly Assessment,” June 27, 2010.

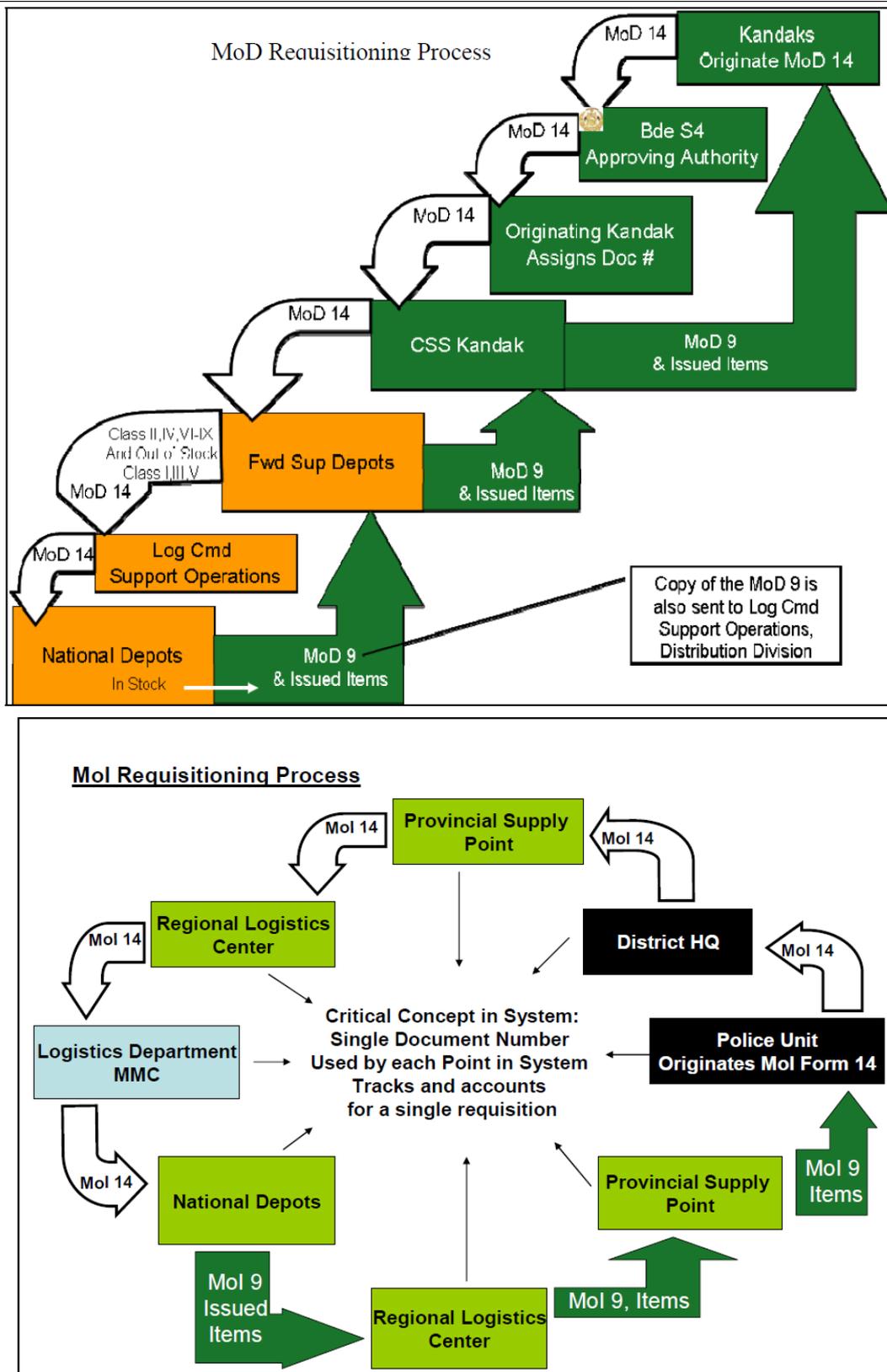
¹²⁹ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 26.

¹³⁰ Guistozi, “The Afghan National Army,” p. 40.

¹³¹ Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) for Defence and Security Studies (London) and the Foreign Policy Research Institute (Philadelphia), *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, September 2009, p. 111, <http://www.fpri.org/research/nationalsecurity/afghanpolice/ReformingAfghanNationalPolice.pdf>.

¹³² DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 29.

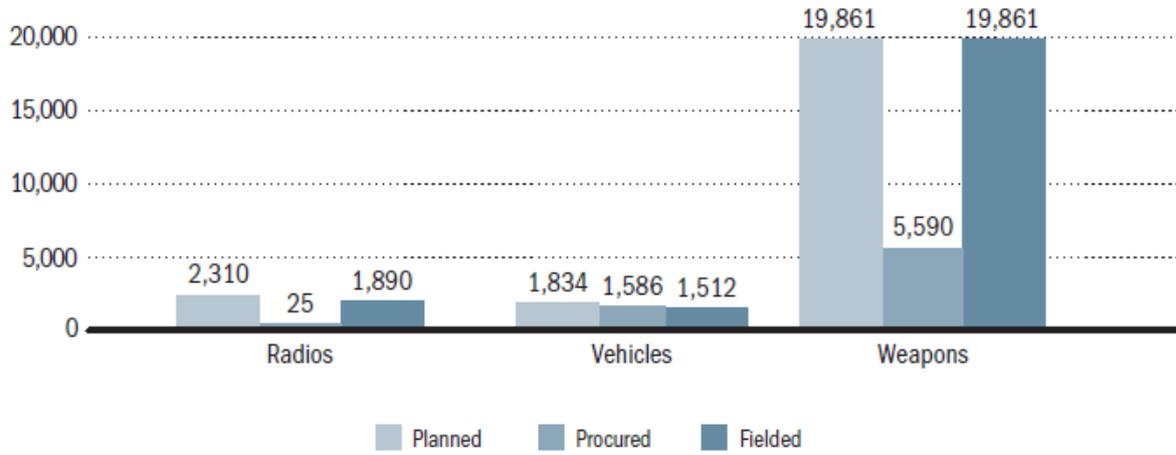
Figure 5.1: The MoD and MoI Logistics System



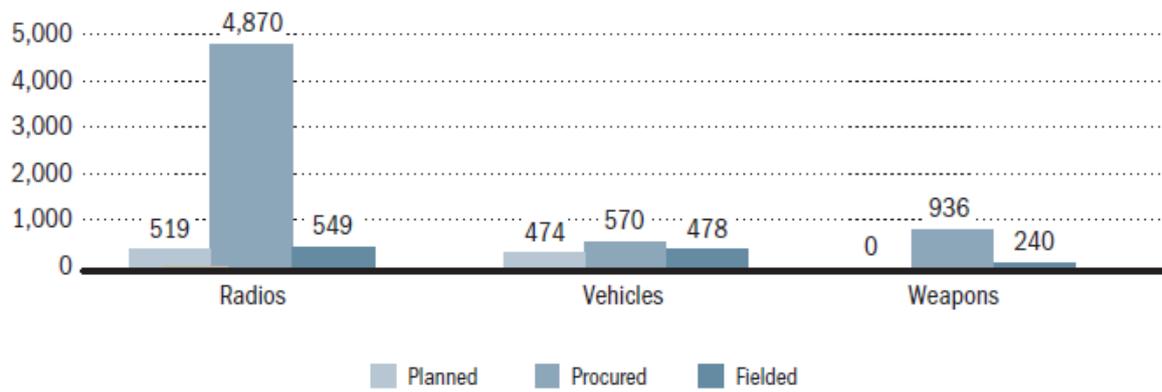
Source: DOD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans to Train, Equip, and Field the Afghan National Security Forces*, September 30, 2009, pp. 28-29.

Figure 5.2: ANA/ANP Equipment as of April 2010

ANA Equipment



ANP Equipment



Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 2010.

Giving Partnership with the ANP Real Meaning

There can be no real victory, or successful transition, without real partnership. The new strategy cannot succeed if major elements of the ANP remain little more than sacrifice pawns while they face a serious insurgent presence. Effective partnership requires forces that can fight and survive.

This is particularly true of the effort to develop the ANP. The ANA has at least been trained for the right mission. The ANP has not and ISAF must take direct responsibility for many of the casualties that the ANP have suffered. The ANP do not take the bulk of the casualties in the fighting because they are leading the fight. They take them because ISAF has not trained and equipped them to survive in a counterinsurgency environment.

For far too long, the ANP was treated as if its mission was to act as conventional police that could operate in a climate of security, while serving in a broader structure of a civil rule of law. These conditions simply did not exist, and cannot exist until the shape and clear phases are complete and hold and build have reached a level of stability and security where police can concentrate on crime, a criminal justice process and courts actually exist, and when there are normal jails. In the interim, the ANP and all other elements of the ANSF must be trained and equipped to be part of the fight.

In this context, the Canadian approach to police partnering, or PMTs, seems to have been more effective than the American approach. In Kandahar province, Canadian PMTs were embedded in police stations 24 hours a day, and had strengthened their stations to Western standards of force protection. American PMTs would sleep on American bases, driving out to ANP stations each morning. While the American approach may provide more flexibility, and more force protection for Americans, it was also unsuitable to the hostile climate of Afghanistan. According to a member of a Canadian OMLT in Kandahar in 2009, Afghan police stations were incredibly vulnerable. The Taliban was able to destroy these with “impunity,” and only stations protected by embedded mentors “could be counted on to still be there the next morning.”¹³³

Taking Account of the National Directorate of Security (NDS)

The NDS does not fall under MoD or MOI command, but it cooperates closely with ANSF at every level. Like most ANA officers, NDS personnel are mainly either ex-Soviet-trained or ex-mujahideen. The NDS is one of the most capable branches of the ANSF, and there are no indications that the present role and capabilities of the NDS need to change. It is clear, however, that NDS activities do need to be fully integrated with those of the ANSF and ISAF, and that there have been coordination problems in the past.

Both the Afghan government and the ANSF will need an integrated approach to both internal security and to HUMINT that is careful not to alienate key elements of the

¹³³Rolston, “Military Intelligence Mentorship in Kandahar Province.”

population. Afghan intelligence can play a critical role in supplementing ISAF and U.S. collection and analysis capabilities, mainly at the local level where HUMINT is critical. It can be equally critical in ensuring that counterinsurgency operations have the kind of Afghan face, planning, and execution that avoids civilian casualties and collateral damage.

At the same time, any combination of intelligence and internal security efforts all too often leads to excesses in the treatment of suspects, detainees and popular alienation. Finding the right balance will be difficult at best, particularly as long as many elements of the population have little practical reason to trust the Afghan government, are unsure it will win a lasting victory, and/or do not have a local rule of law that offers both swift justice and relative freedom from corruption. It will take a systematic ISAF effort to help the ANSF and NDS find the best achievable and practical balance in any given area, as well as to ensure that the end result is to steadily build up the credibility and capacity of local governance. This will be most important in executing amnesty programs, handling detainees, and attempting to bring moderate elements of the Taliban and insurgency back into the government and the mainstream of Afghan society.

Arullah Saleh headed the NDS until June 2010 when he was fired by Karzai along with Interior Minister Hanif Atmar. Much of the politics and reasoning behind these firings remains unclear, as the men were widely considered by Westerners to be two of his most capable ministers. Saleh was replaced by the former head of presidential palace guard, Rahmatullah Nabil. Nabil had little background in intelligence, but was seen as loyal to Karzai.¹³⁴

Integrated Civil-Military Partnership

Finally, as is stressed throughout this analysis, partnership must go far beyond fighting the insurgency. ISAF and the ANSF will lose the war unless their military successes are matched by a timely and effective civil-military effort in the field. It is not enough for the ANSF to be able to perform its security missions and develop an effective NATO/ISAF/US/Afghan partnership in security. A mix of ISAF and ANSF fighting forces can perform the *shape* and *clear* missions and part of the *hold* mission, but if this is all that is accomplished, they will still lose the war to an opponent that can win a battle of political attrition against an Afghan government that is perceived as over-centralized, distant and failing to provide basic services, while furthermore being viewed as corrupt and as supporting powerbrokers rather than the people.

This that means ISAF, the United States, and the ANSF must work together to provide coordinated civil-military action programs while security is being established and to make this partnership a carefully phased aspect of the *hold* and *build* missions. A transition from civil aid efforts to Afghan provincial, district, and local government should take place as soon as this can be made effective at the local level. However, ISAF and the ANSF must immediately establish basic services, encourage local leaders, and provide a functioning justice system.

¹³⁴ Carlotta Gall, "A New Chief of Intelligence Aims to Earn Afghan's Trust," *New York Times*, August 20, 2010, p. 1.

The United States, ISAF, Afghan government, and ANSF must all react to the reality that national elections and democracy do not bring any form of political legitimacy and loyalty by themselves; only actions count. The grim reality is that the Afghan central government is too incapable and corrupt to take such actions in far too many areas and in far too many ways. At the same time, outside civil aid efforts are far too narrow, far too security-conscious, and far too oriented toward talk and planning to serve Afghan needs in the field.

The ideal is a perfectly integrated civil-military effort. The reality will have to be a consistent operational demand for effective civilian and formal Afghan government action. This will take time, however, and in the interim some combination of ISAF and ANSF must act immediately to provide at least enough civil services and support to local governance to offer an alternative that is more attractive than the Taliban and that takes at least initial steps to hire young men and underpin security with stability. They must provide at least enough justice and local security, jobs, and progress in areas like roads, electricity, water/irrigation, clinics, and schools to establish lasting security and stability.

The mix and phasing of such efforts will also vary as much by region and locality as by the need for given kinds of tactics, from civil-military meeting urban needs to those of scattered rural tribal areas. In far too many cases, however, this will require dramatically new standards of performance by the United States and other national aid donors. There must be a new degree of transparency to show that aid efforts actually do produce effective and honest results in the field and do actually win broad local support and loyalty to move toward a true “build” phase.

Finally, every aspect of U.S., allied, and ISAF action must do more to address corruption and incompetence on the part of Afghan, ISAF and other allied aid efforts. In the process, a significant number of national caveats and restrictions on aid will have to be lifted. Corrupt aid officials and contractors will need to be removed and blacklisted, while exercises in symbolism, ephemeral good works, fundraising and “branding” must end. Above all, the military must act immediately when civilians are incapable and these efforts will need ANSF support and leadership where the Afghan civil government cannot act. There is little point in fixing the efforts that can win the war while failing to fix the efforts that will win the peace.

6. THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY (ANA)

The best elements of the ANA have already proven their value in combat, and the ANA will be the most essential element of the ANSF in the current fight. The ANA already partners with ISAF and U.S. forces in shape and clear operations, and will play a key role in hold operations as well. While the ANP should arguably be the eventual lead in “hold” as well as “build”, the ANP currently lacks the capacity and capabilities needed to play that role effectively and the ANA will have to fill in for at least several years to come.

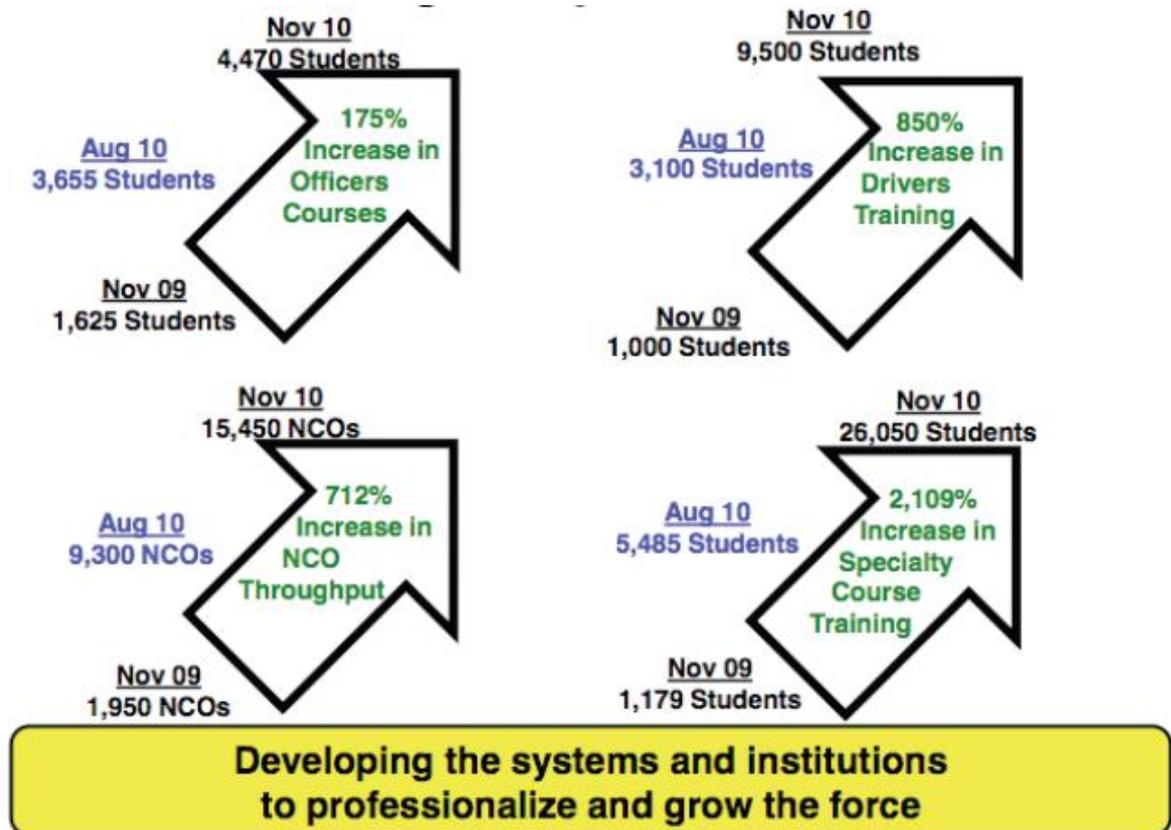
At the same time, the ANA is not yet strong and capable enough to carry out the tasks it now faces nor on a clear path to reach the point where it can accept the transfer of responsibility from ISAF forces. It has serious problems in every aspect of its leadership, has its own problems with corruption, and is influenced by a range of powerbrokers. Any study of future requirements for the ANA must depend on further clarification of the new strategy that President Obama announced on December 1, 2009, and then focus on the remaining problems and challenges in the ANA. At the same time, there is good news at many levels. In spite of a past lack of resources, the Afghan National Army is the most respected institution in the Afghan government.

Current Expansion Plans

So far, more emphasis has been placed on expanding force numbers than on force quality. The force goal for the ANA was still only 60,000 as late as February 2006. It was then raised to 80,000 in February 2007, and then to 134,000 in September 2008. Meeting this goal of 134,000 was originally set for 2013 but was surpassed in August 2010. A further expansion goal of 171,600 for October 2011 was announced in early 2010.¹³⁵ The rapid increase in ANA training graduates is shown in **Figure 6.1**.

¹³⁵ Nordland, “U.S. Approves Training to Expand Afghan Army.”

Figure 6.1: ANA Training Comparison, 2009–2010



Source: NTM-A, August 2010.

It is not apparent that this goal can be met in 2011 if the ANA is to maintain and improve its force quality and expand in the face of persistently high attrition rates. The recent annual ANA attrition rate was 25 percent, and the rate from the ANP is at 20 percent. It will take major improvements in the number and washout rates for new recruits, and in retention, to both expand the ANA and maintain current force levels. At the same time, it is clear that the ANA must be much larger to implement President Obama’s strategy and to deal with the insurgency as U.S. and ISAF forces withdraw. On June 27, 2010, NTM-A/CSTC-A reported an ANA end strength of 129,885 formal manpower, but even if one ignores critical ongoing problems in measuring actual manning and in force quality, a 1.6 percent rise in attrition and a decrease to 54 percent re-contracting from over 80 percent in the previous month indicated that long-term trends had not yet stabilized.¹³⁶ As of August 1, 2010, end strength was 134,028, three months ahead of the October 2010 goal. Attrition had increased once again, this time to 2.97 percent. However, this increase was partially due to the delegation to Corps headquarters of authority to drop AWOL soldiers

¹³⁶ NTM-A, “Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army Weekly Assessment.”

from their rolls, hopefully to the benefit of force transparency and, by extension, quality.¹³⁷

US officials have also mentioned a longer-term goal of 240,000 since President Obama's speech on December 2, 2009, but have been careful to state that there are no firm plans as yet to achieve such a goal for the ANA or ANP, and that future goals will depend on the rate of Afghan progress in both force quality and force quantity.¹³⁸

U.S. versus Afghan Views of ANA Expansion

The U.S. and Afghan views regarding this expansion do not always agree.

Minister of Defense Wardak believes that the 134,000 force level cannot defend the country and that additional plans are needed to give the Afghan Army the kind of heavy weapons and equipment it needs to defend against foreign enemies and not simply perform the counterinsurgency mission. General Sher Mohammad Karimi, the operational commander of the Afghan MoD has also stated that the Afghan Army falls far short of what is needed:¹³⁹

The 134,000 army, which has been approved so far, it is not enough for our country. We have requested to increase that number to at least 240,000. Even during the 1970s, during the reign of King Mohammed Zahir, the army didn't fall below 200,000—and the target was 250,000 troops...Then, everywhere was peace. There was no fighting with the Taliban militants and international terrorists...we need even more troops than during the king's time.

The “Authorized” versus the “Actual” ANA

At the same time, this debate over authorized strength masks a much smaller ANA than such totals indicate. The difficulties in accounting for personnel, exacerbated by high desertion rates and casualties as well as soldiers on leave, makes it difficult to determine the actual number of ANA soldiers on duty at any given time. Additionally, some experts put the number of ANA personnel restricted to non-combat roles as high as 34 percent. If one adjusts the remaining 66 percent, for desertions, low present for duty rates, and other factors, this may leave as few as 32,000 ANA soldiers available for combat duty.¹⁴⁰

NTM-A/CSTC-A uses the general rule of thumb that for 100,000 ANA, approximately 65,000 (65 percent) are in the fielded force. Of those, approximately 45,000 are present for duty. Of those not present for duty, 10,000 were AWOL and 10,000 were on leave, at school, or on some sort of medical leave. Of the AWOLs, approximately 80 percent

¹³⁷ NTM-A, August 2010.

¹³⁸ “Gates Tells NATO Troops Afghan Success in Reach,” Yahoo.com, December 9, 2009; CBS Evening News, “War Plan,” 6:30 p.m., December 8, 2009; Matt Lauer, “Interview with Secretary Gates,” NBC, 7:00 a.m., December 8, 2009.

¹³⁹ Rahim Faiez, AP, “Afghan Official Says U.S. Numbers Too Low,” *Boston Globe*, December 2, 2009.

¹⁴⁰ Johnson and Mason, “Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template,” 6.

return to duty within 60 days. The present for duty rate at the battalion level is even higher, averaging around 65 percent.

Some senior MoD officials also believe that ANA numbers are much smaller than the official tally, “probably around 60 per cent of its personnel charts. The typical battalion in the field, particularly in the south where desertions and losses are higher, was still around 200-300 men on average as opposed to a theoretical strength of 650.”¹⁴¹ Thus even the ambitious goal of 171,600 ANA by October, 2011 could yield less than 85,000 actual combat personnel in the field according to NTM-A’s rule of thumb.

The Changing Structure of the ANA

The current structure of the Afghan Army is shown in **Figure 6.2**. The history of efforts to expand the ANA is traced in **Figure 6.3**. In April 2010, DoD reported that, as of March 2010, 22 ANA units were CM1, 35 were CM2, and 28 were CM3¹⁴² (though this rating system, as covered earlier, sometimes grossly exaggerated the capability of given kandaks).

Current plans call for growing from 117 fielded ANA kandaks to 179. Six of eight planned commando kandaks have already been fielded. ANA kandaks are also being expanded as part of the offensives planned for early 2010. Each of the kandaks in the 205 Corps has been receiving an extra newly trained company. This will increase the number of ANA personnel in the Corps that will see the most action, reduce the officer requirement that would be created if these companies were to be put into new units, and place green troops next to more experienced ones. It does, however, still run the risk of putting newly trained units into major operations, a tactic that often backfired badly in Iraq.

At the same time, there are anecdotal reports that kandak commanders have dispersed members of the newly assigned companies to fill the undermanned existing companies. The risk here is twofold: It prevents the establishment of unit cohesion and it reduces the number of companies available for a more realistic leave rotation policy.

This again illustrates the risk in emphasizing quantity over quality. According to a Canadian OMLT member, “Increasingly the rapid growth of the organization [the ANA] nation-wide was working against efforts to improve quality, diluting those officers and men with potential in a bigger and bigger pool, and elevating mediocrities for lack of any better alternative. ISAF’s focus on quantity over quality, which continues today, had already resulted in a significant reduction in the ANA’s ability to contribute to the kinetic fight in our province by late 2008.”¹⁴³

Plans to expand the ANA must also include expanding its training, replenishment, and sustainment infrastructure. The ANA currently has throughput capacity to generate and

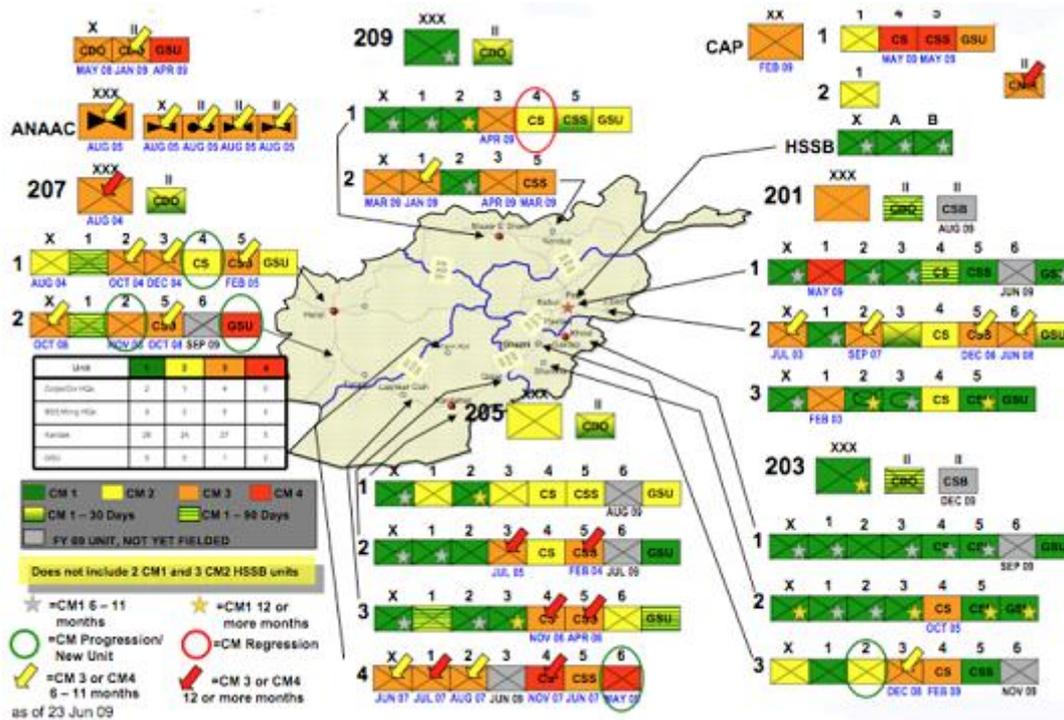
¹⁴¹ Guistozi, “The Afghan National Army,” p. 40.

¹⁴² DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010.

¹⁴³ Rolston, “Military Intelligence Mentorship in Kandahar Province,” p. 5.

replenish about 90,000 personnel, in addition to a capacity to generate and replenish 96,000 ANP.¹⁴⁴ Plans to grow the end-state force size must also increase this throughput capacity, in addition to the capacity of mentors and partners.

Figure 6.2: Size and Readiness of the Afghan National Army



Source: CSTC-A, May 2009.

¹⁴⁴ James M. Dubik, *Accelerating Combat Power in Afghanistan*, Institute for the Study of War, December 2009, <http://www.understandingwar.org/report/accelerating-combat-power-in-afghanistan>.

Figure 6.3: Growth of the ANA

ANA Force Numbers	As of
1,750	March 2003
6,000	September 29, 2003
6,000	January 22, 2004
7,000	February 2004
8,300 + 2,500 in-training	April 30, 2004
12,360	June 29, 2004
13,000	August 2004
13,350 + 3,000 in-training	September 13, 2004
13,000	December 2004
17,800 + 3,400 in-training	January 10, 2005
26,900	September 16, 2005
36,000	January 31, 2006
46,177	January 10-22, 2007
50,000	October 18, 2007
57,000	December 28, 2007
65,000	August 8, 2008
70,000	November 2, 2008
80,000	March 10, 2009
91,911	June 30, 2009
119,000	April 30, 2010
129,885	June 27, 2010
134,028	August 1, 2010

Note: Figures are approximate.

Source: Adopted from “Afghan National Army (ANA),” Institute for the Study of War, April 15, 2009, p. 3, <http://www.understandingwar.org/themenode/afghanistan-national-army-ana>. Additional data provided by NTM-A/CSTC-A and ISAF.

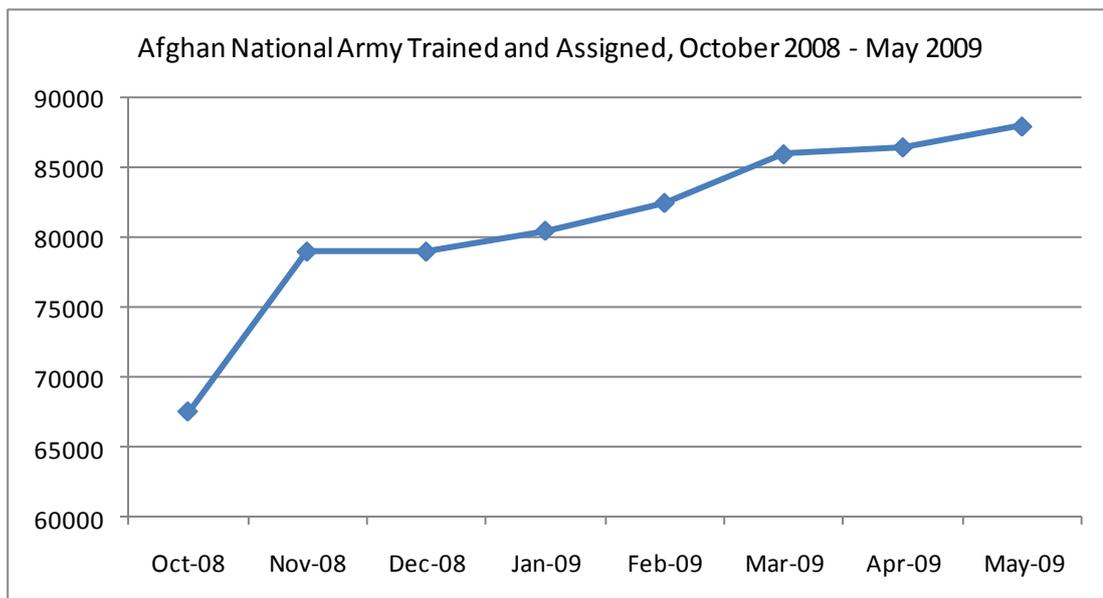
Trends, Training, and Readiness

Measuring force quality is always difficult, particularly in terms of real-world combat performance versus “impact” like numbers of people, equipment stocks and training levels. **Figure 6.4** shows an ISAF estimate of key trends in the size and readiness of the Afghan Army. The most recent ratings do reflect some important improvements over the situation in January 2009. It must be stressed, however, that they do not reflect ratings based on actual performance in serious combat and that this unclassified reporting on the Afghan forces is dated. Accordingly, the best available unclassified description of the progress and problems in the ANA are still the Department of Defense account in its April 2010 report on *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*:

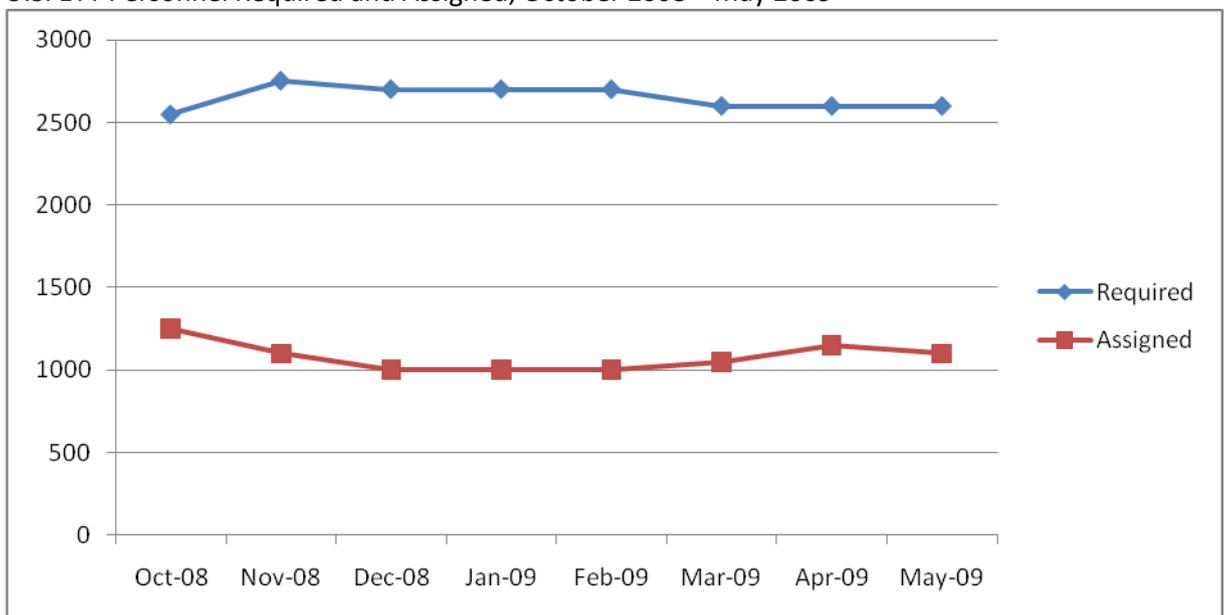
- The ANA growth timeline was accelerated. The new objective directed growth to 134,000 personnel by the end of October 2010 in order to provide a sufficient number of ANA on the ground to combat the insurgency. In order to do this, focus was placed on building infantry-centric units to assist early in COIN operations, with a plan to rebalance the force in future years to enable self-sufficiency. In January 2010, the JCMB agreed to further accelerate growth to 171,600 ANA personnel by October 2011.
- Recent pay increases, including a base pay increase, re-contracting bonuses, and hazardous duty pay, as well as continued fielding of electronic pay systems to ensure pay is received by the soldier, will help mitigate concerns in both of these areas.
- Corruption remains an issue within the ANA officer corps with reports of personnel buying positions. NTM-A/CSTC-A is looking to counter this factor by implementing institutional accountability measures. One example is the February 2010 implementation of a lottery-based assignment system at the graduation of the cadets at the National Military Academy of Afghanistan. The system increases transparency in assignments and ensures that personnel are randomly assigned to all regions in Afghanistan.
- Challenges within the ANA Medical Corps remain. Currently the medical training cannot keep pace with the rapid expansion of the ANSF and this issue will need more focus in coming years. Additionally, the ANA requires more modern hospitals and equipment.
- NTM-A/CSTC-A instituted a two-week pilot literacy training program during pre-basic training for ANA soldiers. In addition, literacy training is an integral part of instruction at the Bridmal NCO Academy and the Basic Warrior Training course. Afghans place great value on literacy and the goal is to leverage literacy programs to promote recruitment and retention and minimize attrition.
- Despite the work being put into the logistics systems, challenges still remain. These include the conscious decisions to rapidly field the combat forces and for the capacity of the logistics system to be established after a strong fighting force is in place. For the next few years, the ANA will continue to rely on NTM/CSTC-A as enablers to support their fielding and sustainment requirements until both the logistics systems and funding are put into place.
- High attrition and low retention have resulted in a large number of new personnel cycling into units. Ongoing combat operations since January 2010 have had a negative effect on manning, equipping, and training in these kandaks, which caused a downgrade in CM ratings. Finally, throughout the entire ANA, there is a shortage of trained and competent leadership in the officer and NCO corps that has affected the quality of the kandaks.

SIGAR has reported other data on ANA readiness and on the rising intensity of ANSF operations and the ANA casualties that result. These data are summarized in **Figures 6.4 to Figure 6.6**.

Figure 6.4: DoD Data on Trends in the ANA



U.S. ETT Personnel Required and Assigned, October 2008—May 2009

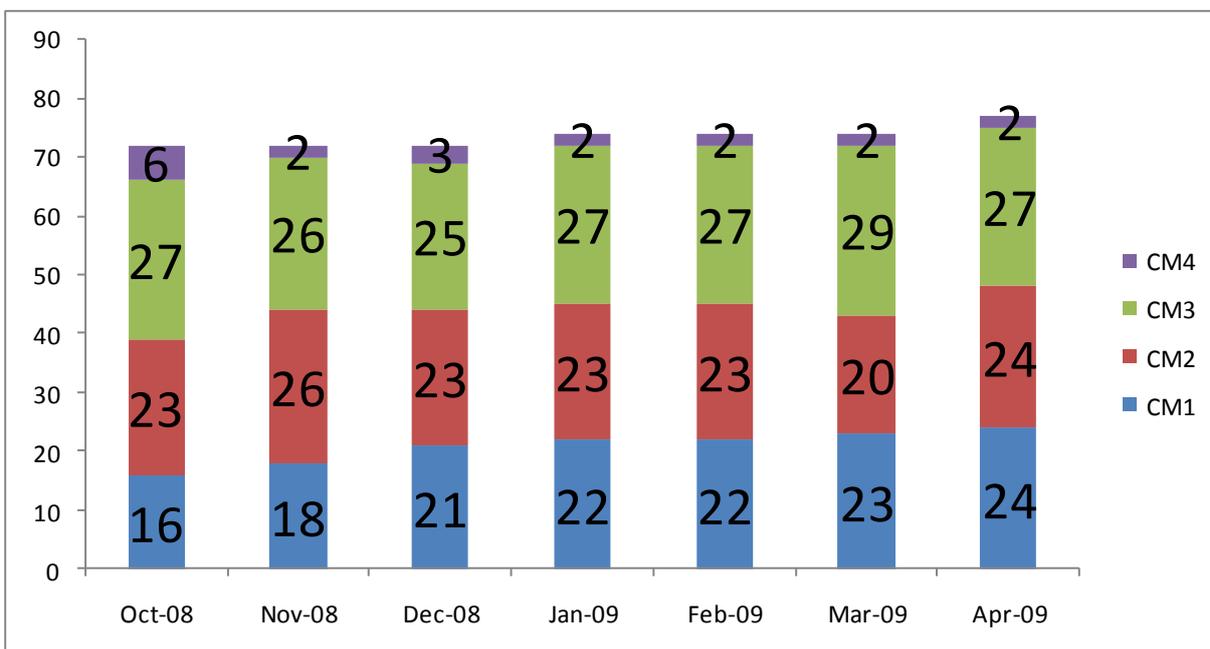
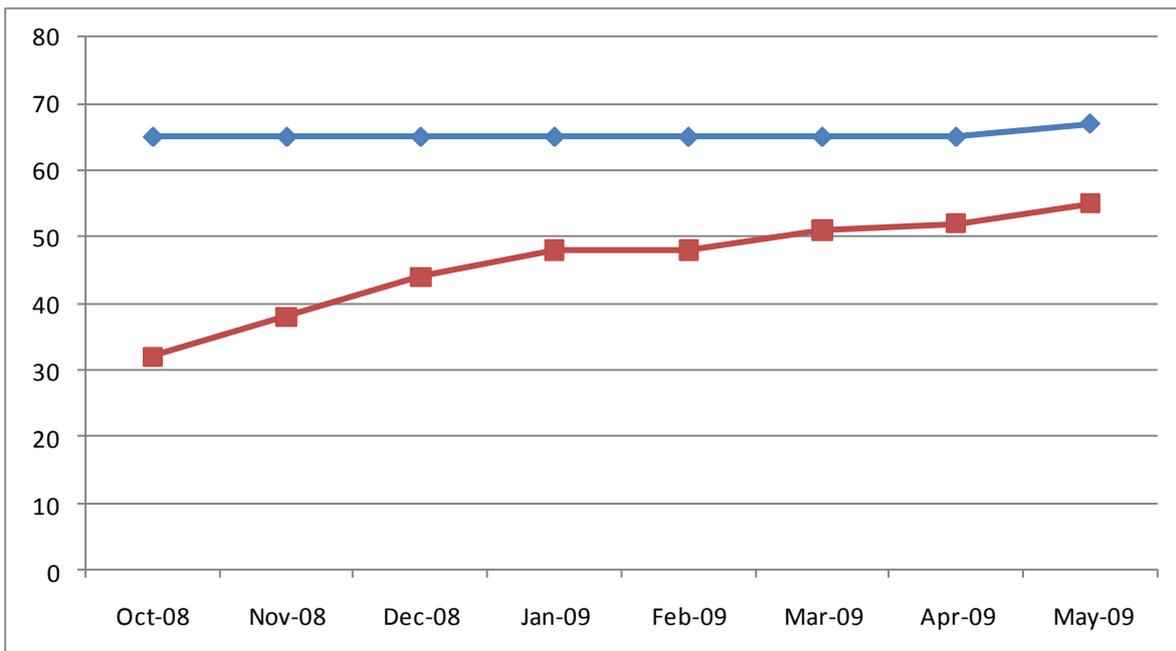


Source: DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, January 2009, pp. 26, 30, 31, 33.

(continued next page)

Figure 6.4, continued:

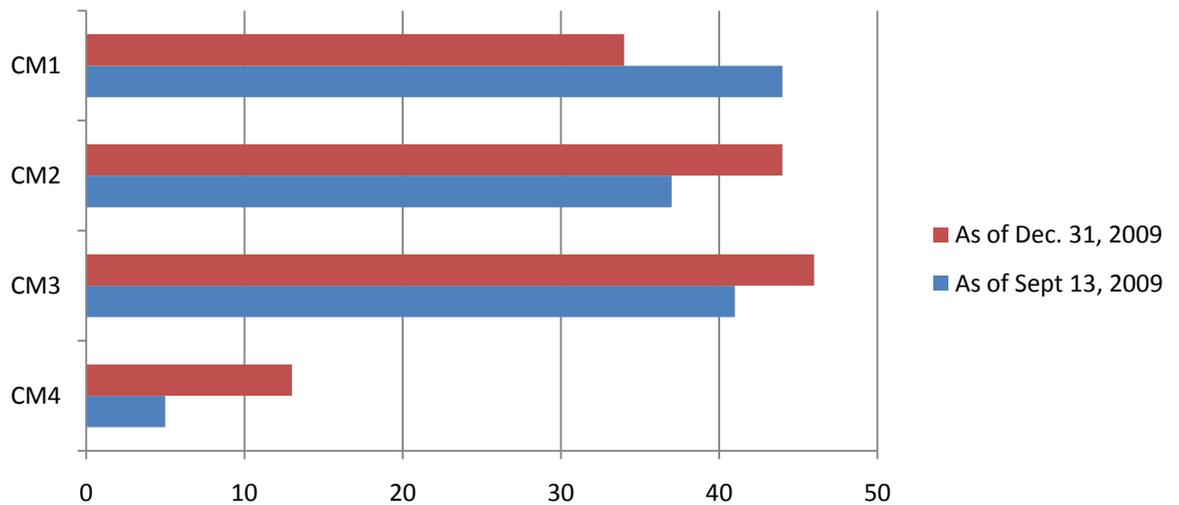
ISAF OMLTs, October 2008—May 2009



Source: DoD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, Report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), April 2009 p. 25.

Figure 6.5: SIGAR Reporting on ANA Developments in 2009

ANA Readiness Improvements: May-September 2009
ANA Unit Capability Milestone(CM) Ratings, Period-to-Period Comparison



CM1: capable of operating independently

CM2: capable of planning, executing, and sustaining operations at the battalion level with international support

CM3: partially capable of conducting operations at the company level with support from international forces

CM4: formed but not yet capable of conducting primary operational missions

Rise in ANSF Operations:

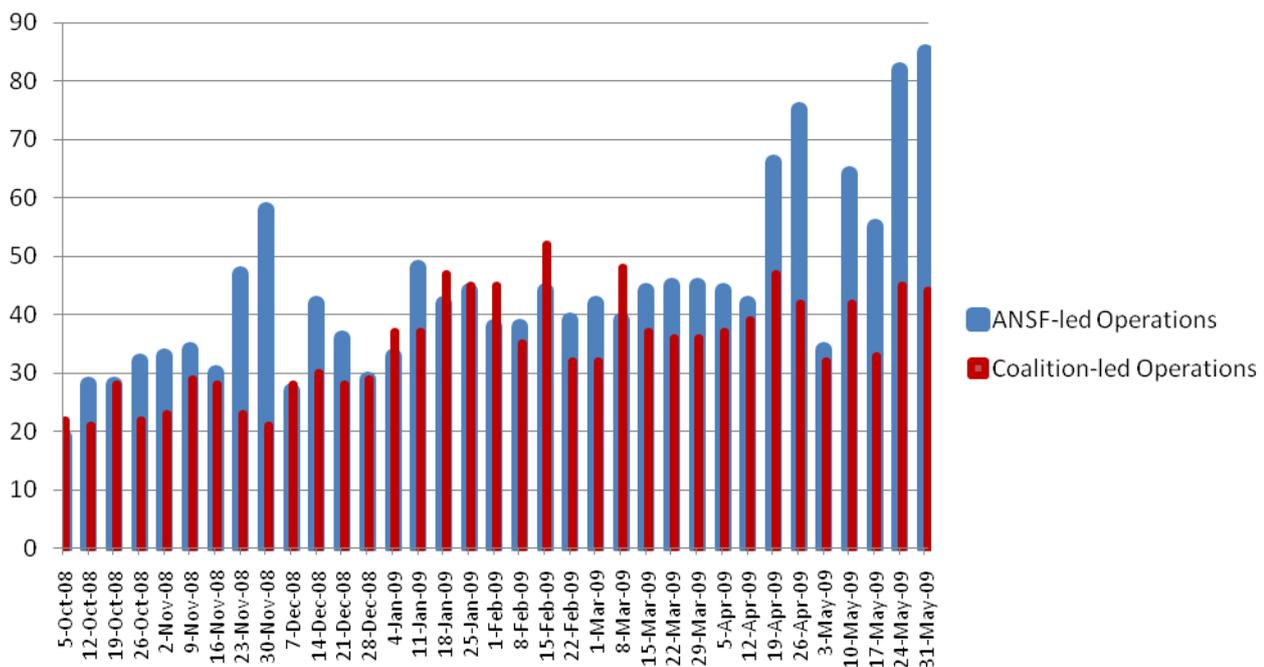
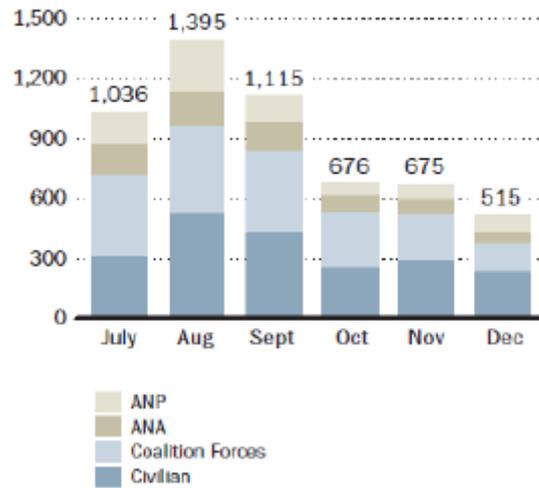


Figure 6.6: Trends in Casualties

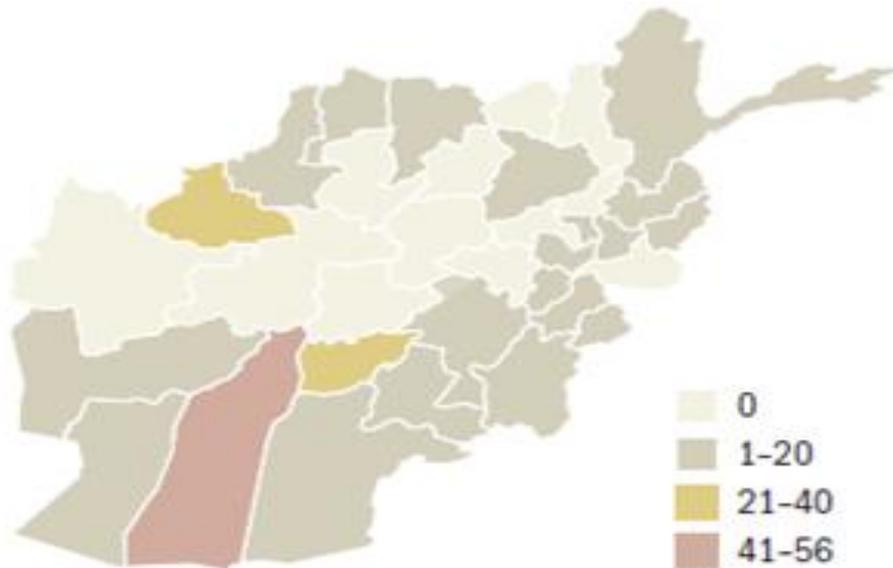
ANA Casualties
7/1 - 12/27/ 2009

TOTAL CASUALTIES BY MONTH,
JULY-DECEMBER 2009



Note: Casualties recorded in December as of 12/27/2009.

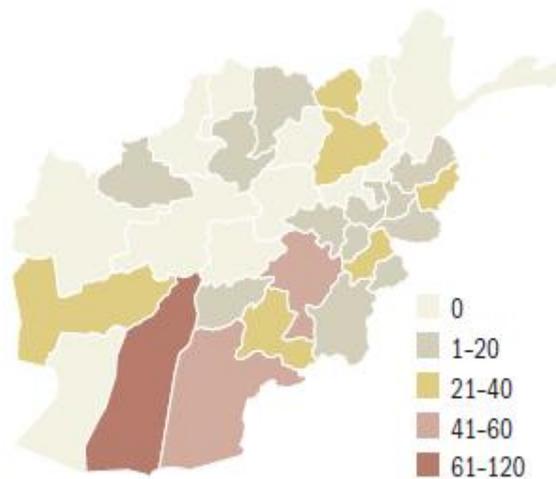
ANA Casualties by Province
9/21/2009 - 12/27/2009



Note: Casualties reported from 9/21/2009 to 12/27/2009.

Figure 6.6, continued:

ANA Casualties by Province in 2010 4/1/2010 - 6/30/2010



Note: Casualties reported from 4/1/2010 to 6/30/2010.

Sources: DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2009, p. 27; SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 2010, p. 58.

ANA Special Forces

NTM-A/CSTC-A began fielding ANA Special Forces (ANASF) units for the first time in May 2010 after deciding to create the force in late 2009. This force is separate from the 7,000-man ANA Commando Brigade, which has been operating since 2007.¹⁴⁵ The ANA Commando Brigade is widely recognized as the most capable element of the ANA. ANASF personnel and officers were recruited almost exclusively from the Commando Brigade. This stripped the Commandoes of some of their best leaders, although no major negative effects were noted as of spring 2010. The training and vetting process for the ANASF was intense:

Of 145 Commandos who volunteered for the first class, 68 failed to make the cut after a one-week assessment and selection course. Of the 77 who began the qualification course, 69 remain. On May 13 they received their Special Forces tab (which will sit on top of their Commando patch) and be formed into four A-teams of 15 soldiers each, one of which will be held back to form an Afghan cadre to help train the next class. Each team will be considered fully mission-capable at that point, but they will not be considered “Special Forces qualified” until they have completed a 26-week “on-the- job training” period during which each ANA A-team will be partnered with a U.S. A-team and required to successfully perform a series of tasks. Only at the end of those 26

¹⁴⁵ Kirk Putnam, “Afghanistan’s First Special Forces Team Graduates,” NTM-A, May 16, 2010, <http://www.ntm-a.com/news/categories/army?start=14&lang=> .

weeks in the field will they receive the tan berets that distinguish them as ANA Special Forces soldiers.¹⁴⁶

NTM-A/CSTC-A plans call for the ANASF eventually to be expanded into 72 A-teams of 15 soldiers each, grouped into four kandaks.¹⁴⁷ These A-teams are

led by a captain, with a first lieutenant executive officer and a team sergeant underneath him. Like U.S. A-teams, the remaining members include two each of the following: Medical sergeants, weapons sergeants, engineer sergeants and communications sergeants.

The Afghan teams will also have two intelligence sergeants (U.S. A-teams have only one), plus an information dissemination sergeant and a civil-military operations specialist. Original plans to have an Afghan National Police representative and a religious officer on each team had to be postponed due to bureaucratic difficulties in the case of the former and a dearth of religious officers in the case of the latter.¹⁴⁸

While the ANASF have just begun operations, initial reporting has been positive. In June 2010, the first of these teams was partnered with a U.S. Special Forces ODA in Khakrez, Kandahar. According to one researcher, this team appeared highly motivated and proficient in village stability operations. Though most team members were not Pashtun, they quickly established a connection to the local community:

During one patrol to the village north of the embed site, the Afghan sergeant major in particular quickly connected to the population, holding one of the village's babies while villagers put a garland around his neck-he subsequently gave the garland to a sick little girl in another village. In short, one could scarcely ask for a better combined team to execute the village stability mission.

The team's mission was to establish a community watch program under the Local Defense Initiative (LDI). As the research in question was concluded, it was too early to assess the team's success as they had only been deployed to Khakrez for a couple of weeks.¹⁴⁹

Patterns in ANA Force Development

CSTC-A provided the following summary of ANA force development at the end of June 2009:

- **Growing**

- Already above 90,000.

- Acceleration to 134,000 end-strength by Dec 2011; possible acceleration to achieve goal in 2010.

¹⁴⁶ Sean Naylor, "No Easy Task: Making the Afghan Special Forces," *Marine Corps Times*, May 19, 2010, http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2010/05/army_afghan_special_forces_051810w/.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Austin Long, "Going Old School: U.S. Army Special Forces Return to the Villages," *Foreign Policy.com.*, July 21, 2010, http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/07/21/going_old_school_us_army_special_forces_return_to_the_villages.

- Expanding Afghan National Army Air Force (ANAAF) capability; growing to 72 fixed wing aircraft and 67 helicopters by 2016
- Building coordination with the ANP and NDS through five Operations Coordination Centers Regional and 29 Provincial
- Increasing ANA infrastructure, completed 187 projects with 82 projects on-going and another 61 projects planned

- **Fielding**

- 117 of 179 units fielded, 91,911 assigned of the 134,000 end-strength
- NATO weapons and Up-Armored Humvees (UAHs) fielding on-going; fielded 32,768 M16s and M4s, 1,760 M203s, 2,199 M249s, 1,138 M240Bs, 100 M2s, and 1,912 UAHs
- 8 accelerated infantry kandaks for Hwy 1 security fielded between May—Dec 2009
- 6 of 8 commando kandaks fielded, 7th kandak fielded Jan 2010

- **Fighting**

- 76 of 117 units capable of leading operations
- ANA has led 56 percent of the deliberate combat operations in the last 90 days
- ANAAF currently executes over 90 percent of air movement requests for fixed wing aircraft
- U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) mentoring 5 conventional infantry kandaks, and partnering with 14 other units

NTM-A/CSTC-A provided additional data on these goals in December 2009. They included:¹⁵⁰

- Develop and grow leaders for tomorrow,
- Generate professional, competent, capable ANSF,
- Accelerate ANA growth to 134,000 by October 2010 [completed in August 2010],
- Provide an infantry centric, COIN capable force, with minimal enablers initially,
- Provide for a more balance, self-sustaining force by end of 2001 (adds military intelligence, military police, CS, route clearance, and other support units.)
- Prolong growth of highly specialized units (air wing, engineers, specialized branch of schools.)
- Partner and grow the ANA Air Force,
- Develop Ministry of Defense (MoD) (MoI) systems,
- Develop the institutional base (training and education for force generation, and
- Resource the fielded force.

This again highlights the acute risks in racing towards force quantity in ways that outpace force quality. It also makes it harder to eliminate the influence of powerbrokers and to create a better ethnic balance. Ethnic balance has been a crucial concern of NTM-A/CSTC-A and GIRoA in creating the ANA. A form of ethnic “affirmative action” was employed in selecting ANASF candidates, as Pashtuns represent a large share of the Afghan population but were underrepresented in the ANASF candidates. Hazaras, who

¹⁵⁰ Background briefing, December 11, 2009.

make up roughly 18 percent of the total Afghan population, are about 38 percent of the first graduating class of the ANASF.¹⁵¹ Pashtuns make up half that percentage of the ANASF.¹⁵²

NTM-A and CSTC-A confirmed the process will be conditions-based and to be revalidated in annual assessments, the first of which was to be in the April-June 2010 time window. They noted that reaching the desired goals would require significant improvements in recruiting, retention, and attrition, as well as major improvements in the capacity to generate professional, competent, and capable officer and NCO leadership. They also said that efforts would be made to mitigate risks through partnering at all levels, and that there would be enhanced accountability of personnel, equipment, and pay.¹⁵³ By May 2010, NTM-A/CSTC-A had begun transitioning from its pure focus on quantity in November 2009 to one balanced by the need for force quality:

- Training capacity had been doubled to handle growth requirements.
- Efforts were being made to make the transition to a Recruit, Train, and Assign system.
- NTM-A/CSTC-A manning went from 25 percent to 58 percent.
- Mandatory literacy training had been implemented for NCOs, with 28,000 recruits enrolled.
- The instructor to student ratio rose from 1:79 to 1:29.

It will be some months before the degree and the depth of change can be determined by evaluating unit performance in the field, but these signs are encouraging.

Major Ongoing Problems

There are other major problems that will require a sustained effort at every level from building the capacity of the Ministry of Defense to the individual kandak.

Corruption and Accountability

In spite of the Army's reputation and the relatively high integrity of the Ministry of Defense, corruption is still a serious challenge. This is evident at every level of the ANA and in all regions of the country. The DoD Inspector General's Office found a number of examples of persistent lack of accountability and corruption in visits to the regional commands:

ARSIC-Central ETTs:

Some corrupt ANA leaders appear to be getting around the Electronic Pay System (EPS) process in order to continue extorting soldiers' pay. For example, there are reports of officers and NCOs devising methods to "get around the EPS system" to extort part of a soldier's pay. This would

¹⁵¹ Naylor, "No Easy Task: Making the Afghan Special Forces."

¹⁵² "Afghans Create A-Teams," Strategy Page.com, May 23, 2010, <http://www.strategypage.com/htmw/htsf/20100523.aspx>.

¹⁵³ Background briefing, December 11, 2009.

occur, for example, when the soldier is required to give up his military ID card to the officer or NCO to obtain permission to go downtown to the bank. On his return, the soldier is required to pay to get the ID card back.

ARSIC-South, J3 Staff:

There is a problem in the 205th Corps with accountability and responsibility, not only for weapons and equipment, but also for personal behavior. There is no system in place for soldiers to be held accountable for their weapons, uniforms, assigned vehicles, or other equipment. There should be a functioning process and procedure for discipline at the Corps-level.

ARSIC-East, Regional Corps Advisory Command (RCAC) Mentors:

There is little accountability (e.g., clothing/inventory records), poor quality assurance and control, and virtually no consequences for loss or damage to equipment.

ARSIC-East, HQ Personnel:

For every 100 units of supply ordered by an ANA unit, on average, only about 80 or 90 will make it to the company. Additionally, 300 percent of the necessary cold weather gear had to be fielded to the 1st brigade, with no explanation for the duplication and no consequences to anyone for the loss and/or theft of the gear. And with no inventory records to document what has been issued to each soldier, the situation will not improve. ISAF/Coalition forces need to emphasize mentoring the concept of personal responsibility and accountability.

ARSIC-South, OMLT Mentors (Canada):

Very rarely is anyone punished for corruption or for losing equipment or uniforms, and if someone is reprimanded, it is usually quickly forgotten. A kandak commander from 205th Corps was caught stealing items from the unit's mosque. When confronted, he blamed the interpreter, despite the fact that the items in question were found in the commander's quarters. Although he was verbally reprimanded by the Corps Commander, supposedly court-martialed, and relieved of his command, the kandak commander went back to his unit and is still in command. Reportedly, a Corps Commander does not have the authority to relieve a kandak commander. That authority is held at the MoD. In another case, a kandak was issued 25 new vehicles, but while transporting them from the depot to the unit location, 21 were damaged or destroyed. No one was held accountable.

Corruption in the ANA must, however, be kept in perspective relative to the more serious problems in the ANP, which affect ANA operations with the ANP and the relative ability of each force to carry out any given part of the "clear, hold, build, and transfer" mission. Paying for police commander positions is another manifestation of the wider corruption issue. Wealthy Afghans pay enormous sums (\$200,000-\$400,000) to be installed as commanders. These sums seem outrageous, yet a police commander in the south can earn more than \$600,000 a year extorting and collecting taxes on the drug trade. Unfortunately, most police commanders are appointed directly from Kabul, rather than from the provinces in which they operate, complicating efforts to combat this practice.

While efforts to combat this corruption are ongoing, they have been hampered by a lack of enforcement of rules and regulations in both the ANP and ANA. Inspector General programs in the MoI and MoD are under-staffed, under-resourced, and under-mentored. According to an OMLT member, "They had no functioning military law or administrative punishment systems so even if they wanted to sanction someone it would have been impossible."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Rolston, "Military Intelligence Mentorship in Kandahar Province," p. 7.

Accountability for personnel presents related problems. ANA and ANP recruits are still not properly vetted. Personnel use this lack of vetting to abuse the system in various ways. For instance, a common practice among ANA soldiers stationed in the south is to go AWOL or leave after their first three years are finished and then head north to join the ANA again under a different name.¹⁵⁵

A Lack of Officers and NCOs

The ANA faces a serious shortage of qualified officers, NCOs, and specialists. Additionally the ANA struggles to recruit specialists, such as logistics and medical support personnel. These problems stem partly from a deficiency of qualified, literate recruits, and partly from a lack of training, incentives, and retention. As a result, U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates has noted, “When we’re talking about basic training, we’re talking about really basic training.”¹⁵⁶

To put this problem in perspective, the Iraqi Army has struggled to fill its NCO and officer ranks, despite having much higher literacy rates, as well as a recruitment pool of thousands of former Saddam-era officers with professional army training. There is no equivalent recruitment pool in Afghanistan. Ironically, despite decades of near constant war, Afghanistan lacks experienced and qualified officers and NCOs. Officer training is one of the few areas of the ANSF development effort where training facilities are more than adequate: ANA officer training schools regularly have only a 40-60 percent fill rate.

Another issue affecting officer quality is the over-centralization of the ANA. Promotions, demotions, sackings and appointments are all highly centralized in Kabul. This is based upon the highly centralized Soviet model, which permeates much of the structure and thinking of the modern ANA. The current system actually appears to be even more centralized than the Soviet one. In Soviet times, “a corps commander had the right to sack subordinate officers up to the ranks of battalion commander if he wanted to, whereas now even sacking a non-commissioned officer is not possible at the corps level.”¹⁵⁷

A law to move promotional authority for NCO and mid-grade officer ranks from MoD or the president down to the Chief of Army staff and Corps commanders was passed on 14 Nov, 2009. However, President Karzai refused to approve it because, “it would create confusion about rank and promotion...the defense minister should retain central control of promotional authority.”¹⁵⁸ Given the ethnic tensions already present in the army, politicization of senior promotions would be calamitous for the stability of Afghanistan.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ Adam Levine, “Gates Sees No More Troops for Afghanistan Until Spring,” CNN.com, September 23, 2008.

¹⁵⁷ Guistozi, “The Afghan National Army,” p. 40.

¹⁵⁸ International Crisis Group, *A Force in Fragments: Reconstituting the Afghan National Army*, p. 15.

The shortage of officers and leaders will continue to harm ANA performance in the future and grow worse in the near term because of the increases in the goal for ANA end strength. Unfortunately, there is little that can be done to solve this problem unless enough mentors are embedded in ANA units and more attention is given to putting “partner” units or cadres where they can help train officers and NCOs in the field. Better pay and training facilities can help somewhat. But officers cannot be created overnight. It takes time for promising recruits to prove themselves in the field and then work their way through deployments and officer training.

Both ISAF and the leaders of the ANA understand the seriousness of these problems and are placing serious emphasis on improving ANA leadership at the NCO and Officer ranks. Gen McChrystal stated: “It’s more important than doctrine. It’s more important even than ideology and more important than equipment.” Leading experts believe it takes 10 years to develop a military. However, after 9 years of US/NATO involvement in Afghanistan, most of which were spent neglecting force development, the ANA are at the sixth year in the cycle.¹⁵⁹

By May 2010, NTM-A/CSTC-A had made strides in acting on the NCO/Officer deficiency. NCO strength was up to 31,786 from 26,252 in November 2009. This number is short of NTM-A/CTSC-A’s goal of 43,847 for May 2010, but does close the gap somewhat. By creating a Direct Entry NCO course for literate recruits and by filling courses closer to capacity, NTM-A/CSTC-A claims an increase in NCO production from 1,950 to 15,850 per year. This achievement is more notable because it occurred during a period of force expansion. Similarly, officer strength was at 16,036, up from 14,602 in November 2009. Enrollment in the Mujahideen Integration Course was doubled, from 825 to 1,650 per year. As of May 2010, the National Military Academy of Afghanistan was at full capacity (600/yr). NTM-A/CTSC-A claims an increase in officer production capacity from 1,625 to 4,470 per year.

The challenges involved are compounded by problems in Afghanistan’s military culture and by a disconnect between mentors and the leadership styles used by many Afghan commanders. Commanders who led during the Soviet era are less likely to value NCOs or utilize their staff, contrary to Western military training in Kabul. Young officers graduating from the National Military Academy in Kabul often feel frustrated by the fact that they are not utilized or valued by their Afghan Commanders in the ways they are trained to expect. Other problems exist because former mujahideen commanders placed in conventional ANA units are more likely to use unorthodox methods to secure and govern an area, again contrary to Western conventional army standards.¹⁶⁰

Some officers serving in Afghanistan suggest that it would be possible to grow the ranks of junior officers by instituting a commissioning program for senior NCOs. These NCOs, and in particular sergeant majors, may be suitable to serve as captains or

¹⁵⁹ Jim Michaels, “U.S. Looking for Leaders in Afghan Army,” USA Today.com, March 31, 2010, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/afghanistan/2010-03-31-Afghan-army_N.htm.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

majors without additional training.¹⁶¹ Due to over-glorification of rank in the ANA, many promising senior NCOs could be recruited into junior officer ranks but are currently wasting their talents as NCOs.

According to an ex-ANA adviser, “Senior NCOs indicated to this author they were departing the service because they are not valued within the ANA and there is no upward mobility for Sergeants Major beyond the Corps level. Many of these quality leaders are in their late 20s or early 30s and ready for increased responsibility. Unfortunately, the Soviet mentality among the ANA officer corps translates into little delegation of responsibility to senior NCOs. There is a fear that the NCOs will outshine the officers. Senior NCOs often exit the army fed up with mediocrity. It is not uncommon for them to take contractor jobs making three or four times their ANA salary.”¹⁶²

Training, Motivation, and Retention

Other challenges exist in training, motivation, and force retention. The high attrition rate, in particular, will make any expansion of the force extremely difficult. The recent trends in training are summarized in **Figure 6.7**. These trends do indicate that recruitment and training track roughly with the general distribution of the ethnic structure of the population, and significant numbers of skilled trainees are now entering the ANA. Ethnic and religious discrimination in promotion does remain an issue, and recruiting of Southern Pashtun is poor. Moreover, Tajiks make up some 41 percent of officers, but only account for 27 percent of the population.¹⁶³ The MoD has made strides in balancing the ethnic makeup of the ANA per **Figure 6.8** compared to years past when Tajiks dominated the ranks of officers, NCOs and total force.

The most serious problems in the formal training effort occur, however, because of a failure to enforce training standards. There are serious problems in all aspects of ANSF training because virtually all Afghans pass training courses regardless of performance. Unfortunately, it is not apparent that trainers can be trusted to rate the impact of their own training, and while the Afghan Army has considerably greater integrity in its training effort than the Afghan police, it still has strong internal pressures to pass virtually all of those who enter training as successes. According to one first lieutenant working at the Kabul Military Training Command (KMTC), “Afghan soldiers leave the KMTC grossly unqualified. American mentors do what they can to try and fix these problems, but their efforts are blocked by pressure from higher, both in Afghan and American chains of command, to pump out as many soldiers as fast as possible.”¹⁶⁴ In May 2010, NTM-A/CSTC-A claimed to have begun transitioning the ANA to a standards-based army with mid- and end-of-cycle testing and other training reforms. It will likely take some months to evaluate the outcome of these changes.

¹⁶¹ Haynes, “Reforming the Afghan National Army.”

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Kessler, “Pay Increase for Afghan Troops Boost Interest”; Bumiller, “Afghan Army Offers Raise and Recruits Flock to Join.”

¹⁶⁴ Hedge, “Afghanistan’s Sham Army.”

Motivation and morale pose additional issues. They vary by unit, and many ANA units have fought fiercely despite taking casualties. However, reports of unmotivated ANA officers and enlisted men are common. One OMLT member observed upon visiting an ANA brigade headquarters that “his [brigade commander Gen. Bashir] cell phone is their primary communications link. The G2 is off somewhere playing chess with a source, the G3 is driving around the city by himself looking for troops to jack up and the G4 is taking a nap. Most of the rest of the headquarters are off playing cards or chess or watching Bollywood videos on a cell phone.”¹⁶⁵ This brigade was rated capability milestone 1 (CM1), the highest possible rating for an ANA unit.

Motivation, leadership, and pay have all interacted to make retention of personnel a major problem in the ANSF. ANA units have been pushed beyond their limit by over-deployment outside their home areas for periods over three years, often in areas without adequate facilities, equipment stocks and maintenance, or leave policies.

The official ANA annual desertion rate is “only” 10 percent. Yet this figure masks a larger overall loss rate. 12 percent annually do not re-enlist which, added to the 10 percent desertion rate plus sickness, casualties, and other factors, means that 25 percent of the ANA quit, desert, are killed/injured, or otherwise leave the service every year.¹⁶⁶ Some analysts believe that these retention rates will make it impossible for the ANA to expand much beyond 100,000 personnel, as at that point the accession rate will be less than annual losses.¹⁶⁷

These problems have been compounded by problems in pay, although the situation is getting better as ANA and ANP become paid directly rather than through their commanders. Pay to both ANA and ANP personnel has often been irregular and was frequently stolen—at least in part—by superior officers, despite the CSTC-A’s efforts to prevent this. Direct pay reduces these problems, although officers can still charge for positions and promotions, tax their troop’s part of their pay, and use less open forms of extortion.

The salary amount has also been a major problem in the past. ISAF and CSTC-A did not properly survey either the ANA or ANP to determine the reasons for growing recruiting and retention problems until late 2009. As a result, the ANP suffered for some years from being so underpaid that it became corrupt out of sheer necessity—a problem compounded by far more erratic pay than in the ANA, worse training and leadership, worse facilities and equipment, and much higher casualty levels.

This problem was eventually reduced for the ANP by raising ANP salaries to the level of the ANA, but this did not address the fact that at least the starting salary of both forces was notably lower than the pay given to Taliban and insurgent fighters. The end result was a desertion rate that official sources put at 25 percent, but that many of those involved stated was from 35 percent to 50 percent over time. Furthermore, the

¹⁶⁵ Rolston, “Military Intelligence Mentorship in Kandahar Province,” p. 10.

¹⁶⁶ Johnson and Mason, “Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template,” 6.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

situation sharply affected loyalty and led soldiers and policemen to warn the Taliban and other fighters of coming operations for relatively small bribes, or to cooperate with insurgents in providing intelligence or allowing infiltration.¹⁶⁸

This led to a crisis in recruitment that the United States and ISAF conspicuously failed to make public—or to properly reflect in combat readiness assessments—until late 2009. It was only in December 2009 that the NATO advisory team announced that it had found that this disparity in pay was a major problem in recruiting, and that the Taliban was averaging \$250-\$300 a month while the average ANA soldier got \$120-\$180 a month. ANA and ANP salaries were then raised to levels closer to \$240 a month. This raised ANA recruiting from average lows far below the required level—and only 831 in September 2009—to 2,659 in the first week of September 2009—roughly half of the entire monthly quota level.¹⁶⁹ It also led some 60 deserters out of 80 in one unit to return to service once they learned that the new pay system was in effect.¹⁷⁰

As has been discussed earlier, pay increases in late 2009 greatly helped recruitment numbers. December 2009 was the best recruiting month in years, with more people signing up for training than the training centers could handle. These same announcements acknowledged that literacy training was being added as both an incentive for recruiting and retention, and to improve force quality. The briefings indicated that some 65 percent of ANA recruits were functionally illiterate—a major problem for training any kind of Afghan force above the ordinary infantry soldier level.¹⁷¹

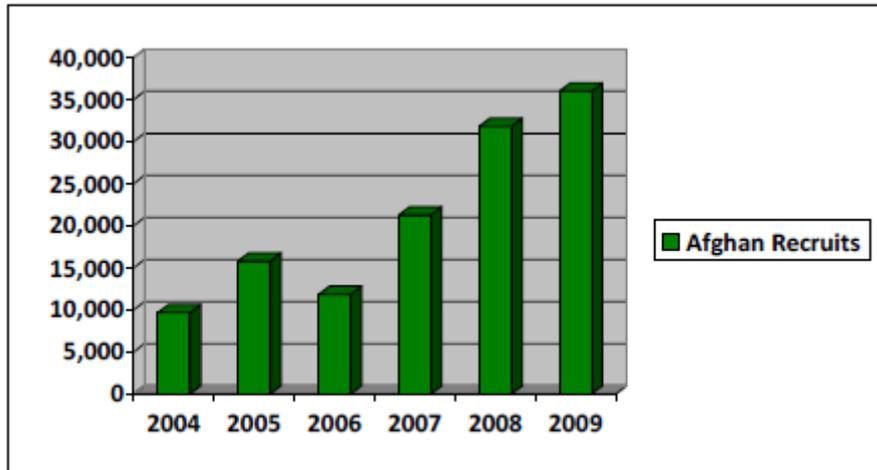
¹⁶⁸ James Gordon Meek, “Afghan Training a Tough Cell,” *New York Daily News*, December 13, 2009, p. 14.

¹⁶⁹ Kessler, “Pay Increases for Afghan Troops Boost Interest”; Bumiller, “Afghan Army Offers Raise and Recruits Flock to Join.”

¹⁷⁰ Kevin Baron, “US Training Plan: Read First, Shoot Later,” *Stars and Stripes*, December 10, 2009, p. 1.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Figure 6.7: ANA Recruitment, 2004-2009



Source: Adopted from DoD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, April 2009, p. 28.

In February of 2008, the MoD announced “Merit-Based Rank, Promotions and Salary Reform.” The modification ensures that officers are paid according to rank, position and merit. The ripple effect of this restructuring is overdue as some situations existed in which mid-level NCOs were paid more than their junior officers in charge of company-size units.¹⁷²

Pay increases and reform, better equipment, enlargement of force strength and positive public perception have all contributed to the increase in recruiting. As shown in **Figure 6.7**, in 2004 the ANA were only able to recruit 9,671 soldiers compared to more than 36,000 new recruits in 2009.

Another problem in ANSF recruitment that has rarely been mentioned in the relentlessly positive past reporting is the lack of troops in the 35 to 55-year age range. This is a demographic problem, as Afghanistan’s wars have simply killed off many of the available recruits in this age range. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) estimates that it will take a “generation” to fill this gap.¹⁷³

President Karzai has suggested one solution to these problems that would also address ethnic tension, lack of Pashtun involvement in the ANA, and the high unemployment rate. He stated to the international community in Munich that he was considering a re-implementation of conscription. Prior to the fall of the Russian-backed government in 1992, service in the military was compulsory.

¹⁷² DoD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, Report to Congress in accordance with the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 1230, Public Law 110-181), April 2009, p. 25.

¹⁷³ Steven Bowman and Catherine Dale, “War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service (CRS), June 8, 2010, p. 40.

President Karzai believes that conscription is a way to lessen the burden of international security forces, integrate Afghans and teach them skills they will bring back to villages throughout the country – although it assumes a level of popular support and national unity that scarcely seems to exist at the level necessary to make conscription work.

President Karzai said that he is consulting with his advisers and is being urged by community leaders. However, Karzai does not seem to have the support of Defense Minister Wardak.¹⁷⁴ Some analysts note the unfavorable historical memory of conscription under the Communists and the lack of national census data required to enforce the draft. Considering the fact that the ANA is already struggling with loyalty and retention, a conscription system would have to overcome considerable difficulties.

Leave Policies and Setting the Right Operational Tempo

“Using up” the force through overcommitment and poorly managed leave and rotation is also an issue. Paid leave is irregular in both the ANA and ANP. This is a major problem when soldiers and police frequently have to travel far through Afghanistan’s poor transport systems to reach their families to deliver the money they have earned. Many ANSF go on leave and are forced to stay on leave until their family gets enough cash together to buy the servicemember a ticket back to their duty station.

These problems have been compounded by grossly inadequate unit rotation. There are essentially no regular unit rotations in Afghanistan.¹⁷⁵ This means that ANA units stationed in the south or east, where fighting is constantly intense, never get a break. Meanwhile, forces in the north rarely see real combat. Not surprisingly, the units in constant combat have much higher attrition rates. For southbound units, this attrition begins before they even deploy. According to Lt. Col Daniel J. Walczyk, “As soon as they find out we are sending them to the south, we start losing them.”¹⁷⁶

This lack of unit rotation also harms the officer corps. A Kabul officer clique has formed wherein officers rotate through Kabul units, including the ANA General staff, and do not rotate out to units elsewhere in the country. This has created a sense of cronyism among these Kabul officers and lowers morale for less well-connected officers out in the field.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ “Karzai Considers Introducing Afghan Conscription,” BBC, February 7, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8502948.stm>.

¹⁷⁵ Rolston, “Military Intelligence Mentorship in Kandahar Province,” p. 5.

¹⁷⁶ Julian E. Barnes, “Afghan Troops’ Training Hampered by Shortage of Instructors,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 2009.

¹⁷⁷ Haynes, “Reforming the Afghan National Army.”

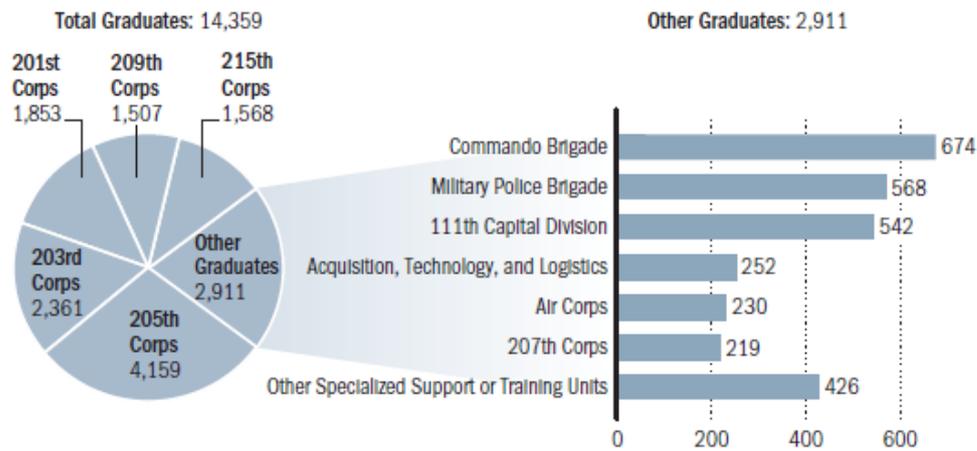
Additionally, the high operational tempo of ANA units in the south, as well as the high pressure on the ANA to take part in operations, has negatively affected the force. In some instances, over-ambitious operational plans have forced logistical and administrative units to the front when combat units were not available.¹⁷⁸ This badly harms the morale of non-combat units.

It should be noted that many of these problems are directly related to the past under-resourcing of the ANSF development program, rushing forces into combat without adequate or competent mentors and partners, and over-deployment of forces outside their home area without proper leave policies. They have also been driven by past failures to properly survey Afghans as to why retention and desertion problems are so great, and to look at how Afghans perceive issues like pay and privileges, leave policies, promotion and assignments, medical services, death and disability, equipment, and facilities. U.S. and ISAF reporting often criticizes Afghan leadership and morale without demonstrating that mentors and partners have been asked to systematically gather data on Afghan perceptions and to look beyond motivation and morale.

¹⁷⁸ Guistozi, “The Afghan National Army,” p. 40.

Figure 6.8: Recent Trends in ANA Training

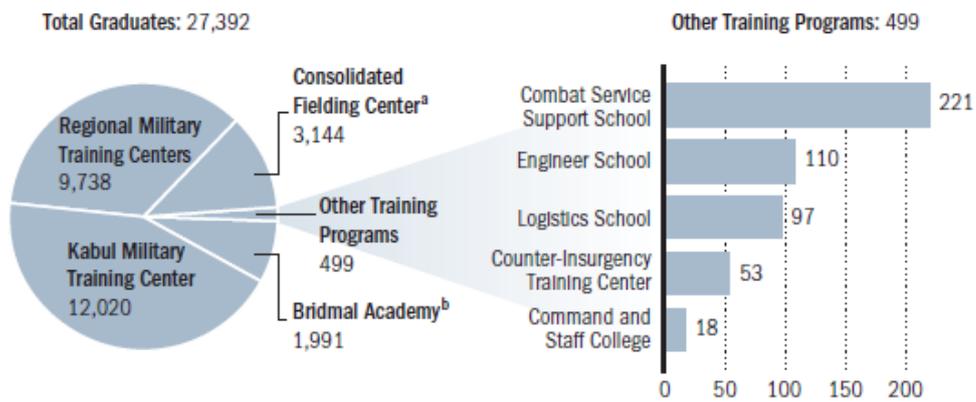
ANA TRAINING GRADUATES BY UNIT ASSIGNMENT



Source: NTM-A/CSTCA, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

FIGURE 3.21

ANA TRAINING GRADUATES BY SCHOOL



a. At the Consolidated Fielding Center, units form, equip, and conduct initial collective training.

b. Bridmal Academy is for NCOs.

Source: NTM-A/CSTCA, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010 p. 59.

Literacy and Manpower Quality

As has been touched upon earlier, illiteracy remains a major challenge to the development of the ANSF. Only 28 percent of Afghans are literate—13 percent of females and 43 percent of males. About 70 percent of recruits to the ANSF are functionally illiterate. Some sources place the illiteracy rate of new recruits at 90 percent.¹⁷⁹ A random test conducted by NTM-A/CSTC-A in May 2010 found that only 6 percent of ANCOP were literate.¹⁸⁰ The ability to read is necessary in a number of positions in the ANSF, most prominently NCOs and mechanics/logistics technicians.

While these problems are solvable, ISAF literacy programs only recently had priority and have thus far been marginally effective. ANP and ANA literacy programs have run into many of the same problems affecting the rest of force development—a shortage of qualified teachers, a lack of Police Mentoring Troops (PMTs) and ETTs, the difficulty of reaching personnel in remote locations, poor oversight, and the demands of the security situation. As with many other problems, illiteracy was worse among the ANP than the ANA. As the Inspector General noted on September 30, 2009, ISAF “has not yet published a literacy development plan, with metrics to measure performance, nor issued clear guidance to its trainers and mentors on program oversight responsibilities.”¹⁸¹

In May 2010, CSTC-A announced a new literacy program to address this issue. CSTC-A projected that the number of program graduates would rise from 107 in May 2010 to 6,232 in November 2010.¹⁸² It remains to be seen whether graduation from this much-needed program will correspond to an increase in functional literacy in the field.

The low ANA literacy rates reflect deeper problems. Some research indicates that most ANA recruits in the East of Afghanistan come from the poorest and most disadvantaged communities.¹⁸³ Economic considerations, rather than any sense of nationalism, seem to be the main motivating factors for ANA recruits. This is indicated by the low recruitment rates before the base pay rate was raised in late 2009. Other factors, such as seasonal employment patterns and increased attention from MoD senior leaders may also have added to the higher recruitment rate, although money is clearly the primary factor.

Ethnicity and Loyalty Issues

As has been touched upon earlier, ethnicity remains a problem. While the ethnic makeup of the ANA now has a better balance, it has been a source of tension since 2001. Tajiks have always been over represented in the ANA, specifically in the

¹⁷⁹ Fisman Abrashi, “Why the Afghan Army Is Hard to Train,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 15, 2009.

¹⁸⁰ SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010, p. 63.

¹⁸¹ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 77.

¹⁸² NTM-A, May 2010.

¹⁸³ Guistozzi, “The Afghan National Army,” p. 38.

officer corps. This was due initially to the huge number of Northern Alliance personnel transferring to the ANA upon the alliance's victory over the Taliban in 2001. The Tajik overrepresentation has persisted and continues today while Pashtun are underrepresented. The ethnic makeup of the ANA, as of 2010, is shown in **Figure 6.9**.

The ethnic breakdown of the ANA masks a deeper problem. Promotions within the ANA also are often based upon patronage, ethnicity, money, or personal loyalty rather than upon ability. Entrenched and powerful patronage networks dominate the promotions system in the ANA and have created large blocks of officers whose loyalty to the central government is dubious at best. By far the largest and most important of these networks revolved around the recently transferred Bismullah Khan, who was

the [former] chief of staff of the army, who in 2008 (according to an unofficial survey carried out in cooperation with ANA generals) could count on the loyalty of an estimated six out of eleven brigade commanders and twelve battalion commanders out of forty-six. As chief of staff, moreover, Bismullah Khan was able to appoint loyal deputies to commanders he did not trust, or to win some degree of support among professional officers who had to lobby Bismullah in order to get a promotion. Aside from Bismullah's network, other networks in the ANA are comparatively small. Minister of Defense Wardak could count in 2008 on the personal loyalty of only a single brigade commander (at least one other brigade commander tended to sympathies with Wardak in the name of shared Pashtun ethnicity, despite being linked to a different political faction). Hazara groups like the various factions of Hizb-I Wahdat and Harakat-I Islami had the loyalty of a brigade commander and five battalion commanders, while four battalion commanders were linked to General Dostum and his group Junbesh-I Milli. A significant number of brigade and battalion commanders (over a third of the total) were not directly linked to any political faction and considered themselves as professionals; almost all of them had a background in the pro-Soviet army of the 1980s, but were often indebted to some of the factions mentioned above for having facilitated their careers.¹⁸⁴

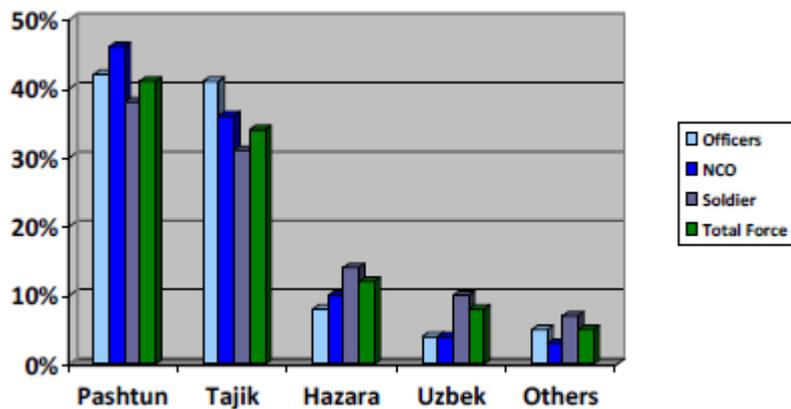
In addition to the rivalry between these patronage groups, and the general ethnic tensions cutting across the ANA, another rivalry simmers between former mujahedeen officers and those who served in the pro-Soviet army in the 1980s. Some advisers and mentors spend "substantial amounts of time" managing this rivalry.¹⁸⁵ While ethnic tensions were always a complication in training and mentoring the ANSF, President Karzai's recent overtures to the Taliban, backed by elements of the Pakistan Army, are seen by key minority leaders as threatening to reignite civil war.¹⁸⁶ The factionalization of the ANA would greatly facilitate such a war.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Filkins, "Overture to the Taliban Jolts Afghan Minorities."

Figure 6.9: Ethnic Mix of ANA Personnel in 2010



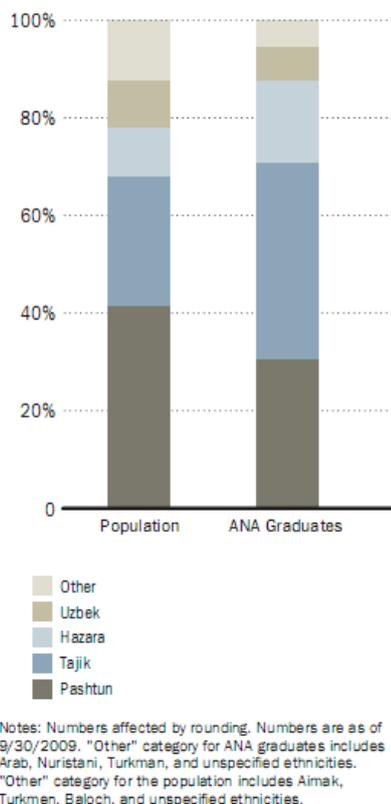
	Pashtun	Tajik	Hazara	Uzbek	Others
Officer	42%	41%	8%	4%	5%
NCO	46%	36%	10%	4%	3%
Soldier	38%	31%	14%	10%	7%
Total Force	41%	34%	12%	8%	5%

Source: Adopted from DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010.

(continued next page)

Figure 6.9, continued:

Ethnic Representation: ANA Graduates vs. General Population (Percent)



Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 2009, p. 61.

Equipment Issues

Figure 6.10 and **Figure 6.11** show that ANA equipment deliveries are increasing and the equipment is getting better, but problems remain and requirements must change if the ANA is to become a balanced force that can both be a true partner and accept an eventual transfer of responsibility. The Department of Defense stated in its June 2009 report on *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* that

M16 assault rifle fielding continues in the 201st Corps, 203rd Corps, 205th Corps and Capital Division. NATO weapons fielding will be complete by spring 2010. Commando kandaks are currently equipped with U.S. and NATO weapons systems that include the M4 carbine and 81mm mortars. As of March 2009, the CSTC-A program to refurbish existing artillery (122mm, D30) is funded and awaiting award of contract. CSTC-A is attempting to acquire additional D30 artillery systems to expedite artillery fielding. In addition to artillery, CSTC-A is currently in the process of fielding more than 4,100 high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs) to the ANA, with expected completion by mid-2010.

Similarly, SIGAR reported in September 2009 that

ANA personnel are equipped with M16A2 rifles and M24 sniper rifles; M203A2 grenade launchers; and M2, M240, and M249 machine guns. For transportation, the ANA uses light and medium

tactical vehicles (LTVs and MTVs), armored high-mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs), and ambulances. For communication, the ANA uses base-station, portable, vehicle-mounted, and handheld radios.¹⁸⁷

Shown in **Figure 6.10**, SIGAR reported in April 2010 that the ANA “fielded 1,890 radios, 1,512 vehicles, and 19,861 weapons. The largest increase in ANA equipment was the number of weapons fielded, which increased three times as many as the last quarter while radio procurement decreased significantly to 13,778 fewer than last quarter.”¹⁸⁸

The fact remains, however, that this equipment is very light by U.S. and ISAF standards, and no current plans seem to exist to give the ANA more than light armor or artillery. This means that the ANA has no procurement plan that would equip it to accept a large-scale transfer of responsibility after mid-2011.

ANA Corps commanders report that their soldiers have old and unreliable equipment left over from the mujahedin Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process, and their ammunition is of lower quality and reliability than that of the insurgents. Accelerating the growth of the ANA may require new units to be formed with full combat support but without combat service support and with older equipment.

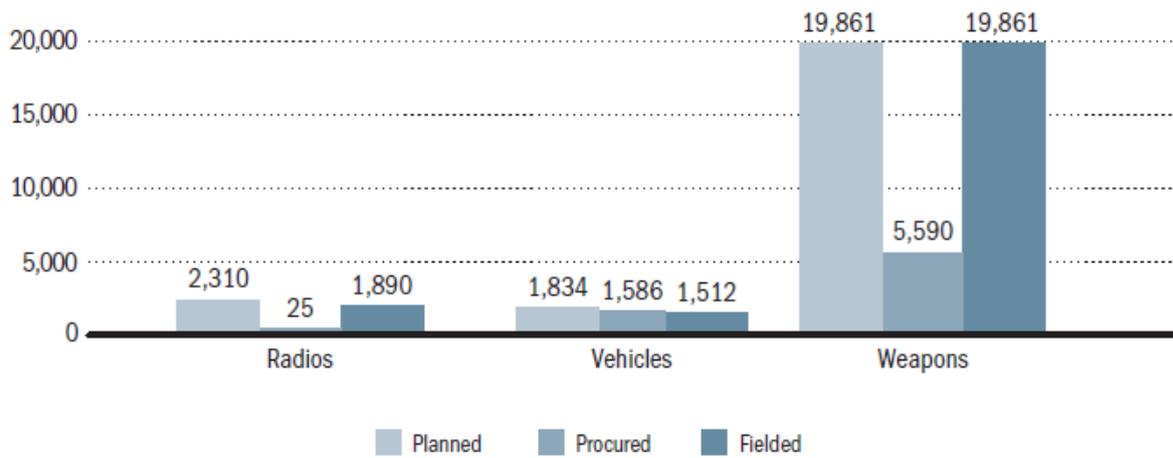
The past under-equipping of Afghan forces has been both morally reprehensible and fiscally irresponsible, although Afghan delays, corruption, and mismanagement have been problems as well. A trained Afghan soldier is far more expensive to replace than are his weapons and ammunition. ANA soldiers cannot be allowed to become casualties or to fail to reenlist due to substandard equipment that puts them at undue risk. If ANA troops who rely on NATO for support are committed to combat, they should have modern equipment and reliable ammunition that is at least a match for insurgents.

ISAF also needs to be sensitive to Afghan concerns that the ANA and its Air Corps eventually acquire the heavier weapons needed to defend the country without ISAF support. It is easy to forget that Afghan forces once operated some 15 divisions with 1,300 tanks, over 1,000 armored fighting vehicles, large numbers of artillery and 120 jet combat aircraft plus armed helicopters. There is a clear need to concentrate on the insurgency, but ISAF must not forget that Afghanistan’s neighbors are scarcely pacifists and issues like Afghan honor and prestige remain significant.

¹⁸⁷ SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 2009, p. 61.

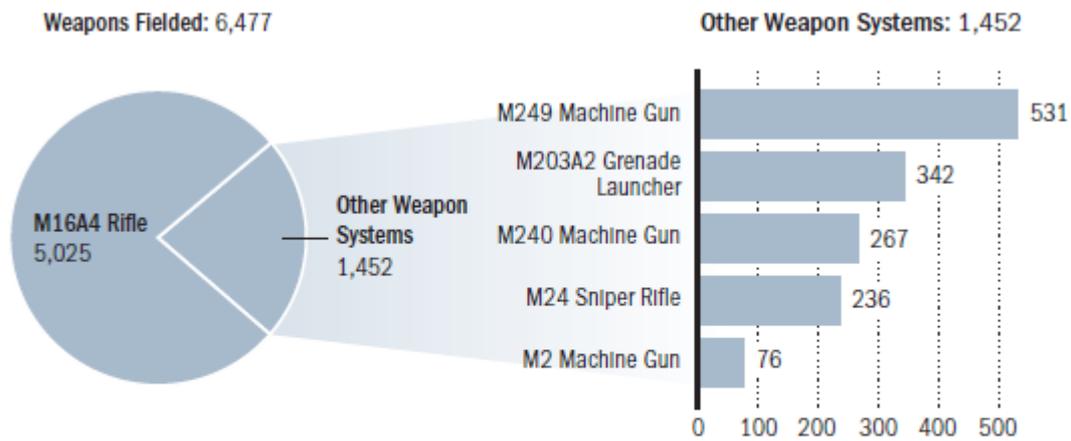
¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, April 2010, p. 57.

Figure 6.10: ANA Major Equipment Deliveries, January 1–April 30, 2010



Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 2010, p. 57.

Figure 6.11: ANA Major Equipment Deliveries, April 1–June 23, 2010



Note: These weapons were transferred to ANA forces from 4/1/2010 to 6/23/2010.

Source: NTM-A/CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

Figure 6.11, continued:

ANA RADIOS AND VEHICLES FIELDIED	
Vehicles	
Light and medium tactical vehicles	484
Up-armored HMMWVs ^a	163
Radios	
VHF radios ^b	661
HF radios ^c	241

a. Up-armored HMMWVs include M1151, M1152, and M1152 ambulance models.
b. Very High Frequency (VHF) radios include various configurations of the PRC-1077 and HH7700 radio systems.
c. High Frequency (HF) radios include various configurations of the RT-7000 and PRC-1099 radio systems.

Source: NTM-A/CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010, p. 61.

ANA Intelligence

ANA military intelligence still has major problems. Intelligence issues are inherently difficult to discern from unclassified reporting. However, it is clear that ANA intelligence capabilities are severely lacking. According to one Canadian intelligence office in an OMLT,

The ANA intelligence section responsible for this area comprised five personnel. The two officers had received some training in their responsibilities; the NCOs had received only OJT [on-the-job training]. At the kandak level, the intelligence section was between 1 and 3 personnel. There is supposed to be one reconnaissance company per brigade, but throughout Afghanistan these are being used as regular infantry to hold fixed locations. That meant the combat intelligence teams had no information to evaluate other than the remarkably useless intreps [intelligence reports] they would receive from Corps. All the officers had their personal and confidential network of contacts, but that information would never be written down or passed on. With nothing coming in, at battalion, brigade, even corps levels, there was no collation system, no battle map to update, no analysis to conduct, no briefings to give.¹⁸⁹

Detainee Operations

Detainee operations pose a special problem for both the ANA and ANP. While ISAF forces have recently revised their detainee procedures to better separate hardcore insurgents from more reconcilable ones, ANA detainee operations remain troubling.

A Canadian OMLT member described typical Afghan treatment of detainees:

¹⁸⁹ Rolston, "Military Intelligence Mentorship in Kandahar Province," p. 8.

The army handed over detainees as soon as possible to the NDS, who tended to immediately release them. At the time, all detainee cases had to be resolved within 72 hours. No questioning was conducted, and any statements of identity taken at face value: to do otherwise was considered rude. In most cases the detainee would soon be released upon payment of a surety: only the friendless went to Sarpoza [the Kandahar detention facility]. We'd run into some of them again, and it's fair to say every high level insurgent in the province had been through the mill at least once. More problematic to me was the disposition of detainees while in custody, either left to sit around in the intelligence office, or sometimes next to the brigade commander...for extended periods. It's fair to say that any bona fide insurgent in ANA custody probably learned more from the experience than the other way around.¹⁹⁰

Key Decisions About the ISAF and U.S. Role in ANA Force Development

A successful U.S. strategy to win the war in Afghanistan—and to create a true host country partner—will, however, require the full—and *ruthlessly self-honest and objective*—implementation of several decisions that shape the qualitative development of the ANA:

- *The first decision is to accelerate improvements in both training partnering and force development to ensure the ANA can come as close as possible to reaching a nominal effective strength of 134,000 men in 2010 without sacrificing force quality, and to create a base that can support future major expansions in the ANSF by 2011-2014. NTM-A/CSTC-A has set a tentative goal of 159,000 by July 2011, and 240,000 by 2013. It is unlikely that these goals can be met with the necessary level of force quality and enduring force capability, but if NTM-A/CSTC-A is to try, it will require an expansion in funding, in training facilities and trainers, in equipment, and in mentors and partner units. Resources to do this well should be identified and committed concurrently.* Every regional and task force commander visited or interviewed indicated that such expansion is now needed. If ISAF is more successful, then this process can be slowed and/or the force goal can be cut. Given the lead times, however, it is necessary to act now to begin this force expansion process, particularly if it is to be done both at the pace Afghans can support and to maintain the necessary force quality.
- *The second decision is to either end the shortfall in NATO and ETT mentors, and resources, or cut the force goals for the ANSF and reshape them to suit the resources which are actually on hand.* There are no easy ways to quantify the present shortfall, but there is no doubt about the scale of shortfalls through 2009. CSTC-A reported that the ANA needed a minimum of 67 OMLTs plus U.S. trainers in July 2009. However, it had 56 OMLTs on the ground, of which only 46 were validated. American ETTs were also under-resourced in the past, though ETTs are being replaced by the “two brigade combat teams (BCT)” concept of providing mentors. The requirement for OMLTs also will expand along with the ANA. It will rise to 91 by the end of CY 2010, and only a maximum of 66 OMLTs will actually be on the ground. This is a deficit of 25. Expert analysis is needed, but it may take the equivalent of a third new brigade combat team (changing the two-BCT approach to a three-BCT one) to correct this deficiency. Expanding to 240,000 men would require substantially more OMLTs plus additional ETT mentors, many of which must be carefully chosen to help the ANA develop critical new “enablers” like artillery, engineering, C2, medical services, as well as logistics and sustainability.
- *The third decision is to focus on building up the capability of deployed units, rather than over-relying on formal training before units are in the field.* Even the best formal training process is only the prelude to shaping the capabilities of new units in the field, testing leaders, providing practical experience, and supporting ANA and key ANP units with experienced cadres of mentors

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

and partner units. With newly-formed units, practical training in both operations and unit management and leadership is more critical than formal training and is critical to limiting corruption, the scale of retention, and AWOL problems. Even if the formal training process provided more extensive (or meaningful) training at the full or other unit level, inexperienced units would still be dependent on the “on the job” mentoring and support they receive in the field. Some experts suggest this can be accomplished by embedding a brigade combat team, brigade, or similar force into each echelon of each ANA Corps (which cover the same areas as the ANP regional commands) to provide the expertise and enablers to carry out joint planning, intelligence, command and control capabilities, fire support, logistic expertise, and other capabilities that the ANA now lacks and can acquire through partnership and joint operations with the United States. ISAF must sharply raise the quality of their effort to partner, mentor, and train ANA units in the field and to continuously monitor the success of its efforts to create truly effective forces. ISAF commanders at every level must make partnering and training key real-world parts of their operations and ensure that ANA units achieve true operational readiness.

- *The fourth decision is to create a full operational partnership, focused around the development of the ANA and key elements of the ANP, so that Afghans are a true partner in all NATO/ANSF and U.S. operations and take the lead in joint operations as soon as possible.* It is not enough for ISAF units to partner with the ANSF. The ANSF must be made a full partner at the command level as well. Afghans should see Afghans taking the lead in the field as soon as practical, playing a critical role in shaping all plans and operations as well as in implementing *hold and build*. This often cannot be done immediately, but it must be done as soon as possible. At the same time, ISAF must constantly re-evaluate the deployment of the ANA and other ANSF forces to reflect the overall needs of the campaign and not the demands of Afghan politics and powerbrokers. Some ISAF and ANSF commanders in the field have proposed that ANA forces be reapportioned across Afghanistan—typically, with a net increase in their own respective battle spaces. In practice, there does not seem to be much room for implementing unit rotation policies to relieve units now engaged in combat. This is true because no region currently has a surplus of ANA forces and because far more ANA forces are already deployed in relatively ‘hot’ areas, including the south and east, than in the north and west. MoD’s fielding plans call for prioritizing the south, but ISAF needs to press the GIRoA to ensure that newly formed units are allocated where they are most needed and not for political purposes.

At a broader level, the United States, ISAF, the Afghan government, and the Afghan Ministry of Defense need to make other critical choices. Creating an effective ANA will serve little purpose unless the Afghan government is fully committed to fighting the war and unless ISAF and the Afghan government are fully committed to fighting it with the same strategy. Rhetoric aside, it is far from clear that this is the case. The United States and ISAF are pursuing a far more proactive approach to combat than the government, and this raises serious questions as to whether GIRoA will use the ANA and the paramilitary elements of the ANP to try to win or to seek some form of political compromise.

The same issues exist in implementing the rest of the strategy, compounded by deep uncertainties as to how it can actually be implemented. No one has yet clearly defined how ISAF and the Afghan government will use the ANA to work with civilian partners and put the current concepts for civil-military operations concepts into practice. It is all very well to use a slogan like “clear, hold, and build.” It is quite another to systematically implement it as part of a population-centric strategy. The ANA will also have to be capable of civil-military operations. No matter how much effort is made to improve the integrity, size, and capability of the various elements of the Afghan police, improve Afghan governance, and create an effective structure for prompt justice, there will be 3 to 5 years in which the ANA will have to play a critical

role in various “clear” and “hold” efforts, and in helping local, aid, and government workers in various build roles.

Finally, it is all very well to use terms like “transition” and “transfer of responsibility,” but they are being used without so much as a hint of what plans, if any, exist to make them real.

7. THE ANA AIR FORCE (ANAAF)

The Afghan National Army Air Force is still very much a work in progress, as is shown in **Figure 7.1**. The Afghan National Army Air Force got a late start and lags behind the development of other ANSF elements. The ANAAF is already contributing to the COIN fight, and further contributions—mainly lift and medical evacuation—would be very welcome and could relieve ISAF of some key requirements.

The generation of ANAAF capabilities in maneuver, air support, transport and intelligence gathering will greatly aid the war effort, and is worth investing significant NTM-A/ISAF resources. However, the ANAAF is still in an embryonic state and will not develop major capabilities for some time. It is unlikely that the ANAAF will be able to contribute significantly to the war effort in the near term.

Current Capabilities

The ANAAF has expanded in both personnel and equipment. As of May 2010, NTM-A/CSTC-A reported ANAAF troop strength at 3,190, up from 2,788 in November 2009. A recurring problem in the program is that equipment donation from international countries has outpaced recruiting efforts in skilled positions such as loadmasters, mechanics and pilots. For instance, the number of C-27s delivered is projected to far outpace that of qualified Afghan C-27 pilots. The problem is compounded by the fact that much of NTM-A/CSTC-A pilot training is conducted in English, further narrowing the recruiting pool and increasing training time and complexity to include English language classes. As of May 2010, 23 of 68 pilots had failed CONUS pilot training.

Progress continues, but ANAAF capability is at such a rudimentary level that NTM-A/CSTC-A is frequently given to noting the passage of entry-level milestones like a single mixed-crew (i.e., Afghan and NTM-A) C-27 supply run to Mazar-e Sharif rather than training milestones of consequential scope and scale.¹⁹¹ ANAAF personnel, like many in the ANA, have a great deal of combat experience, and many were trained by the Soviet Union decades ago. Thus the ANAAF's main challenges are not training pilots, but rather in the following areas: communications, maintenance, command and control, logistics, coordination of complex operations, utilizing more modern equipment, and English language training.

Command and control poses a particularly difficult problem, as *The Long War Journal* noted in August, 2010: “Overall, their performance remains slow and spotty, hampered by an imprecise and exclusively vocal methodology of passing orders from the highest levels to the pilots and ground crew staged at the tarmac. Often, the communication resembles a version of the child’s game ‘telephone,’ in which instructions become garbled as they pass down the chain; and the process can be further impaired by the centralized tendencies of the Afghan command structure. It is

¹⁹¹ NTM-A, August 2010.

not uncommon for senior politicians and generals to issue orders directly to pilots, in lieu of passing their wishes through subordinates. The resulting confusion can muddle the orders.”¹⁹²

The airlift inventory increased from 32 in 2009 to 46 in May 2010. NTM-A/CSTC-A projected a further inventory increase to 63 aircraft by November 2010 and to 146 aircraft by 2016. The ANAAF has both fixed and rotary wing transport capability, although helicopters, better suited to Afghanistan’s rough terrain, will eventually form the bulk of the ANAAF’s offensive power. The medium lift aircraft consist of five AN-32s, one AN-26 and five C-27 Spartans. NTM-A/CSTC-A plans to eventually field 20 C-27s and retire the older AN-26 and AN-32s.¹⁹³

Battlefield mobility and light attack, provided by helicopters, consists of twenty two MI-17 helicopters (three additional assigned to the Presidential detail) and nine MI-35s Hinds. The older Hinds are expected to retire in 2016, to be replaced by new Mi-35s retrofitted to serve as attack craft. The decision to buy 41 Russian Mi-35s (for \$828 million) received some criticism, as the aircraft are not as advanced as many Western alternatives. However, Mi-35s are much cheaper than similar American helicopters, and were designed by the Soviet Union specifically to fight in Afghanistan. Furthermore, they are much easier to maintain, an enormous advantage in light of the ANSF’s historical maintenance problems.¹⁹⁴

The ANAAF inventory also includes three L-39 jets.¹⁹⁵ NTM-A/CSTC-A announced on June 27, 2010 that the ANAAF would continue to transition to Western airframes, including 20 C-27s, 6 rotary wing trainers, up to 32 basic fixed wing aircraft, and up to 20 CAS fixed wing aircraft.¹⁹⁶

Shaping a Force for Transition and Adding a New Role

There is a clear case for giving the ANSF the currently planned mix of airlift, battlefield, mobility, RW attack, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (IS&R), medevac, and multi-role capability. Shaping an air force that can fully replace U.S. and allied airpower, however, is a far more demanding challenge given Afghanistan’s resources and manpower base. It may be possible to bring the ANA to the point where it is ready for transition by 2014-2016, but this seems doubtful for the ANAAF. The ANAAF is rapidly expanding, as shown in **Figure 7.1**. There is a need for better transition planning in the case of both forces, but it is particularly important for the ANAAF.

¹⁹² Bill Ardolino, “Soviet workhorses, ISAF training form the backbone of a developing Afghan Air Force,” *Long War Journal*, August 20, 2010, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/08/soviet_workhorses_tr.php.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

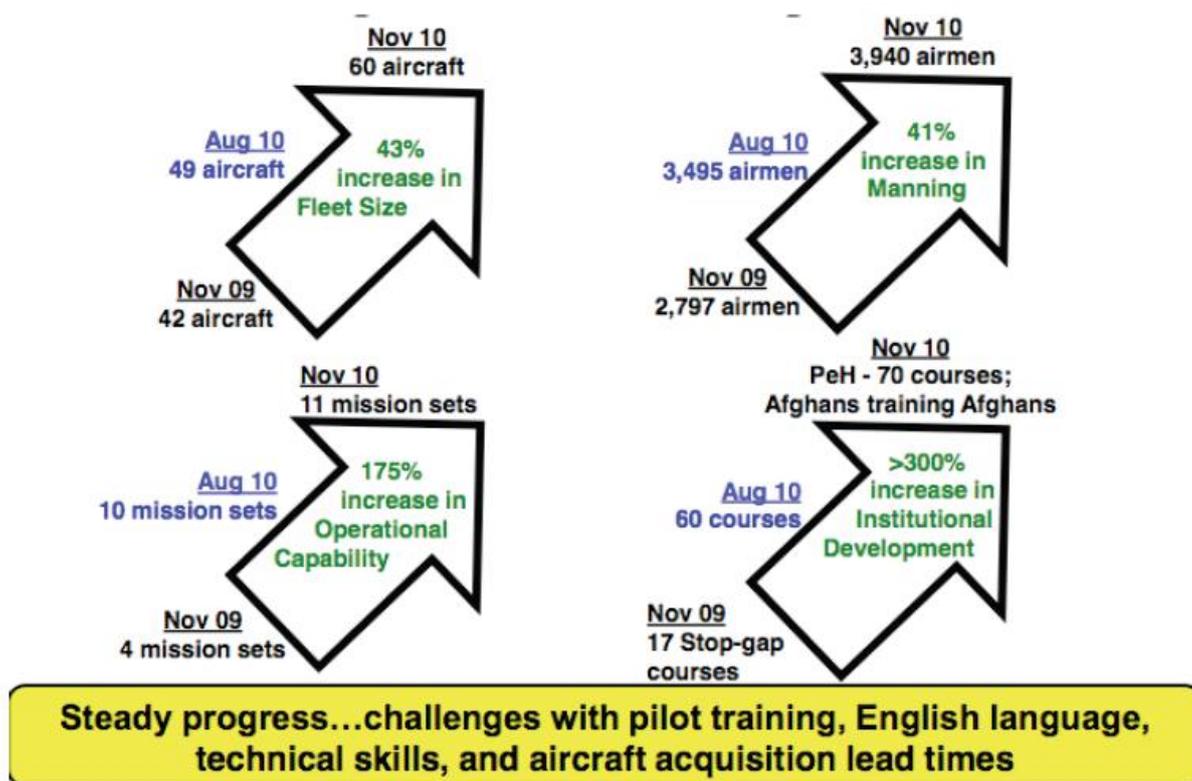
¹⁹⁵ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116; SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010, p. 60.

¹⁹⁶ NTM-A, “Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army Weekly Assessment.”

Notably, NTM-A/CSTC-A reported on June 27, 2010 that ANAAF had recently planned and led an An-32 Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to Kabul, in which 51 men, women, and children were evacuated.¹⁹⁷ NTM-A/CSTC-A has also reported ANAAF execution of multiple humanitarian operations since then.

At the same time, there is a broader role that the ANAAF may be able to perform in the near term. It can develop the skills to support NATO in targeting and managing air operations and take on responsibility for vetting air strikes and air operations. Such a partnership would do much to assure Afghans that Afghan forces were true partners in all air operations and played the proper role in reducing civilian casualties and collateral damage. Such a “red card” role presents obvious difficulties, but it will be applied to all ISAF operations, including ground operations, in time. Working to make it effective now as well as a key partner and part Afghan and ISAF strategic communications could have major benefits.

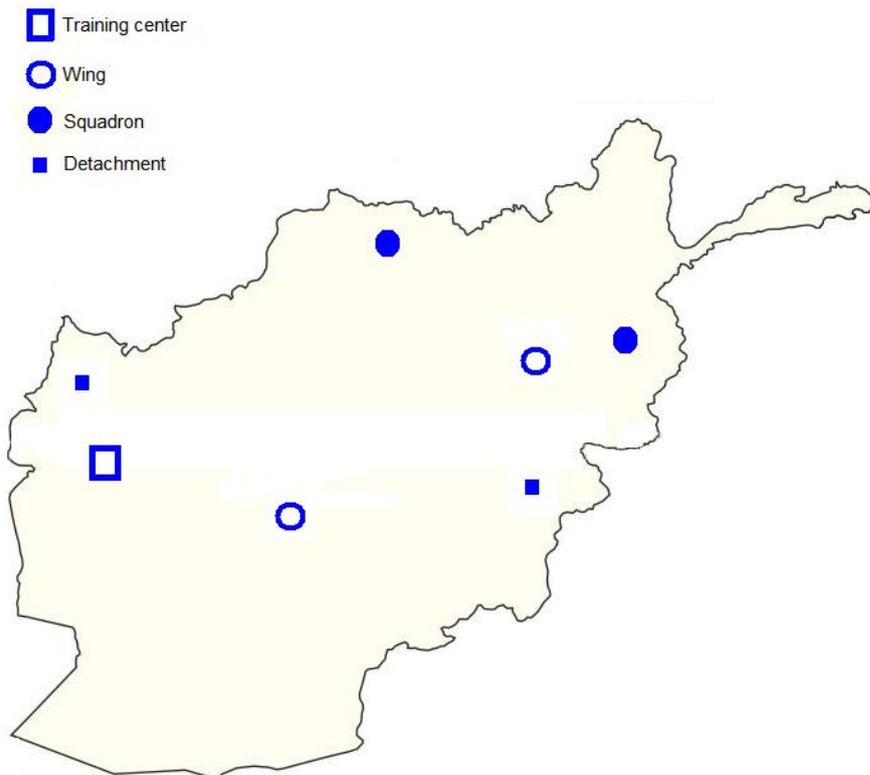
Figure 7.1: ANAAF Expansion



Source: NTM-A, August 2010.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

Figure 7.2: The Afghan National Army Air Force



		CY08	CY12	CY16
Airlift	AN-26	2	0	
	AN-32	6	0	
	C-27	4	18	18
Battlefield Mobility	Mi-17	15	58	58
Free airlift	Mi-17	3	3(2 x V5)	3
	C-27	2		2
RW Attack	Mi-35	3	9	0
Training	Basic (e.g. C-209)		8	8
	Advanced (e.g. A-29)		6	6
	Rotary Wing (e.g. B-407)		6	6
Multi-role	Lift/ISR (e.g. C-208)		4	4
	Attack/ISR (e.g. A-29)		14	14
	Attack - L-159		20	20
Personnel			2500	7254

Source: NATO/ISAF.

8. THE AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE (ANP)

Some elements of the ANP have achieved considerable capability, and there have been cases where ANP forces have taken serious casualties and sometimes fought with great courage. The fact remains, however, that the ANP still has major problems from top to bottom. Afghan police forces have been thrust into the forefront of the COIN fight regardless of their capability, and this is reflected in their casualty rate. The ANP has suffered casualties at three to four times the rate of the ANA.¹⁹⁸

The vast majority of the ANP are still lacking in both capacity and capability. They are undertrained, underequipped, corrupt, vulnerable to pressure from powerbrokers, and lacking in support from both the civil government and a functioning justice system. These problems have long been mission-critical, and have greatly increased ANP casualties. Yet, the new strategy calls for the ANP to play the lead role in “holding” any area that has been cleared, and in providing security during “building.” These clear/hold/build/transition activities are sequential in any given battle space, let alone across the theater, which makes putting a competent ANP in place as soon as possible all the more essential.

Improving the ANA may be the most urgent immediate need in combat, but no one can ignore the fact that a population-centric strategy requires both paramilitary and regular police. However, the Afghan police force is still a “broken” force, and current efforts to improve it seem to lack realistic priorities for paramilitary forces, seek impossible goals for the overall training and capability of the ANP, and ignore their lack of support from Afghan governance, the Afghan judiciary, and other elements of a functioning justice system. There may well be a fundamental mismatch between the present ANP development effort and the other elements of the civil side of civil-military operations.

With the exception of the Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP), the ANP cannot operate effectively in the face of serious insurgent threats. Yet, the ANCOP only totaled 5,365 men in March 2010, or some 5 percent of the total force, and had an appallingly high attrition rate. Improvements in pay do not solve its problems with powerbrokers and corruption, and it lacks anything approaching effective civil partners and the other components of an effective prompt justice system and rule of law. Moreover, corruption within the Ministry of the Interior remains a problem—compounded by corruption in other elements of the Afghan government at the national, provincial, district, and local levels.

There are good reasons to try to build a larger and more effective ANP. NTM-A/CSTC-A has begun an effort to train the entire force within 2 years, and the Focused District Development (FDD) reform program is accelerating. Yet, police reform is extremely difficult in a COIN environment, particularly in a country as large, diverse, and inaccessible as Afghanistan. Furthermore, the basic force

¹⁹⁸ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 110.

development effort is dependent on adequate contributions of trainers and mentors from ISAF countries—contributions that so far show little prospect of meeting the required levels of quality and quantity. It also seeks to create an overall force with higher standards than Afghanistan has the manpower pool to support while doing too little to create the kind of paramilitary police forces that Afghanistan urgently needs.

The Structure of the ANP

The trends in police manning are shown in **Figure 8.1**. Like the ANA, the Afghan National Police have expanded significantly in recent years. This expansion has, however, been less effective than that of the ANA—reflecting both resource problems and just how late ISAF and member countries realized that conventional police could not survive in a growing insurgency. It is also impossible put any real faith in these numbers. They do not begin to adequately reflect the number of absentees, men who pay for positions to collect salaries in safety without actually serving, “ghost” personnel who are kept on the books so their officers can collect their salaries, or personnel too unqualified to actually serve.

Figure 8.1: ANP Manning, May 2009–March 2010

	AUP			ANCOP(G)			ABP			Special Police	ANP Total		
	Goal	Asgn	% Asgn	Goal	Asgn	% Asgn	Goal	Asgn	% Asgn		Goal	Asgn	% Asgn
May-09		51,763			2,709			12,967		14,808		82,247	
Jun-09		54,005			2,890			12,867		15,185		84,947	
Jul-09		59,677			3,211			12,945		14,246		90,079	
Aug-09	62,034	60,512	97.5%	5,365	3,056	57.0%	17,621	13,817	78.4%	14,744	96,800	92,129	95.2%
Sep-09	62,114	61,122	98.4%	5,365	3,455	64.4%	17,621	13,815	78.4%	14,952	96,800	93,344	96.4%
Oct-09	63,724	63,841	100.2%	5,400	3,284	60.8%	17,400	12,826	73.7%	13,858	96,800	93,809	96.9%
Nov-09	62,229	62,934	101.1%	5,400	3,431	63.5%	17,400	12,800	73.6%	15,793	96,800	94,958	98.1%
Dec-09	62,229	63,945	102.8%	5,400	3,226	59.7%	17,400	13,117	75.4%	16,089	96,800	96,377	99.6%
Jan-10	62,229	64,724	104.0%	3,870	3,269	84.5%	13,698	13,235	96.6%	17,037	96,792	98,265	101.5%
Feb-10	62,114	64,221	103.4%	5,365	4,941	92.1%	17,482	13,729	78.5%	16,686	97,589	99,577	97.6%
Mar-10	62,114	65,499	105.4%	5,365	5,802	108.1%	17,482	13,912	79.6%	16,925	99,261	102,138	102.9%

Source: DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

As of early 2010, much of the ANP remained largely untrained and had massive problems with corruption, drug use, retention, and equipment. Police casualties have also remained very high. According to Gen. McChrystal, the Taliban “put a severe amount of pressure on the police, particularly in areas where security is immature and so the police have borne the brunt of a terrific amount of insurgent pressure, which increases police casualties, which makes it harder for the police to rebound.”¹⁹⁹

There is no doubt that a large police presence will be needed to establish a functioning justice system—and implement *hold* and *build*—although it is far from clear that a force with anything like the quality now being called for can be created in less than half a decade or can be effective without better governance and a functioning judiciary. By any standard, the ANP has also been slow to expand to anything like the force levels required. The force goal for the ANP was still only 60,000 in February

¹⁹⁹ “Interview with Gen. Stanley McChrystal,” NPR, December 9, 2009.

2006—for a country of some 33.6 million people—a far larger population than in Iraq with a larger territory, a far more dispersed population, and with far worse lines of communication and ease of movement at every level. It only rose to 82,000 in May 2007, and then to 86,800 in April 2009 and 96,800 in June.

According to CSTC-A, the ANP strength in Oct. 2009 was 94,000, with the goal of 109,000 by October 2010. ISAF reported the ANP actual force strength at 104,500 as of April 2010. The MoI planned to grow the total force strength to 134,000 by Oct. 2011. This means, however, that the police must find 43,921 recruits in order to overcome the 67 percent attrition rate among new recruits, as well as make up for the 20 percent annual attrition in the fielded force. In order to reach 2011 projections, the ANP will need to increase troop strength by another 25,000 but bring in 86,506. Total recruits needed to accomplish the October 2011 goal will exceed 147,000. The ANP will need to increase officer strength by 4,500 in 2010. Gross numbers, however, say nothing about quality or leadership.

Historical Background

As is the case in Iraq, the history of the Afghan War is largely a history of failures at the policy level, and the national security leaders in the U.S. government—as well as allied governments like Germany—failed dismally to come to grips with creating an effective ANP. Since 2001, a series of failures to develop an effective Afghan National Police gravely undercut the chances for victory. It took until FY 2004 for the United States and ISAF to even begin serious funding of the police effort. Given the lead times involved in creating effective units, this meant that any major output from the funding could only begin in FY 2005 and could only gather serious momentum in FY 2006. In practice, however, the actual training effort was so badly manned and organized that the actual pace of progress was far slower.

Throughout the history of ANP development, new training priorities, rather than replacing old ones, were simply added to the list without the allocation of sufficient additional resources. As a result, police training remained in a state of perpetual crisis rather than one of fielded force development and sustainment. The ANP training effort was and continues to be woefully undermanned, as the rapid expansion of ANP personnel has never been matched by the expansion in training personnel.

For most of this period, ISAF did not realize how difficult it would be for the ANP to function as a civil police force in country without a functioning criminal and civil justice system in most areas; without courts and jails; and where the formal justice system is far more corrupt, ineffective, and harder to access for some 95 percent of the population than the informal local justice system.

The German Experience

Worse, it took years to develop anything like a meaningful approach to police training and organization, and to reflect the reality that Afghanistan was still at war and faced a steadily growing insurgency. Germany was given the lead responsibility for police training in February 2002, and this resulted in an almost surrealistic mix of incompetence driven by training the ANP for Western-style police missions, under-resourcing it, and failing to react to the growth of the insurgent threat.

The problems with the German approach were summarized in a 2009 USIP report that backs this assessment up in considerable detail:

The Germans developed an initial plan for training the Afghan police based upon the European model of creating a police academy that would provide a university-level education for officers and a shorter academic program for noncommissioned officers. The Germans committed \$70 million toward renovating the police academy in Kabul, provided eleven police instructors, refurbished Kabul police stations, and donated fifty police vehicles. The first team of German police advisers arrived in Kabul on March 16 and the German Coordination Office was opened on March 18, 2002. The Coordination Office supervised the reconstruction of the police academy, which formally reopened on August 22, 2002, with 1,500 officer cadets enrolled in a five-year program. The academy also offered a three-month recruit course for 500 noncommissioned officers.²⁰⁰

The Germans seemed to have assumed that professionalism and integrity could be developed by a small cadre of police officers, but lacked anything approaching the capacity to train large numbers of rank-and-file policemen. Indeed the Kabul Police Academy was only intended to be effective in training small cadres of Afghan leaders. The German Police Project Office (GPPO) stated that the plan was “to start with the backbone, that’s why we started with the leaders,” but it soon became evident that this effort was far too small to reach the rank-and-file in contact with the civilian population, and that many leaders still remained ineffective or corrupt.²⁰¹ The end result was the German effort that was far too small to develop a police force for a country the size of Afghanistan. A German general stated that the effort was a “miserable failure” that would have taken “82 years” to complete.²⁰²

The State Department Steps In

These problems led the U.S. State Department to supplement the German program during 2003-2005 with equally limited success. The United States used DynCorp contractors to greatly expand the training program, with 71,147 Afghan police receiving training. However, this new training program was rushed, haphazard, and generally ineffective. According to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP):

²⁰⁰ Robert M. Perito, *Afghanistan’s Police: The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform*, Special Report 227, United States Institute of Peace, August 2009, p. 3.

²⁰¹ International Crisis Group, “Reforming Afghanistan’s Police,” Asia Report No. 138, August 30, 2007, p. 7.

²⁰² “German General Pans Afghan Mission,” *International Herald Tribune*, December 1, 2008.

The quality of the training received by the majority of the graduates of the U.S. program is open to question. In Afghanistan, contract instructors faced a formidable challenge. Trainees had little or no previous classroom experience. They sat on hard benches for hours a day in prefabricated classrooms that baked in the summer and froze in the winter, listening to instructors who spoke in English and poorly trained Afghan translators unfamiliar with police terminology. Few of the American instructors were professional police trainers and there was little or no use of adult-learning techniques. Because more than 70 percent of the Afghan trainees were illiterate, most of those trained received only the fifteen-day program. The inability of recruits to read and write inhibited their ability to absorb information and learn basic police skills, such as taking statements from witnesses, writing incident reports, and maintaining records.

Trainees did not remain at the training centers long enough to absorb much detail or the ethos of democratic policing through contact with the instructors. The U.S. training program also failed to provide the type of follow-on field training that had been a constant feature of similar U.S. programs in Panama, Haiti, and the Balkans. Afghan trainees were returned to their place of origin with no follow-up to determine whether they were applying their training or to account for the uniforms, equipment, and weapons that were issued at the end of the training period. Many were assigned to static guard duty or reduced to serving under untrained and corrupt leaders who possessed little understanding of the role of police in a democratic society.

In addition to problems with training, the international police assistance program suffered from a lack of agreement on overall strategic objectives and coordination between the U.S. and German programs, as well as poor leadership from the Afghan Interior Ministry, which supervised the police, and inadequate funding. In May 2002, the UN Development Program established the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) to enable donors to contribute funds for police salaries. By 2004, only \$11.2 million of the \$65 million requested had been contributed. Failure to provide funding meant that the Afghan government could not support the deployment of national police outside the capital. Even in Kabul, Afghan police went unpaid for months, a situation that resulted in petty corruption that undermined public confidence. Increasingly, the public regarded the Afghan National Police with a mixture of fear and disdain.

It was only in June 2005—after the police had become heavily tied to warlord militia forces—that a serious police training effort began. Responsibility for the U.S. police training mission was transferred to the DoD under the CSTC-A. This mirrored a similar transfer of police training responsibility from the State to the Defense Department in Iraq. However, “as in Iraq, transferring responsibility to the Defense Department infused manpower and financial resources but did little to improve the effectiveness of the U.S. police assistance program.”²⁰³

It should also be noted that no effort was made to tie police development to the level of effective Afghan governance or judiciary in the field, to assess the impact of poor pay in an environment of powerbrokers and narco-trafficking, or assess the impact of a rising insurgency in any detail. The police training was “stovepiped” to the point of functional absurdity.

²⁰³ Perito, *Afghanistan's Police*, p. 5.

Shifting to the Department of Defense

Transfer to DoD did not address these problems. It instead began a joint U.S. DoD and German effort, with “policy direction” still left with the Ambassador and with most of the mentors remaining under a DoS contract. This effort continued to fail until 2008, after which a further reorganization effort took place. The police training effort then remained divided between CSTC-A and an EU-formed European Policy Mission (EUPOL), efforts that continued to repeat at least some of the German failures to prepare the ANP effectively for the counterinsurgency mission—coupled to questionable contractor support and performance standards.²⁰⁴

EUPOL had major problems from the start of its operations. According to USIP, “the first EUPOL commander resigned after three months, as the result of a dispute with the EU’s special envoy to Afghanistan.” EUPOL had difficulty in establishing working relations with the NATO-led ISAF. The European public has been unenthusiastic about their forces serving in Afghanistan. There was also a problem with differing goals for the program among member states. European police were slow to deploy, with many EU member states balking at honoring commitments for personnel. Although EUPOL’s authorized strength was 400 members, it had only 218 police officers in attendance by May 2009.²⁰⁵ By June 2010, only 265 EUPOL international staff members were providing training (in addition to 163 local staff), despite the massive increases in ANP force goals.²⁰⁶

The ANP training mission was reorganized yet again in late 2009 when CSTC-A was put under NTM-A, its command was put under LTG William Caldwell, and the mentoring mission was put under IJC.²⁰⁷ In addition, a European Gendarmerie Force began training the ANP in late 2009, representing yet another group and all of its accompanying bureaucratic and logistical demands.²⁰⁸ While the police training effort has now become far better resourced and led than in the past, the frequent reorganizations of the training program have hindered the development of an effective ANP.

The impact of this problem was summed up by *The New York Times* in 2010: “The international nature of the NATO-led training program has resulted in a welter of 20 different programs run by half a dozen countries and agencies with widely varying

²⁰⁴ For a good overall—if now dated—assessment of the police training effort, see Scott Chilton, Eckart Schiewek, and Tim Bremmers, *Evaluation of the Appropriate Size of the Afghan National Police Force Manning List (Tashkil)*, Version 1, Final Report, International Consulting, July 15, 2009, especially pp. 24–38. For more details on reform of the ANP development effort, see International Crisis Group, “Reforming Afghanistan’s Police”; and *Policing in Afghanistan: Still Searching for a Solution*, Asia Briefing 85, December 18, 2008.

²⁰⁵ Perito, “Afghanistan’s Police,” p. 10.

²⁰⁶ SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010, p. 63.

²⁰⁷ NATO, “NATO’s new training mission for Afghanistan is activated in Kabul,” press release, November 21, 2009.

²⁰⁸ “NTM-A/CSTC-A Update,” *Small Wars Journal*, December 26, 2009, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2009/12/ntmacstca-update/>.

methodologies and standards. Officials are now trying to write a nationwide instruction program that will be more standardized.”²⁰⁹

The Current Status of the ANP Development Plans

The Afghan National Police (ANP) now includes several distinct forces: The Afghan Uniform Police (AUP), responsible for general policing; the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), a specialized police force that provides quick reaction forces; the Afghan Border Police (ABP), which provides law enforcement at Afghanistan’s borders and entry points; the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), which provides law enforcement support for reducing narcotics production and distribution; and the Specialized Police, which encompasses a wide range of security missions evolving within Afghanistan to include counternarcotics, counterterrorism and investigative police.

The trends in the status and readiness rating of the various elements of Afghan National Police are shown in **Figures 8.2** through **8.4**. The problems inherent in the CM rating system have already been noted. They are even less reliable in the case of the ANP, however, than in the case of the ANA.

What all of these numbers have in common is that they reflect authorized or reported, rather than actual strength, and readiness ratings that are suspect at best. The Department of Defense recognized some of these issues in the development of ANP in its April 2010 report on *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*:

Logistics and personnel management are two important areas where capacity is lacking. Mentors are focusing on these areas but the majority of the MoI is not expected to reach CM2 until July 2011. One of the challenges of the ANP Development program is the influence exerted by a large number of stakeholders, including NATO, EUPOL, the United Nations, individual countries, the U.S. Embassy, and many others. Multiple and competing inputs from different actors have often led to a disjointed and confusing approach to police training.

A high level of attrition within the ANCOP, likely caused by its high operations tempo, remains problematic. To address the problems caused by high operations tempo, the MoI has proposed that by mid-April, the MoI will begin an ANCOP rotation cycle of training, employment, and rest periods in order to address ANCOP attrition. MoI estimates that over the past ten months, ANCOP attrition is at 70 percent.

The MoI reports current ABP strength of 13,912, which is below the 17,482 goal for March 2010. The ABP failed to meet recruiting and attrition goals over the last several months but recent initiatives mentioned above may improve this situation.

One of the major past weaknesses of the ANP program is the lack of centralized command and control for recruiting and training. In order to have an effective police training system, Afghans must have oversight of recruiting and assume responsibility for these functions.

²⁰⁹ Rod Nordland, “With Rawest of Recruits, Buildup of Afghan Police Is Faltering,” *New York Times*, February 3, 2010, p. A4.

A major concern of the international community is the lack of personnel accountability in the ANP force. There have been accounts of “over-the-*tashki*” police in various districts doing police work while not being paid through LOTF-A, as well as accounts of “ghost police” who are on the payroll but are not actually present for duty.

The Personnel Asset Inventory includes drug testing of the entire fielded police force. Results to date (from more than 32,409 tested personnel) have found a 13.7 percent positive rate. Of those who tested positive, approximately 80 percent are for THC (tetrahydrocannabinol, the primary intoxicant in marijuana and hashish), 13 percent for opium, 3 percent for methamphetamines, and the remainder for indeterminate drugs.

Training is a key challenge to building the capacity of the ANP. In recent years, because of the lack of program resourcing, 60-70 percent of the force was hired and deployed with no formal training (the “recruit-assign” model).

High levels of corruption persist in the ANP and reports of promotions being sold are common. NTM-A/CSTC-A is aware of this issue and has initiated a planning team, coordinating with EUPOL and the MoI to address the issues of leadership and professional development and to identify ways to counter corruption. This process is especially needed in schools such as the Afghan National Police Academy where only two percent of the last graduating class deployed to the south while 74 percent remained in Kabul. One obstacle to ANP leadership development is the absence of a retirement and pension system that allows for merit based upward mobility of younger officers and civil servants.

Challenges within the ANP Medical Corps remain. Currently, medical training cannot keep up pace with the rapid expansion of the ANSF and clinics are dramatically understaffed. Additionally, more modern equipment and facilities are needed, especially in more remote areas of Afghanistan where the police operate.

At the conclusion of the force uplift (August 2010), international partners will be partnered with the police in 45 of the 80 key districts that comprise the COMISAF Campaign Plan’s “key terrain”; however, across the country, as of March 30, 2010, there is a projected shortfall of 108 POMLTs and this shortfall will only increase as we increase the size of the ANP and the corresponding embedded partnering requirements. There are currently 241 ANP units partnered.

FDD has improved the quality of ANP in many districts but many districts have only had minimal success after completing the FDD training program due to the lack of reform in other areas such as governance and rule of law. Without these institutions in place, police training efforts will only be minimally effective.

As with the ANA, the logistics systems in the ANP have been weak. Despite progress, the MoI logistics system is in its early stages of development and lacks automation, infrastructure, and expertise. Additionally, the lack of a national transportation system and lack of adequate roads in some areas makes it difficult to get supplies to many remote police districts.

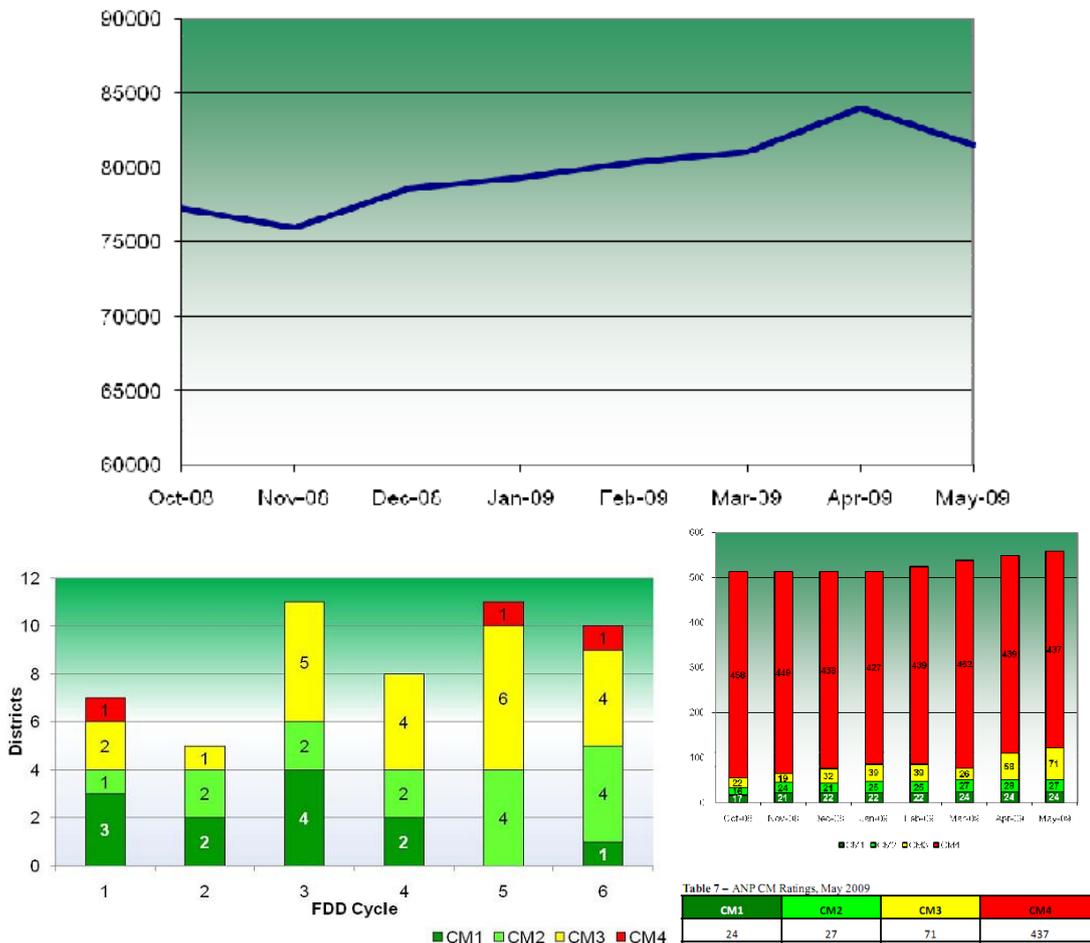
Currently there are just under 1,000 female police serving on the force. These women play an important cultural role in searching and gathering intelligence from women suspects. While they are paid the same as their male counter parts, they suffer from low public opinion, lack of support from male co-workers, and the dangerous nature of the job.

Establishment of effective rule of law institutions is critical to the sustainment of an effective police force. To date, in the justice sector, there has been little enduring

progress despite investment toward reform, infrastructure, and training. Courts are understaffed and chronically corrupt. Security for judges and prosecutors continued to be a significant problem, especially in RC South.

President Obama did not state new goals for the ANP in his strategy speech in December 2009, but NTM-A/CSTC-A followed up in January 2010 by stating that it was establishing the groundwork for ANP to grow from an authorized strength of 94,958 in December 2009, to 109,000 by October 31, 2010, and 134,000 by October 2011.²¹⁰ In April 2010, ISAF reported that the ANP was at 104,500.²¹¹

Figure 8.2: DoD Reporting on Trends in the ANP, 2008-2009



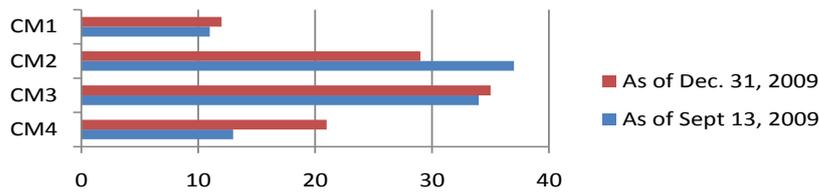
Source: CSTC-A/NTM-A.

²¹⁰ Nordland, "U.S. Approves Training to Expand Afghan Army."

²¹¹ Commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF), Campaign Overview, June 2010.

Figure 8.3: SIGAR Reporting on ANP Developments

ANP Unit Capability Milestone(CM) Ratings, Period-to-Period Comparison



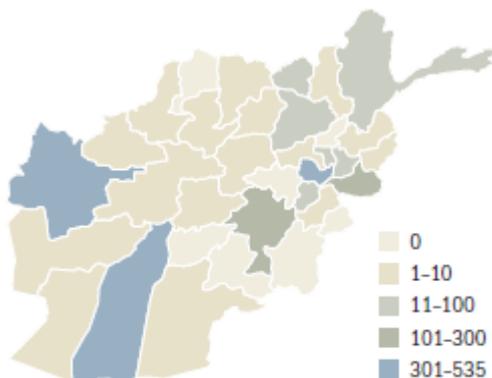
CM1: capable of operating independently

CM2: capable of planning, executing, and sustaining operations at the battalion level with international support

CM3: partially capable of conducting operations at the company level with support from international forces

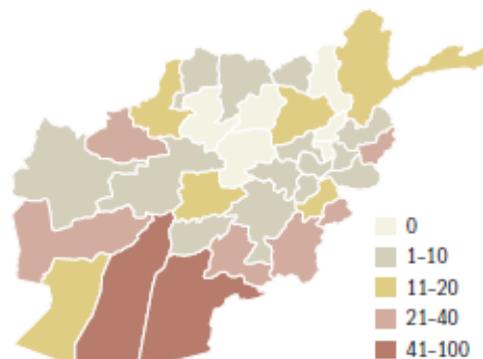
CM4: formed but not yet capable of conducting primary operational missions

ANP TRAINING GRADUATES BY PROVINCIAL ASSIGNMENT



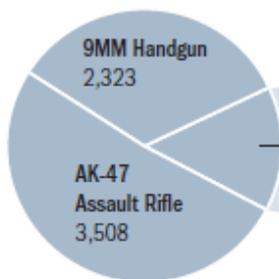
Note: Unable to determine assignments for 272 ANP graduates from data provided.

ANP CASUALTIES BY PROVINCE

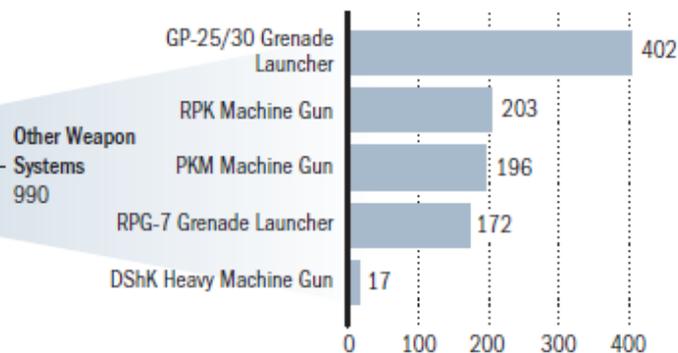


Note: Casualties reported from 4/1/2010 to 6/30/2010. Source: IJC, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

Total Weapons: 6,821



Other Weapon Systems: 990

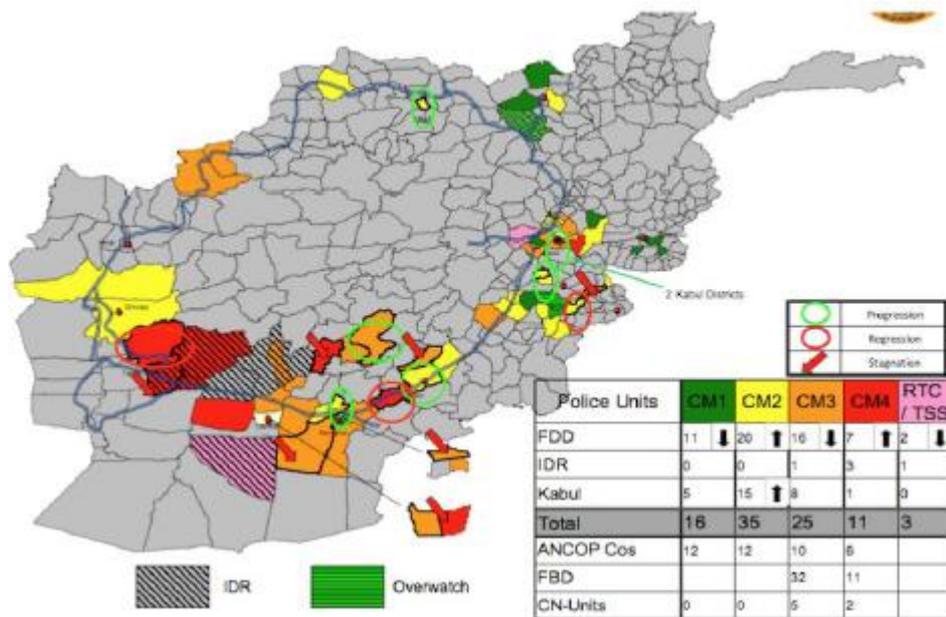


Notes to Figure 8.3:

- CM1 = All criteria adequately met, quantitative measures >85%, qualitative assessment of functionality in role >85%.
- CM2 = Most criteria adequately met, quantitative measures 70–85%, qualitative assessment of functionality in role 70–85%.
- CM3 = Few criteria adequately met, quantitative measures 50–70%, qualitative assessment of functionality in role 50–70%.
- CM4 = No criteria adequately met, quantitative measures <50%, qualitative assessment of functionality in role <50%

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 2009, p. 66; April 2010, p. 61; and July 2010, p. 58.

Figure 8.4: Capability of Select Afghan National Police Units in 2010



Ministry of Interior	Metric Rating	DM of Counter Narcotics	Metric Rating
Parliamentary Affairs	CM4	Counter Narcotics	CM 3
Public Affairs	CM3		
Inspector General	CM2	DM of Strategic Planning	CM3
Anti-Corruption	CM3	Strategic Planning	CM3
DM of Security	Metric Rating	DM of Admin and Support	Metric Rating
Afghan Civilian Police	CM3	Personnel Management	CM3
Afghan Border Police	CM3	Logistics	CM4
Anti-Crime (CID)	CM3	Finance & Budget	CM3
AGF	CM3	Facilities & Install Mgmt	CM4
Operational Planning	CM3	Surgon Medical	CM3
Force Readiness	CM3	Info, Comms & Tech	CM3
Intelligence	CM3	Legal Affairs	CM3
GDPSU	CM4	Acquisition & Procurement	CM3
		Force Management	CM3
		Training Management	CM3

Source: DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010.

CSTC-A Force Development Goals in 2009

Like the ANA, the force development goals for the ANP have risen steadily over time. A substantial part of this increase has taken place since the beginning of 2009. There has also been an increase in the demand for police quality, and one that may have outstripped Afghanistan's ability to provide and sustain the overall force now being called for.

CSTC-A provided the following summary of the development goals for the ANP at the end of June 2009:

- **Growing**

- Acceleration of 4,800 ANP for Kabul by August 2009
- Expanding by 10,000 ANP in 14 key provinces by August 2009
- Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) —16 of 20 battalions fielded
- Increasing ANP infrastructure, completed 102 projects with 331 projects on-going and another 351 projects planned

- **Reforming**

- Reinforce good policing where it exists
- Accountability Reforms
 - Rank Reform (100%), Electronic Pay (98%), Electronic Funds Transfer (70%), and Bio-metrics (21%)
- Ministerial Reform Initiatives
- Financial Disclosure and Merit Based Appointments

- **Developing**

- Focused Border Development (FBD)
 - Cycle 1-3 complete; Cycle 4 and 5 on-going
- Focused District Development (FDD)
 - 64 Districts and 12 Provincial reserve companies in FDD Cycles 1-8
- Ministerial Development

As part of this summary, CSTC-A reported the following goals for near term growth:

- **Phase I: 4.8K Growth for Kabul**

- The 4,800 ANP growth approved by Washington D.C. and the JCMB
- Recruited, Vetted, Trained, and Fielded by elections
- Two Phase training program
- CSTC-A will have the resources to fund this entire requirement

- **Phase II: 10K Growth—Key Provinces**

- Approved in principle by JCMB in April 09; plan approved by IPCB in June 09, subject to the availability of funds
- The 10K will be deployed in 14 high threat provinces: Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan, Zabul, Nimroz, Paktika, Khost, Paktia, Ghazni, Nooristan, Badghis, Farah, Konduz, and Baghlan

–Two Phase training program

–The total cost of the 10K growth estimated at \$260M; coordinating with the International Community for funding.

Current NTM-A Force Development Goals

NTM-A and CSTC-A have since stated that these plans were conditions-based and to be revalidated in annual assessments, the first of which would be in the April-June 2010 time window. In practice, some changes came earlier. NTM-A and CSTC-A provided additional data on their priorities for police development in December 2009. Their highest priorities included:²¹²

- Develop and grow leaders for tomorrow,
- Generate professional, competent, capable ANSF,
- Reform and growth the ANP to 96,800, and continue to 109,000—pending JCMB approval,
- Develop Ministry of Interior (MoI) systems,
- Develop the institutional base (training and education for force generation, and,
- Resource the fielded force.

In January 2010, the international community, JCMB and U.S. government agreed at the London Conference that the ANP would grow to 109,000 by October 2010 and 134,000 by October 2011.²¹³ As is the case with all of the force goals set during the war, no clear rationale was provided for choosing these particular numbers—if any actually existed. ANSF force goals seem to increase largely on the basis of guesstimates, or efforts to determine how large an increase is possible, rather than by developing validated and justifiable goals.

NTM-A and CSTC-A noted that success in meeting these goals would require significant improvements in recruiting, retention, and attrition, as well as major improvements in the capacity to generate professional, competent, and capable officer and NCO leadership. It also said that efforts would be made to mitigate risks through partnering at all levels, and that there would be enhanced accountability of personnel, equipment, and pay.²¹⁴

Afghan Priorities for Development of the ANP

The Afghan Ministry of Interior set its own near-term priorities for the development of the ANP in early 2010, and these may be summarized as follows:

²¹² Background briefing, December 11, 2009.

²¹³ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010.

²¹⁴ Background briefing, December 11, 2009.

- **Accelerate Focused District Development (FDD) & Other Programs**
 1. International Police Mentoring Troops (PMTs)
 2. Survivability (MEDEVAC/IED/Force Protection)
 3. FDD/Focused Border Development (FBD)/ANCOP
- **Eliminate Corruption**
 1. Ministerial Reform (Merit Based Appointment/Investigations)
 2. Major Crimes Task Force / CN Justice Task Force
 3. Inspection/International Audit Teams
 4. Logistical/Financial Accountability
- **Improve Police Intelligence**
 1. Anti-Crime Reorganization
 2. Neighborhood Watch/Community Engagement
 3. Technology (Intercept/Analyses/Kabul Camera)
 4. Expand Expertise (Mentors/Law Enforcement Professionals (LEP)/Forensics)
 5. Enhance Counter Narcotics Operations
- **Increase Tashkil**
 1. Kabul Increase now to 4,800 (mostly completed by early 2010)
 2. 10,000 Increases by Election (mostly completed by early 2010)
 3. Increase to enable COIN “Hold”
- **Secure Key Cities & Highways**
 1. Eliminate illegal Tolls
 2. Expand the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF)
 3. Expand Partnering with Special Operations Forces (SOF)
- **Secure Elections**
 1. Operational Coordination Center Regional, Provincial (OCCR/P) Activation
 2. Security and Protection of Candidates
 3. Election Security Planning as of 15 Jun 09

This list matched CSTC-A and NTM-A goals in many ways, but it was more a wish list than a plan.

Moi Reform

The Ministry of the Interior has not achieved the level of capability and integrity of the Ministry of Defense, and the international community has significantly under-resourced the building, training, equipping, and mentoring of the ANP. The MoI suffers from a lack of proper command discipline and force allocation. According to Major General Cone, “right now there are too many people who can pick up a phone

and say to their man in the Ministry of Interior, ‘call down and move 200 guys this way,’ or ‘look the other way on this.’”²¹⁵

The process of reform has also been slow. A major program to reform the MoI, and bring the command structure of the ANP into balance, was launched in 2006. Despite major delays, this program eventually achieved some results, most notably reorganizing the officer corps (the system had far too many high-ranking officers), and in pay reform: “By 2009, the program had reduced the ANP officer corps from 17,796 officers to 9,018, with a reduction in the number of generals from 319 to 159 and colonels from 2,712 to 310 and an increase in lieutenants from 4,000 to 6,000.”²¹⁶

Reform in other areas came even more slowly. The police wage scale was only aligned with rises in the cost of living, the salaries paid to the Afghan military, and the level of payments that went to the Taliban in 2009. Wages for captains increased from \$78 per month to \$250; for colonels, from \$92 to \$550; and for major generals, from \$103 to \$650. Further reform of both police and military pay took place in 2009, in an effort to raise pay above the level received by many Taliban volunteers and to reduce the leverage powerbrokers, narcotraffickers, and others had through payments and bribes. The 2010 reforms established a variety of incentives to include bonuses, hazardous duty, time-in-service and longevity.

As the reforms are meant to increase recruiting and retention, the actual results will take some time to properly grade.

A program of background checks on ANP officers was also instituted in 2009, although the identity and actual number of ANP personnel remained unclear. LOTFA data indicated that there were 78,541 personnel on Interior Ministry and ANP payrolls, but by November 2008 UN validation teams had issued only 47,400 identification cards in a process that was hampered by a lack of ANP cooperation.²¹⁷

The fact remains, however, that a public opinion survey reported in July 2010 found that 42 percent of Afghans felt the MoI was one of the three most corrupt ministries in the country, followed by 32 percent for the Ministry of Justice, and 30 percent for the Directorate of National Security (DNS). (Eighteen percent of those polled ranked all three ministries as equally corrupt.)²¹⁸

President Karzai’s dismissal of Hanif Atmar from his position as Minister of the Interior in June 2010 may lead to a further deterioration in MoI capability—although more because of a loss of power on the part of the minister than from any lack of competence on the part of his successor. On June 28, 2010, General Bismullah Khan was confirmed as Atmar’s successor, and has a good reputation.

²¹⁵ RUSI, *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, p. 113.

²¹⁶ Perito, *Afghanistan’s Police*.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²¹⁸ Londono, “Afghans View Police, Judiciary as Corrupt,” p. A8.

The problem is that Atmar was viewed in the West as one of the more competent Ministers, and his dismissal has been interpreted as a Karzai move to pave the way for reconciliation with the Taliban. One U.S. official speaking about Atmar and Amrullah Saleh, who was dismissed from the National Security Directorate, said, "We worked well with both of them, and it will take time for their successors to get fully up to speed, time that we don't really have."²¹⁹

Reforming the MoI carries an additional urgency in light of renewed efforts to grow and develop an ANP that can take over from ISAF and sustain itself once most ISAF forces are gone. As of June 2010, ANP units relied almost exclusively on the United States and ISAF for logistical and administrative support. Police mentors in Kunduz Province told SIGAR in February 2010 that, "The [MoI] logistics system does not function to any acceptable level... [We] would hesitate to state that a logistics system even exists."²²⁰ This is an additional problem for the population-centric COIN campaign in that, even if the ANP can reform their behavior, they are hardly a source of GIROA legitimacy while they remain completely dependent on foreign support at what should be their own ministerial level.

According to NTM-A, MoI personnel development reform was well underway in May 2010. For example, the ANP recruiting command was formed in March 2010 and a merit-based promotion system was introduced in May 2010. However, NTM-A/CSTC-A also reiterated in May 2010 that the Ministries would not be self-sustaining before July 2012 and that corruption remained pervasive in the MoI. NTM-A/CSTC-A noted on July 25, 2010 that vertical and horizontal integration were still problematic:

One of the primary challenges for the MoI is to strengthen both the cross-functional partnership between the MoI administrative departments and between Kabul and the regional and provincial levels.²²¹

Readiness

As has been seen in **Figures 8.2 to 8.4**, ANP readiness remains low—even when judged by CM readiness standards. The majority of ANP units were rated CM2 or CM3.²²² SIGAR did note an uncertain rise in readiness in 2009, but this progress is tentative at best: "As of December 31, 2009, there were 12 ANP units—approximately 12 percent of the units rated for this quarter—at CM1, according to CSTC-A. Last quarter, approximately the same percentage of ANP units were rated CM1...Two additional units were rated this quarter."²²³ As mentioned earlier, the

²¹⁹ Alex Rodriguez and David S. Cloud, "Afghan Interior Minister, Top Security Official Resign," *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jun/07/world/la-fg-afghan-ousters-20100607>.

²²⁰ SIGAR, "Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments."

²²¹ NTM-A, "Weekly Update," July 25, 2010.

²²² SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 2009, p. 64.

²²³ *Ibid.*, January 2010, p. 68.

quality of units at all CM ratings, including CM1, was highly suspect and, even where temporarily accurate, was subject to regression.

Manning

It is unclear that any aspect of the manpower data on any element of the ANSF is trustworthy. When reporting numbers of ANP, a U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report in 2007 stated that the Pentagon does not trust the figures that come from the MoI. “Ghost” reporting was rampant earlier when government accounting was non-existent. ANP commanders would pocket the pay of absent officers while reporting them present for duty. Additionally, the Department of Defense released a survey in 2007 stating that 20 percent of the ANP were unaccounted for yet remained on the payroll records.²²⁴

While estimates are shown in the police census data in **Figures 8.5** and **8.6**, this reporting still fails to report actual vs. authorized and absentee levels accurately, and these problems are considerably worse for the ANP than the ANA. Other reporting has also tended to sharply understate the level of real-world problems in the ANP.

For example, the Department of Defense reported in June 2009 that

between March 2008 and February 2009, nationwide recruiting numbers for all police programs was 17,191 (2,737 ABP, 3,562 ANCOP, and 9,468 AUP and specialty police). It is important to note that the MoI has not had any problems achieving any of their recruiting goals. Positive polling data on popular support for the police and the propensity to serve as well as recent experiences with FDD suggest that this trend can continue. The MoI will transition from locally-based recruiting to a national recruiting system in 2009.

The MoI is currently developing its own senior-level vetting system to ensure merit based promotions and to validate the quality of its current leaders. Rank reform was largely completed in 2008 with the total number of officers going from 15,001 to 6,820. At the highest ranks there are now 120 Generals down from 319; 235 Colonels from a high of 2,447, and 305 Lieutenant Colonels from 1,824. Officers took a written test as part of the reform process. Those that did not pass the test were provided a second opportunity to demonstrate their skills.

The individuals who failed both tests were reduced to NCOs or patrolmen. All Afghan National Police recruits (AUP, ABP, ANCOP, etc.) undergo the same vetting process established four years ago by the MoI Recruiting Department and now fully implemented. The recruits are screened by the MoI Medical, Intelligence, and Criminal Investigative Departments. Recruits must have either a national identification card (*Táchira*) or two letters of recommendation from community elders.

Upon arrival at an RTC for FDD training, all AUP officers are vetted for a second time by a regional police recruiter. They also undergo health screening, biometrics data collection, enrollment in the electronic payroll system, issue of Identification Cards, enrollment in electronic funds transfer where available, and drug testing. Recruits who test positive for opium are released from the training program. Recruits

²²⁴ T. Christian Miller, “How Many Cops on the Beat,” ProPublica.org, March 20, 2010, <http://www.propublica.org/feature/how-many-cops-on-the-beat>.

who test positive for hashish or marijuana remain in the program and receive counseling concerning ANP drug policies and prevention. During the course of the eight-week FDD training, U.S. civilian police mentors monitor all trainees and identify those that need to be removed. Police officers that fail to graduate from the FDD course are removed from the force.

As of March 2009, the ANP is paid at parity with the ANA and all thirty-four provinces are using Electronic Funds Transfer to pay police. Electronic Funds Transfer is intended to eliminate the hand-to-hand method of payment that provides many opportunities for corruption. However, such opportunities persist. It is still possible for ANP commanders to demand a portion of their officers' salaries after disbursement from the electronic system. The MoI will extend Electronic Funds Transfer as the banking system extends throughout the country. The MoI is also testing a program to electronically pay police officers using cellular telephone technology.²²⁵

These comments understated or buried the scale of serious problems. For example, the statement that “These numbers do not reflect actual increases in total ANP strength for this time period. Many candidate officers do not complete the vetting and training process. ANP ranks are further decreased by high casualty rates and the failure of ANP officers to report for duty” was buried in a footnote. Serious remaining problems in vetting were largely ignored, as were chronic problems in training performance—compounded by critical problems with illiteracy. One investigation in 2008 found only 1,200 officers in a region where Afghan commanders claimed 3,300 were serving.²²⁶ These ‘ghost’ officers bloat official numbers to an unknown but potentially significant degree.

The DoD Progress Report released in April 2010 acknowledged the continual “ghost reporting” as a major concern of the international community. In October 2009, NTM-A/CSTC-A and the MoI established a Personnel Asset Inventory database; this was put in-place as a baseline for ANP drug testing, weapons verification, and biometrics. An ambitious goal of screening all ANP by May 2010 was set but the MoI or NTM-A/CSTC-A has yet to confirm the status of the program.²²⁷

DoD reporting had previously understated police retention problems. Again, reliable numbers are hard to come by, but one source put police attrition rates as high as 20 percent in early 2009.²²⁸ One-fourth of the officer corps quits annually.²²⁹ While retention rates seemed to be improving under the FDD program, FDD is progressing slowly and has only affected a small portion of the total ANP force. Improvements in the FDD program have come at a cost to the elite ANCOP forces that deploy as a stopgap for ANP. The DoD reported in April 2010 that ANCOP forces were

²²⁵ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2009, pp. 27-28.

²²⁶ RUSI, *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, p. 10.

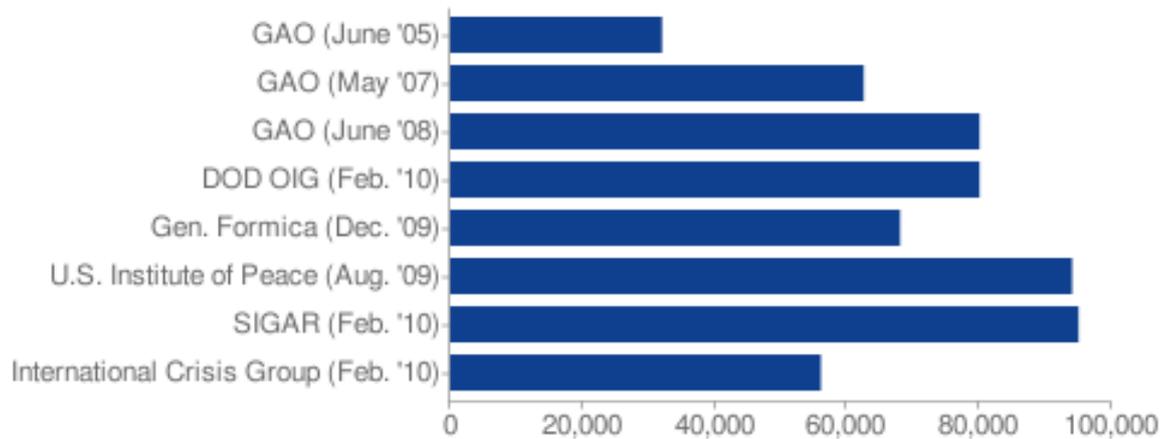
²²⁷ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²²⁸ United States Institute of Peace, “Policing Afghanistan: A Meeting of the Security Sector Reform Working Group,” conference, Washington, D.C., May 27, 2009.

²²⁹ Nordland, “With Rawest of Recruits, Buildup of Afghan Police Is Faltering.”

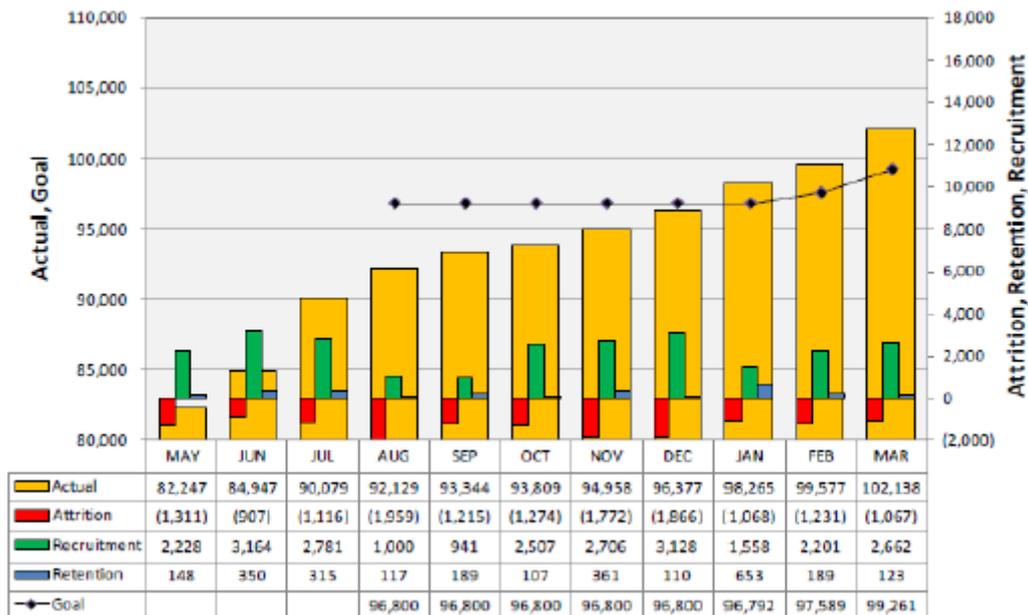
experiencing a 70 percent attrition annually rate.²³⁰ NTM-A officers have since noted that ANCOP attrition rates have fallen to “only” 50 percent—an improvement, but still a shockingly high rate.²³¹ Overall attrition rates in the ANP remain stubbornly high. As previously mentioned, any expansion of the ANP is extremely difficult to achieve when one fifth of the force disappears each year.

Figure 8.5: Various ANP Manning Surveys Conducted 2005–2010



Source: T. Christian Miller, “How Many Cops on the Beat,” ProPublica.org, March 20, 2010.

Figure 8.6: ANP Monthly End Strength, May 2009–March 2010



Source: DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 115.

²³⁰ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²³¹ Colonel Joe Buche, conversation with author, August 2010.

Pay, Leave, and Recruitment

As has been noted earlier, ANP pay has been a major problem—compounded by decoupling increases in police pay from a matching rise in pay for judges and other key elements of the justice system. The ANP has suffered for years from being so underpaid that many police had to become corrupt out of sheer necessity—a problem compounded by far more erratic pay than in the ANA, worse training and leadership, worse facilities and equipment, and higher casualty levels. This problem has been reduced by raising ANP salaries to the level of the ANA, but recent rises have not fully addressed the fact that the starting salary of both forces may remain lower than the payment given to Taliban and insurgent fighters.

Moreover, raising pay to the standard of the Taliban does not mean it meets minimal requirements like giving police enough income to marry, or can compete with the influence (and bribes) of powerbrokers and narcotraffickers, or ensures that police both get their pay and do not have to provide substantial kickbacks to their superior or to pay for their appointments. Buying positions and promotion remains a critical problem. So does extortion or “taxing” of pay and allowances by superior officers. Moreover, the ANP are far more vulnerable to bribes and corruption at every level of operation than the ANA because they come into far more direct contact with criminals and powerbrokers and have far more opportunity to extort money from the civil population.

Paid leave has been irregular and poorly managed. This is a major problem when soldiers and police frequently have to travel far through Afghanistan’s poor transport systems to reach their families and deliver the money they have earned. Many ANP go on leave and are forced to stay on leave until their family gets enough cash together to buy the service member a ticket back to their duty station. Others simply leave the service.

The recruitment process has been flawed, partially accounting for the low quality of recruits. The process is entirely under Afghan control, and until recently was locally based. The MoI set up a recruiting command in January 2010. The initial goals of the command are to increase recruits, coordinate with MoI Headquarters and standardize policies. The DoD reported in April 2010 that the command will be staffed with 263 recruiters with offices located in all 34 provinces.²³² However, there still appear to be few solid recruitment standards. Generally speaking, having a friend on the force or a powerful connection gets people onto the force more often than merit.

Vetting of candidates is also rarely carried out faithfully, if at all. Databases of Afghan recruits, crucial to background checks on recruits, are not detailed or extensive.²³³ Biometric cataloguing and vetting of ANSF personnel has yet to be widely adopted.

²³² DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²³³ RUSI, *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, p. 106.

Enduring Training Problems or Unrealistic Goals?

In late 2009, a huge percentage of the ANP remained completely untrained, with some experts putting this number as high as 78 percent. In the spring of 2010, NTM-A estimated that the force could not be trained until 2012 despite its stepped-up training efforts and warned that any real-world timeline was highly dependent upon the contributions of Coalition partners. If Coalition partners continue to deliver lower-than-expected numbers of police trainers, the entire timeline for police training will have to be reassessed—even if many of the police continue to fall short of the required level of training or become police without really meeting the desired training standards.

One expert summarized the problems in the police training program as follows:²³⁴

The central importance of police in contributing to stability in conflict and post-conflict situations is probably obvious to this audience. But, unfortunately, it is not always so to policy makers and the military who usually drive policy making on the ground in Afghanistan. Far too often, the policing side of the equation (international and domestic) is an afterthought. And as a result it is often poorly thought out and poorly resourced.

Initially in Afghanistan, responsibilities for sectors were divided up between key international donors. The Germans were given responsibility for police, and Americans for the army, Italians for the justice system and the British for counter-narcotics. This almost inevitably resulted in a lack of coordination between these key elements of the security sector as well as a large differences in resources, with the vast majority of the money going to the Afghan National Army, the one institution to receive comprehensive, top to bottom reform.

There were big philosophical differences in approach by the Germans (and now the Europeans) and Americans. German training was primarily focused on a civilian law and order force with little acknowledgement of the security environment. The United States squarely focused on producing an auxiliary security force to supplement its own troops.

These different philosophies also played out in the approach taken to training. Germans focused on producing a highly professional officer corps—three year training course for officers and one year for non-commissioned officers. This was laudable, but of course meant that only some 870 officers were trained in the first three years, and some 2,600 NCOs. Even more dangerously it meant that in the interim local commanders and militia leaders were able to embed themselves in the Ministry of Interior and in senior local police positions with their own men as the “beat police.” This greatly increased resistance to meaningful reform in future years.

Frustrated by the slow pace in the police sector, the United States entered the game in the lead up to the 2004 elections. Americans realized much greater efforts were needed to train the lower ranks, and ramped up a rapid training course, churning out police in 8 weeks if literate, and just 5 weeks if illiterate—and only some 30 per cent or so of recruits were literate.

Meanwhile, far too little was happening in terms of real reform at the Ministry of Interior, long regarded as a deeply corrupt institution. The justice sector also continued to lag, with too little in the way of agreed strategic approaches to reform, including how the different institutions would work together. There is of course little point in having a police force if you don't have functioning judges, courts or prisons and a working relationship between the different bodies. Building Afghan institutions is the ultimate exit strategy and the only way to ensure sustainability.

²³⁴ Nick Grono, *Policing in Conflict States—Lessons from Afghanistan*, International Crisis Group, June 16, 2009, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6167&l=1>.

In 2006, in response to the growing insurgency even these minimal standards were dropped, with the creation of the Afghan National Auxiliary Police. This program was supposed to see 11,000 men hired in the most violent areas and given a gun and a uniform after ten days training. Crisis Group warned that this was a dangerous distraction from building a professional police force. As predicted after millions of dollars and two years of efforts this program was widely admitted to be a failure with a few thousand of these men switched to the regular police, but thousands more disappearing never to be seen again with their weapons and uniforms. Yet more were simply let go, again with their weapons and uniforms but now unpaid and presumably unhappy about it.

Imagine if this time and effort had been put into training quality professional NCOs, who are essential field leaders in a largely illiterate country. Instead their training too has been slashed from one year to some three months.

How quickly lessons are forgotten amidst the speedy rotations in Afghanistan. Almost identical rhetoric to that about the ANAP in 2006 is now being used by the Americans to promote the APPF, the Afghan Public Protection Force. Admittedly a far more closely monitored project—although it is only in the trial stages in Wardak province—it aims to provide local recruits with three weeks of training, and a gun. Given the current doubts about the effectiveness and accountability of the Afghan police force, we are skeptical that having a less trained “police” force, with local allegiances, will contribute to providing greater security and building public confidence.

There are some glimmers of hope. A new Interior Minister, with a far more strategic approach, took the helm at the end of 2008. The International Police Coordination Board (IPCB) has been streamlined and is co-operating, specifically at a working level, far more productively than previously. There was also great pride in Kabul at the quick reaction of the security forces to the February 2009 assault on three ministries in the capital, and that effective response provided an important psychological boost. These small achievements need to be built upon.

... There must be effective coordination between donors—at both planning and implementation stages. There must be a clear vision of the mission objectives, shared by all of the major donors in partnership with Afghan institutions. And there must be a chain of command with clear division of work.

This should be self evident, but apparently the lessons of the past have not been internalized. In Afghanistan there has been a failure to coordinate at all levels. The Germans and Americans and Italians did not coordinate over their vision of the security and rule of law sectors. The Americans and Germans did not coordinate their training of officers and police. Currently, the EU has the nominal lead for police training, even though the United States contributes the vast bulk of the resources. And they both have a different philosophy of policing—be it counterinsurgency or community focused. The new minister of interior is far more effective in knocking heads together amongst the international community but efforts are still too often run outside Afghan institutions, and short term in focus.

Effective coordination also extends to donors’ internal organization to assist with police reform. In the United States there is no single agency responsible for police training abroad. The departments of Defense, State, Justice, and Homeland Security, as well as the Agency for International Development, all have police programs that operate independently and often without communicating effectively. The decision to give a leading role in police programs in Afghanistan to the Department of Defense has further blurred the distinction between the military and police.

SIGAR reporting in April 2010 provided another warning about the training effort, although one that understates the qualitative problems which still remained:²³⁵

²³⁵ SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 2010, p. 61.

From January 1 to March 31, 2010, ANP training organizations graduated 4,908 personnel, a 14.5 percent increase from the preceding quarter. As of the end of the quarter, 2,761 ANP are in training. The largest number graduated from Focused Border Development...Graduates during this quarter were assigned to a much larger number of provinces: 27 this quarter... compared with 7 last quarter. The largest number of graduates was assigned to Kabul.

The joint DOS/DOD audit found that the DOS Civilian Police Program does not meet DOD's requirements to train a police force capable of combating the insurgency. Consequently, DOS and DOD agreed to allow DOD to assume contractual responsibility for the primary ANP training program. The audit recommended that the Commanding General of CSTC-A establish clearly defined requirements for the training, as well as implement effective contractor oversight procedures.

Attrition within the ANP is also a challenge, with a rate of 25 percent, according to ISAF. Attrition is highest in the ANCOP, at a rate of 67 percent, despite the fact that the ANCOP is the best trained and most educated force within the ANP. To combat attrition, NTM-A/CSTC-A plans to initiate a cyclical program in May 2010 that will allow for periods of rest during which ANCOP personnel can engage in literacy training and other education, and take leave.

To improve the overall quality of training that ANP personnel receive, the MoI and NATO are developing Afghan Police Training Teams (APTTs) to be in all provinces by the beginning of 2012. The APTTs are staffed by Afghan trainers who work alongside ISAF Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams and Police Mentoring Teams to extend the reach of training and development capacity into districts that lack training support.

Along with improvements in training quality, the MoI seeks to make ANP training more uniform and consistent, addressing the lack of centralized command and control for recruiting and training. In January 2010, according to DOD, the MoI established the ANP Recruiting Command to help accomplish this goal. This new command will synchronize and coordinate recruiting policies across the ANP.

The situation has improved since late 2009. By May 2010, 618 ANP officers had completed the Afghan National Police Academy and OCS training, with 1,723 projected to graduate by November 2010. 17 Afghan Police Training Teams (APTT) had been created, with 100 projected for creation by November. However, the ANP still lack the trainers, mentors, and partners they need. Moreover, even those police who do meet training standards remain subject to corruption and political influence, and most still do not have the facilities and equipment they need to survive and operate in the face of an insurgent threat. As **Figure 8.7** shows, training is improving in volume. However, training standards are mixed at best, and Afghans often come out of the training system who have not really met training standards or even shown they can handle the minimal literacy burdens involved. Essentially, if a police trainee shows up, and attends the graduation ceremony, he (or she) passes and is considered "trained." Even by this rather loose standard, most police remain untrained. Furthermore, officer training schools only had a 40-60 percent fill rate as of early 2010.

The improvements in the training of new officers also do not alter the fact that many of the serving ANP have little or no *meaningful* training. NTM-A/CSTC-A put forth a two-year timeline in early 2010 to train the force. Though its manning increased from 25 percent in November 2009 to 58 percent in May 2010, NTM-A/CSTC-A simply does not currently have enough personnel to carry out the police training effort, even with the added trainers coming into theater as the U.S. troop level increases in 2010. The 2-year timeline is based upon presumed increases in training personnel from European Coalition partners. However, it is not understood if the European nations will meet these expectations.

If the European contribution to the police training effort remains low, the entire training timeline will have to be reassessed. It is not clear how badly this would slow down the police training effort, but there will probably be a significant delay unless more trainers are found elsewhere. At the height of the troop increase in August 2010, international forces will be partnered in only 45 of the 80 key districts in ISAF's "Key Terrain" which projects a shortfall of 108 POMLTs or 4,320 personnel (40 per team). The amount of ANP units without partners will only increase as the MoI increases its troop strength while NATO simultaneously draws down forces.²³⁶

NTM-A/CSTC-A continues to try to find options. Lt Gen Caldwell, in coordination with former Afghan Interior Minister Hanif Atmar, outlined a plan to transport 3,000 top police officers to Turkey and Jordan for advanced training. Progressively utilizing ISAF forces abroad might help compensate for the shortage of 500 NATO trainers, graduating more educated officers and allowing the MoI to replace corrupt or ineffective chiefs.²³⁷ The announcement of plans to send police officers abroad also came alongside MoI regulations calling for all ANP to receive at least a six-week basic training program before assignment to stations. As of March 2010, three quarters of the force had received no formal training.²³⁸ In May 2010, this number was still over 50 percent. The fact is that it will still be at least several years before training becomes fully adequate.

NTM-A/CSTC-A has also developed a program in coordination with the MoI that may accelerate reform and increase training. The Afghan Police Training Team (APTT) will graduate its first class of 60 ANP in March 2010 with a planned future growth of 400 APTTs. The concept is to pair a team of four Afghans: one Officer, two NCOs and one civilian located at the district level. The model team will work to increase training, drug screening, equipment accountability, literacy training, and administration.²³⁹ Challenges in the program will come at the district level where police chiefs are forced to publicize accountability shortcomings and corruption within the ranks.

Efforts are also being made to reduce any problems caused by reliance on contractors. As of May 2010, DynCorp International LLC held the contract to supply 500 civilian police advisers located at the regional training centers. The Department of State managed the contract but after recommendations from Ambassador Eikenberry and top military commanders, the contract was to be managed by the DoD beginning in July 2010.²⁴⁰ The funding, management, and training responsibility of the ANP has transferred multiple times through several evolutions since its inception. Training the ANP in many ways began in mid-2010.

²³⁶ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²³⁷ Greg Jaffe, "Program Aims to Rebuild Afghan Police Force, Repair its Image," Washington Post.com, March 12, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/11/AR2010031103148.html>.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

The fact remains, however, that the overall goal for training the ANP may set standards that cannot be met for years to come and that fail to reflect a real world picture of the kind of police Afghanistan can and will sustain. Furthermore, retention of trained police officers remains a major hurdle. According to LTG Caldwell, there is a 67 percent attrition rate among police recruits. Caldwell stated that this rate was "far too high" and that revamping the way the police works to avoid burnout was one of his main priorities. As the ANP attempts to expand to 300,000 personnel, this rate must come down or an enormous number of recruits must be found.²⁴¹ In April 2010, monthly attrition for the AUP was 1.2 percent, which was slightly better than NTM-A's goal of 1.4 percent. However, seasonal variations in the intensity of violence should dampen optimism about this decrease.

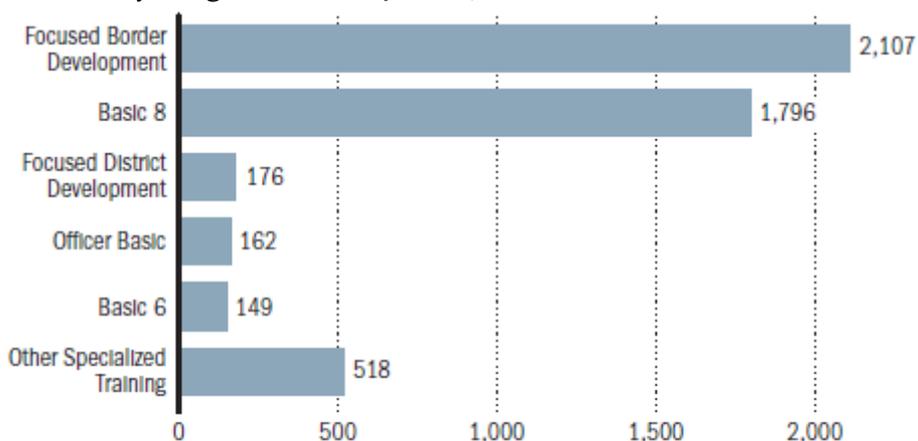
It simply is not clear that any near-term effort can meet all of the present requirements or that the Afghan government and Afghan society will allow most ANP to operate outside the limits imposed by local powerbrokers, tribalism, patronage and corruption, and the weaknesses in governance and the judiciary. As has been the case in Iraq, there are powerful pressure to recruit local police and limit their role to local norms and standards. If it comes to a choice between Western and local concepts of policing, the very fact that the United States and its allies are committed to leave almost ensures that local standards will eventually dominate.

Moreover, the effort to train the regular police should be directly integrated with the effort to shape capacity for governance and create a judiciary that can actually serve the needs of the entire country. Given the low standards in governance and the judiciary in much of the country—and the probabilities of raising them during the time the United States and ISAF have major influence—it might be better to concentrate scarce resources on the ANCOP and other specialized elements of the police, accept the fact most police will never meet current goals, and find an answer to combining policing and a justice system that Afghans want, can actually create, and can afford. The result would fall far short of Western standards, but that seems almost inevitable. It is better to pursue reality than to create a field of dreams.

²⁴¹ AFP London, "70 Percent of Afghan Police Recruits Drop Out: U.S. Trainer," March 2, 2010, <http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/afghanistanunrestpolicebritainusnato>.

Figure 8.7: Recent Trends in ANP Training

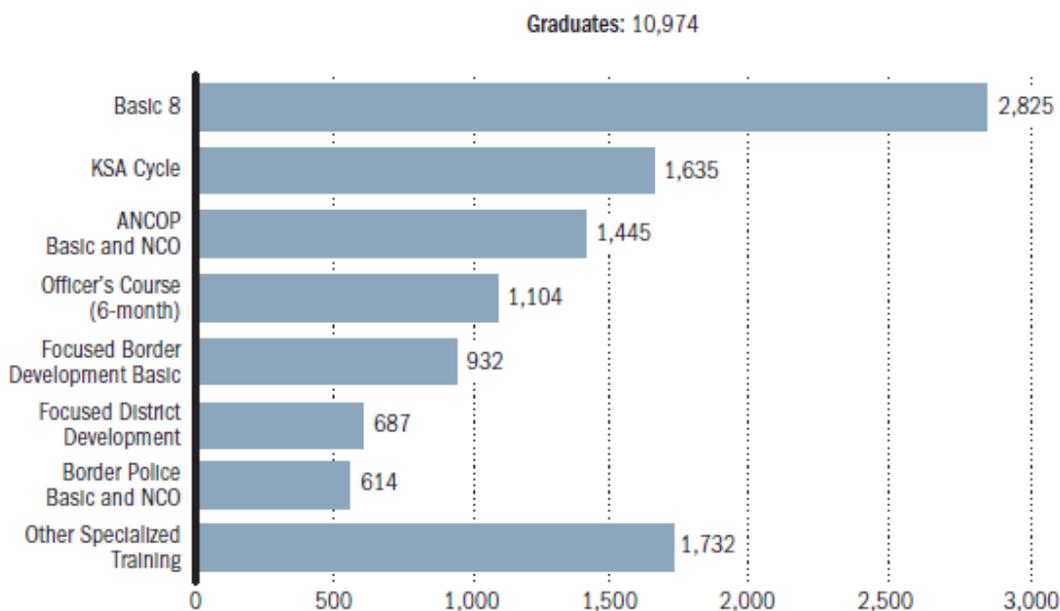
ANP Graduates by Program: Jan 1-April 30, 2010



Note: Other Specialized Training includes Ceremonial Unit, Afghan National Civil Order Police, Train the Trainer (T3), Medical, Advanced 8, Guard Training, Female Intelligence, Female Basic, and Firearms.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 2010, pp. 60-61.

ANP Graduates by Program: Third Quarter 2010

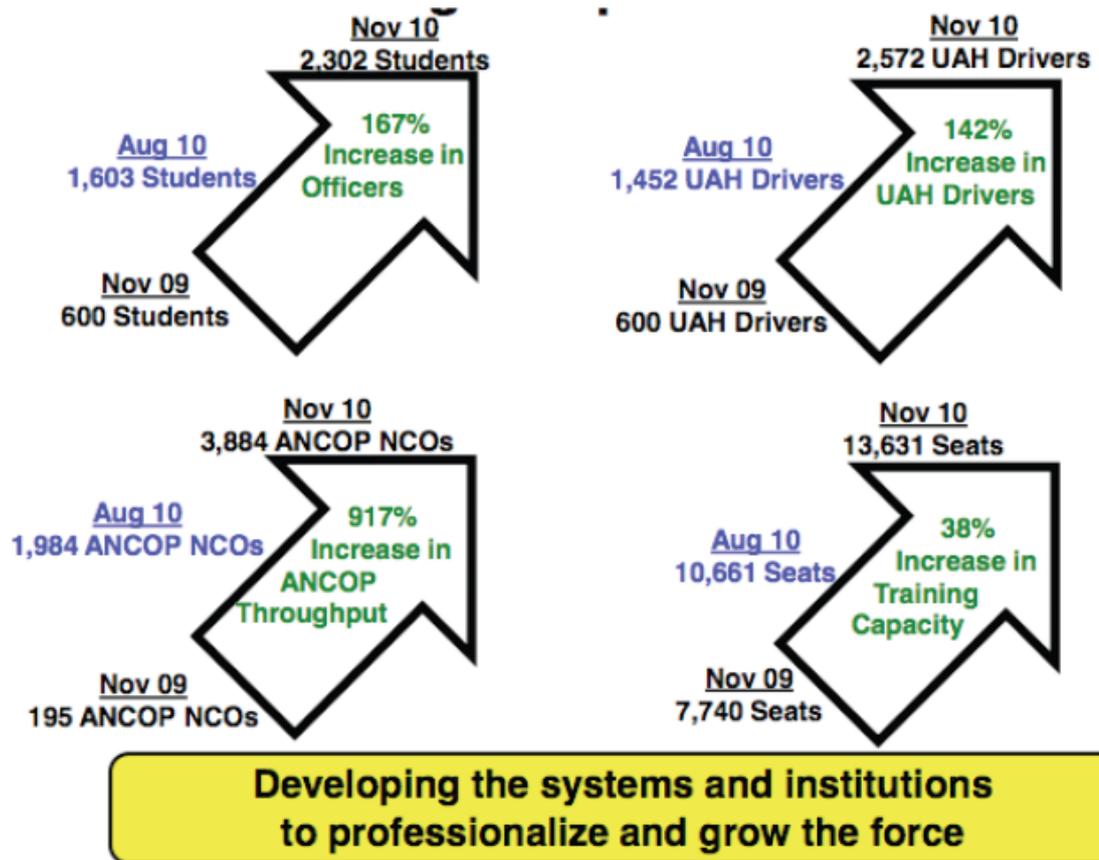


Source: NTMA/CSTCA, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010, p. 62.

Figure 8.7, continued:

ANP Training Comparison: 2009 - 2010



Source: NTM-A/CSTC-A, August 2010.

Equipment and Infrastructure

Figure 8.8 shows that equipment deliveries are improving. Even so, the ANP is significantly less equipped than the ANA, although some ANCOP units are better equipped. SIGAR provided the following summary of ANP equipment in the spring of 2010:²⁴²

- From January 1 to March 31, 2010, the ANP fielded 549 radios, 478 vehicles, and 240 weapons, according to NTM-A/CSTC-A. Continued driver training enables additional vehicles to be fielded. NTM-A/CSTC-A expects to receive an average of 250 vehicles per month for the ANP for the next seven months.
- The only weapons procured during this quarter were PK machine guns. According to NTM-A/CSTC-A, there was a large change in the number of weapons planned for the future—from 2,448 last quarter to none this quarter. The number of weapons fielded also decreased this quarter, 1,017 fewer than last quarter. This decrease in fielding was intended to encourage the MoI to implement and enforce greater accountability of excess weapons, according to NTM-A/CSTC-A.

Much of this equipment is too light to meet ANP needs as long as it must perform part of the “hold” mission and is vulnerable to attack by Taliban forces in the field. Moreover, deliveries have been slow, accountability has been poor, and both training and field units have often been seriously short of operational equipment. These problems are compounded by inadequate facilities that are often very vulnerable. **Figure 8.9** shows that a number of infrastructure projects were not completed because the threat was too great.

CSTC-A reported in the spring of 2009 that it had “canceled” 28 ANP construction projects for security reasons. Of these, one contract was terminated for convenience and 27 projects were de-scoped from existing contracts. The awarded amounts on these contracts totaled \$33.53 million and these security concerns affected projects in all regions of Afghanistan except for the northern region.²⁴³ That summer, SIGAR reported that “seventeen contracts with a collective value of \$14.50 million were terminated this quarter, one for security concerns and the others for contractor performance. No new contracts were awarded from October 1 to December 31, 2009.”²⁴⁴

The biggest improvement in the ANP inventory has been the procurement of armored vehicles (HMMWVs). According to the April 2010, DoD report, 425 are on-hand with a total requirement for 3,500.²⁴⁵

²⁴² SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 2010, pp. 64-65.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, June 2009, pp. 65-66.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, January 2010, p. 69.

²⁴⁵ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

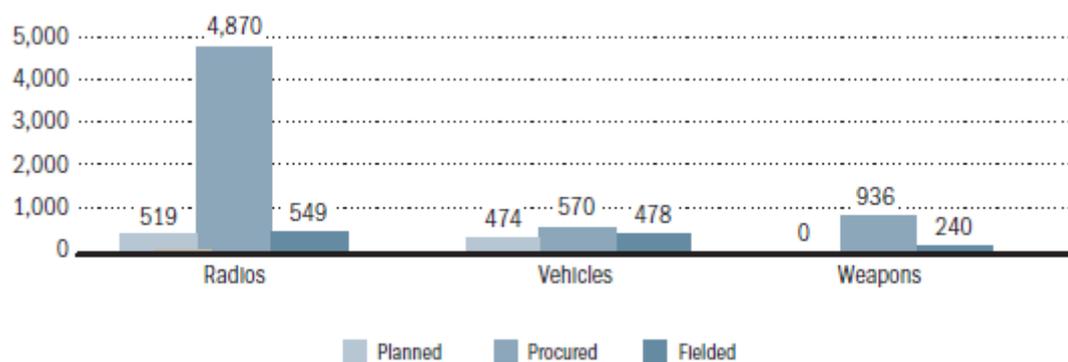
On July 22, 2010, SIGAR reported additional problems with an ANP compound in Kandahar. The Joint Regional Afghanistan Security Forces Compound (JRAC) was meant to house four structures: a regional logistics center, an ANCOB battalion, an AUP regional headquarters, and an ABP command center. The JRAC was constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), with each structure built under a different contract. While the JRAC generally met contract standards, negotiation and execution of the four contracts was not coordinated, leading to numerous problems. Some power, water and sewer systems were redundant and temperature control systems varied, unnecessarily complicating maintenance. Because the JRAC project began before implementation of national “austere” construction standards, the compound is not sustainable without U.S. assistance. SIGAR noted that project oversight did not comply with USACE standards.

Perhaps most troubling is that one of the projects was delayed for two years, “in part due to a land dispute between CSTC-A and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration...In addition to nearly \$280,000 in USACE expenses related to the project’s re-location, the prime contractor has filed a request for equitable adjustment for \$665,000 in additional costs.”²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the situation is slowly improving:

Infrastructure contracts for the ANP—like those for the ANA—relate to barracks, headquarters, training buildings and ranges, administrative spaces, warehouses and storage buildings, and maintenance facilities. According to CSTC-A, ANP facilities are sustained through a national operations and a maintenance contract. This contract includes training to enable the eventual handover of full operations and maintenance responsibility to the MoI.

As of December 31, 2009, CSTC-A reported 250 active infrastructure contracts, compared with 269 in the preceding quarter; the largest group of these contracts is for projects in the north. Seventy-seven contracts with a collective value of \$174.35 million were scheduled to be completed during the quarter.²⁴⁷

Figure 8.8: Part One, Recent Trends in ANP Equipment, January 1–April 30, 2010



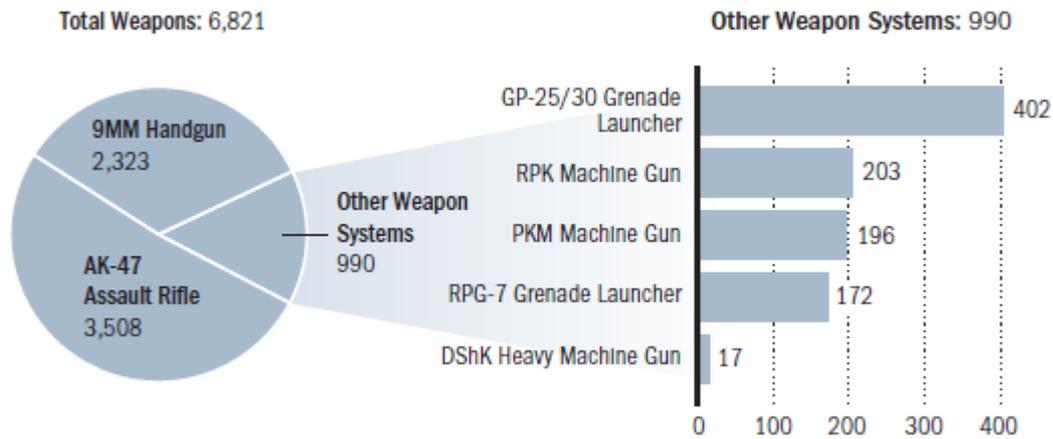
Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 2010, p. 64.

²⁴⁶ SIGAR, “ANP Compound at Kandahar Generally Met Contract Terms but Has Project Planning, Oversight, and Sustainability Issues,” July 22, 2010.

²⁴⁷ SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 2010, p. 69.

Figure 8.8: Part Two, Recent Trends in ANP Equipment, April 1–June 23, 2010

ANP WEAPONS FIELDDED



Note: These weapons were transferred to ANP forces from 4/1/2010 to 6/23/2010.

Source: NTM-A/CSTCA, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

ANP RADIOS AND VEHICLES FIELDDED

Vehicles

Light and medium tactical vehicles	988
Up-armored HMMWV ^a	818

Radios

VHF radios ^b	1,531
HF radios ^c	119

a. Up-armored HMMWVs include M1151, M1152, and M1152 ambulance models.

b. Very High Frequency (VHF) radios include various configurations of Motorola or ICOM radio systems.

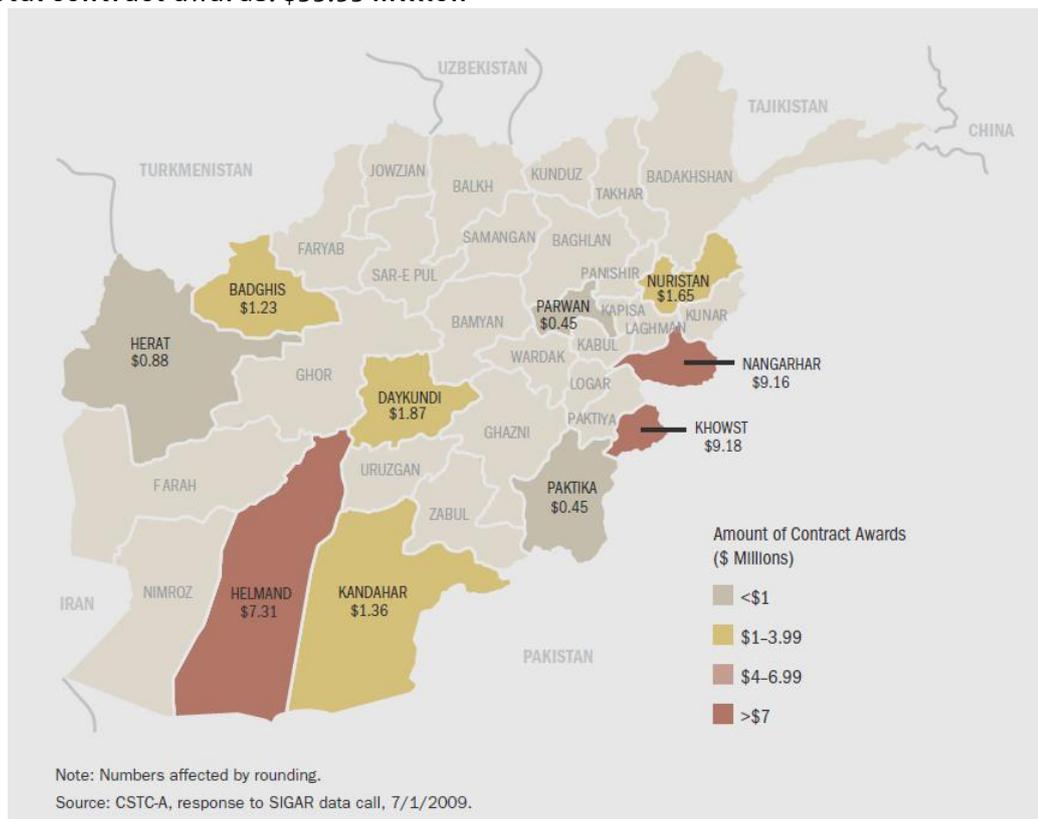
c. High Frequency (HF) radios include various configurations of CODAN radio systems.

Source: NTM-A/CSTCA, response to SIGAR data call, 7/6/2010.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2010, p. 64.

Figure 8.9: ANP Infrastructure Projects Canceled Due to Threat

Total contract awards: \$33.53 million



Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 2009, pp. 61.

Permeating Corruption

It is also critical to stress that none of this effort will succeed unless the force development effort can find better ways to deal with corruption—both within the police and throughout every aspect of the Afghan government, justice system, and society they must function in. Pay increases and better training may have reduced the level of police abuses. Nevertheless, corruption and incompetence remain widespread. The same ISAF and national officials that sometimes publicly praise reform of the MoI privately state that it is still corrupt and needs further reform. The purchasing of senior police positions and promotions appear to be widespread practices. So are safer posts and posts in desirable areas, and police cadres are sometimes little more than concealed militias and staffs for given powerbrokers. According to one senior ANP official, “All posts are sold with a predetermined price.”²⁴⁸

Many police still extort the local population, run checkpoints to get additional funds, and take pay from powerbrokers and narcotraffickers. Theft, extortion, and graft are common,

²⁴⁸ RUSI, *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, p. 10.

if not endemic. Criminals can often buy their way out of investigation or incarceration while the suspect or innocent are subject to long periods in jail and sometimes forced confessions. Police rarely challenge the Taliban or insurgents unless pressured to do so and sometimes ignore Taliban operations. Police and insurgent checkpoints—or “toll booths”—are often located near each other on the same road.

Police Extortion and Theft

The police are regularly seen as one of the most corrupt groups in the country, and they collect a substantial but unknown amount of money each year through shakedowns of local Afghans and businesses. ANP checkpoints are often little more than tolls. ANP performance is crippled by other forms of serious corruption, manifested most powerfully to the Afghan population by frequent street-level ‘shake-downs’ by the police. There are no disciplinary units at the provincial level to control police forces.²⁴⁹ These problems are enabled by corruption at higher levels of command within the MoI and in other local governance structures.

The ANP does not just steal from Afghans. The United States spends billions to arm and supply the ANP, many of whom then sell their weapons and ammunition to the Taliban, inevitably to be used against ISAF forces. With a steady supply line from the United States, the Taliban rely on the ANP for weapons and ammunition superior to, and at a cheaper price, than older models available throughout Afghanistan or brought in externally from foreign allies.²⁵⁰ Insurgent commanders have reported that local police will go so far as to report a major firefight as explanation for ammunition “expended” which has actually been sold to the Taliban.²⁵¹

The External Causes of Police Corruption

It is unclear, however, that even the most honest police could operate effectively in a government and economy so corrupt and dominated by powerbrokers. It is also important for all U.S. and outside critics to remember that most of these same powerbrokers have profited and gained their present level of authority in large part because of Coalition actions and failure to manage aid funds and military contracts in ways that ensure the money does not go to powerbrokers. No police will resist the realities of a corrupt political and economic environment—as the U.S. experience during Prohibition demonstrates all too well.

Moreover, the U.S. and allied failure to effectively link police development to the matching development of governance and the other elements of the justice system—and the matching failure to equip, house, and adequately train the police—have created a climate in many areas where there is no functioning level of governance or

²⁴⁹ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 59.

²⁵⁰ T. Christian Miller, Mark Hosenball, and Ron Moreau, “The Gang that Couldn’t Shoot Straight,” *Newsweek*, http://www.newsweek.com/id/235221?from=rss&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+newsweek%2FTopNews+%28UPDATED+-+Newsweek+Top+Stories%29.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

formal/informal justice system to support them. This has been a crippling aspect of police development. Police do not exist in a vacuum. They cannot function where there is no real governance and functional justice system, and any analysis or development plan that ignores these realities singles out police corruption in ways that are little more than absurd.

Only recently have top officials acknowledged the ANP's incompetence and corruption as Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, the State Department's top representative in the region, has publicly called the Afghan police "an inadequate organization, riddled with corruption."²⁵² NATO/ISAF programs cannot succeed, however, where political interference, corruption, and powerbrokers block effective ANP action or ensure that it cannot be reformed. Powerbrokers have a clear incentive and desire to control and influence the ANP, as it directly threatens their operations. This must be understood and included as part of the planning for ANP improvement. The political dimension of ANP development is as critical as the military and civil dimensions.

Drug Use and Corruption

Police do not live in a social vacuum. The drug trade has had a critical corrupting influence on the ANP (and sometimes on the ANA). This is not surprising, with Afghanistan regularly achieving around 90 percent of global annual opium production. In addition to huge sums of drug money corrupting the force, the availability of so much opium and hashish in Afghanistan has contributed to high rates of drug use among the ANP. While hard data on ANP (and ANA) drug use is hard to come by, it is clear that the problem is huge. One in five ANP recruits tests positive for drugs.²⁵³ One British official estimated that 60 percent of the police in Helmand province were drug users, while other U.S. sources put the drug use rate at 25 percent.²⁵⁴

An August 2009 USIP report noted that Afghans believed "almost universally that Interior Ministry officials, provincial police chiefs, and members of the ANP were involved with the drug trade. This belief was based on widespread reports of senior Interior Ministry officials accepting large bribes for protecting drug traffickers and for 'selling' senior provincial and district police positions to persons engaged in drug trafficking. A combination of local loyalties, links to criminal networks, low or no pay, and a residual culture of impunity contributed to endemic corruption in the ANP."²⁵⁵ Senior officials lack control of their personnel and do not regularly monitor performance.²⁵⁶ This is compounded by political interference, and by the lack of a robust justice sector. Well documented cases of ANP corruption are numerous and often outrageous. Sadly, reports of ANP personnel taking part in rape, murder, torture, and other crimes are all too common.²⁵⁷

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Nordland, "With Rawest of Recruits, Buildup of Afghan Police is Faltering."

²⁵⁴ Australian Broadcasting News, "60pc of Helmand Police Use Drugs: Official," February 18, 2009.

²⁵⁵ Perito, *Afghanistan's Police*, p. 7.

²⁵⁶ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 59.

²⁵⁷ RUSI, *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, pp. 12–14.

Power brokering and political scheming has had an equal impact. A comprehensive overhaul of the merit-based promotion system and transparency within the ranks of the ANP has still not been addressed. While the MoI, CSTC-A/NTM-A and EUPOL are all aware of the corruption, none have been able to reform the system. In a report released by the DoD in April 2010, only 2 percent of the Afghan National Police Academy was deployed to the south while 74 percent remained in Kabul.²⁵⁸

In March of 2010, GAO released a report titled, “Afghanistan Drug Control” which shed further light onto the neglected issue of drug use within ANP ranks. This is an issue government and military personnel are just beginning to address with such efforts as a new \$11 million program that includes drug treatment facilities, develops protocol for the treatment of addicts and trains Afghan prevention providers.²⁵⁹

Police and prosecutors are easy targets for bribery when their government paycheck is compared to that of drug lords. For the past 8 years, syndicates have easily infiltrated law enforcement through force or collusion. Government officials who have attempted to remain legitimate or curb drug movement or growth in their districts have been either murdered or corrupted.²⁶⁰

Although drug usage within the ranks has been a problem since the ANSF’s inception, not until recently has the government begun properly reporting and addressing the issue. According to a GAO report, 12-41 percent of ANP recruits tested positive for drugs at regional training centers. However, even that high number is disputed since opiates leave the system quickly. Furthermore, State officials stated that countless recruits who test negative show signs of withdrawal during the training.²⁶¹ A report released by the DoD in April 2010 found that, of 32,409 ANP tested, 13.7 percent tested positive for drug use. Of those who tested positive, 80 percent were for marijuana and hashish.²⁶²

The ANP lack a comprehensive drug rehabilitation clinic at either regional command training centers. Although the DoD Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) does not extend to ANP, due to limited funds, the Ministries of the Interior and Public Health authorized ANP access to public health facilities nationwide.²⁶³

The Focused District Development Program

The Focused District Development (FDD) program described in **Figures 8.10 to 8.11** is an attempt to deal with part of these problems—although one largely decoupled from reform of governance and the rest of the justice system. The FDD program does seem to

²⁵⁸ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²⁵⁹ Government Accounting Office (GAO), *Afghanistan Drug Control*, March 2010, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10291.pdf>.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²⁶³ GAO, *Afghanistan Drug Control*.

have had at least some temporary benefit in dealing with the quality and integrity of the police, but **Figure 8.12** shows that it is necessarily slow and limited by the availability of formal trainers, coalition units to partner with the re-trained AUP units, and the availability of ANCOP units to backfill for the AUP during training. Moreover, it cannot deal with the broader realities of the influence of powerbrokers, the insurgent threat, the impact of the climate of corruption outside the police, a lack of effective support from local governance, and the absence or failure of the other elements of a functioning justice system.

The Focused District Development program operates by taking the police offline in entire districts, putting in replacement units, sending the offline force to a regional training center together for 8 weeks to receive training appropriate to position and prior training and literacy levels, and re-equipping them with authorized equipment. During training, the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) covers the police district, and is withdrawn when the ANP return. Following their return, the police are monitored and provided with follow-on training, and police officers are trained further in specific topics to become trainers organic to the district.

Police in FDD who fail to graduate, or cannot be vetted, are supposed to be removed from the police force. Unfortunately—as is the case with most of the ANSF training process—personnel rarely ever fail training courses no matter how badly they perform. Some analysts estimate that the failure rate for FDD personnel is 5 percent.²⁶⁴ Sadly, this low rate may be even higher than most ANSF training courses, wherein all that is required to pass is to show up.

The Department of Defense described the FDD program as follows in its June 2009 report on Afghanistan:

The Focused District Development (FDD) is a comprehensive program divided into six phases for assessing, training, and validating district AUP units. The program began in late 2007. Each phase includes units between seven and 11 AUP units. Fifty-two police districts out of a total of 365 districts in Afghanistan are currently enrolled in the Focused District Development (FDD) program.

To date, selection of FDD districts has focused on districts in the south and east, near the Ring Road. For the first seven cycles of FDD there were no formalized procedures for collaborating with international partners to select which districts would go through the FDD program. FDD cycle eight will incorporate a more collaborative approach to district selection. CSTC-A, through USFOR-A, approached ISAF to propose developing a more formal and integrated approach to district selection. CSTC-A, USFOR-A, ISAF, UNAMA, the ICMAG, and the MoI worked together to produce a prioritized list of FDD districts coordinated closely with the COIN strategy. This collaborative approach to district selection will be continued for future FDD cycles.

The first six cycles of FDD included only district-level AUP. However, cycle seven will consist of eight provincial police companies and four district units mentored by international PMTs (IPMTs) from Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK. The inclusion of provincial ANP in the FDD is the result of the lack of PMTs. The fact that provincial police have assigned mentors has eased the PMT constraint and facilitated their inclusion in FDD. It is also of significant value to the provincial police chiefs and governors to provide a trained police resource for quick response to crises and to provide flexibility within the province. At full manning levels, the FDD program would take three years to complete. As mentioned above, there are significant shortages in PMTs and overall ANP training personnel.

²⁶⁴ RUSI, *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, p. 106.

As of April 2010, 83 districts had been trained.²⁶⁵ CSTC-A estimates that 2012 would be the earliest that FDD could be completed in all of Afghanistan's 365 districts.²⁶⁶ Accelerating the FDD program does not appear to be possible under current resource constraints, due to a lack of sufficient training capacity, a shortage of PMTs, and a shortage of ANCOP personnel to relieve the ANP while in FDD.

As with many aspects of ANSF development, the problems of the FDD program are exacerbated by a shortage of U.S. and ISAF training personnel. The shortage of PMTs is the most critical factor hindering the FDD program, according to CSTC-A. The total PMT requirement is for approximately 2,375 personnel. Only 39 percent of that requirement had been met as of May 2009. Of the 635 required PMTs, CSTC-A fielded only 90, and these were under-strength. The decision to send an additional BCT to train the ANSF will significantly reduce this shortfall, but it will not eliminate it.²⁶⁷

Additionally, while the ANCOP force is stretched too thin to perform both the FDD roles and meet urgent security needs, efforts to conduct FDD without backfilling the force while it is away for training have proven unsuccessful. Any acceleration of the FDD program will require more ANCOP personnel to be trained, or an alternative force to backfill the districts in FDD must be found.

Finally, police forces that undergo FDD must have adequate mentors upon their return to their districts. Unfortunately, the previously mentioned massive shortage of mentors means that this rarely happens. NTM-A/CSTC-A has not yet identified the necessary personnel to mentor the districts post-FDD. It is a waste of precious resources to conduct the manpower-intensive FDD process and then send them back to their districts without follow-on mentoring and supervision.

An effort has been made to focus the training cycles on regions with high levels of insurgent activity, primarily in the east and south of Afghanistan. However, due to problems in threat assessment, and a lack of intelligence advisers, the selection of districts may not be linked to the priorities that would emerge from an integrated concept of operations based on better intelligence and planning. There are some indications that districts have been picked on the basis of districts in need of help, but not the districts that need the *most* help.

Districts that have undergone FDD do seem to have experienced significantly lower civilian casualties after completion of the program.²⁶⁸ However, one of the consistent curses of the lack of credible transparency and reporting on virtually every aspect of U.S., allied, UN, and Afghan government operations is that public and unclassified reports to the real-world results in plans and concepts have been "spun" into claims of success before they have had a real or lasting impact on actual performance.

Senior U.S. officers, advisers, and intelligence personnel raise serious questions about the extent to which the problems with corruption and powerbrokers in the ANP reassert

²⁶⁵ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²⁶⁶ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 128.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ Petty Officer 2nd Class Paul Dillard, "Provincial Development Added to FDD Program," *Enduring Ledger*, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) Public Affairs, February 2009, p. 6.

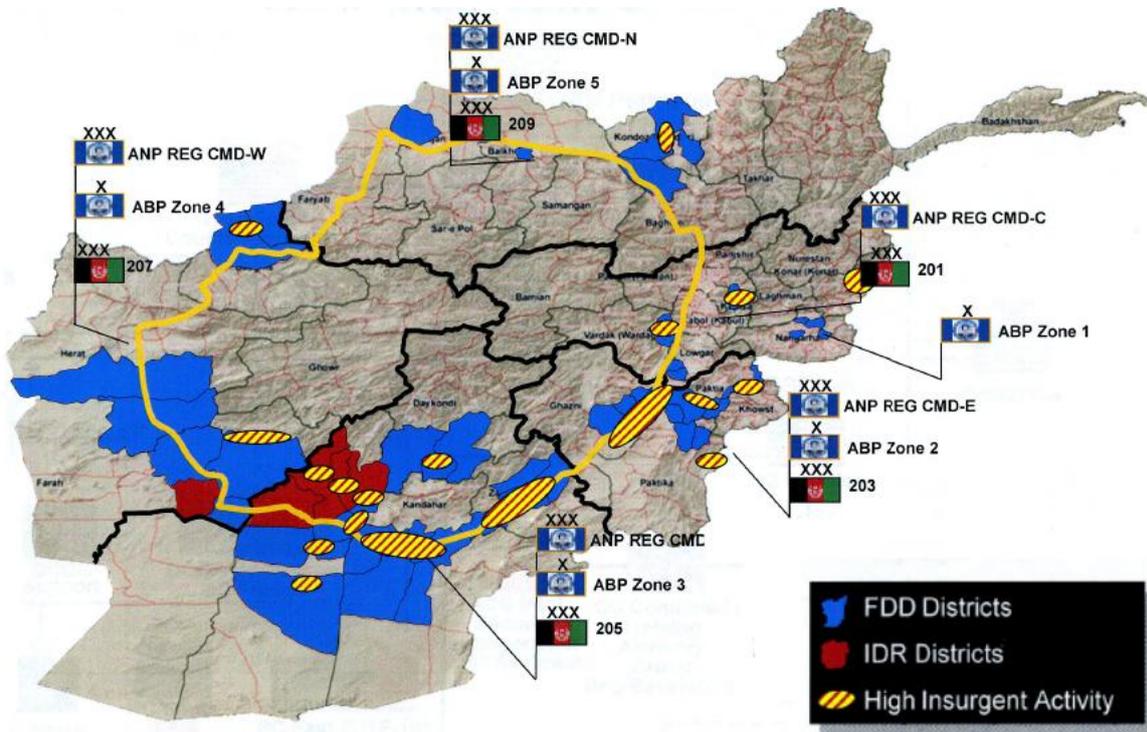
themselves over time. These questions remain unanswerable due to the lack of follow-on assessment. Most agree that the program does produce at least some lasting benefits and improves popular Afghan perceptions of the police. On the other hand, the program is severely limited in what can be accomplished if police are reinserted back into districts rife with corrupt government officials or with no rule of law.²⁶⁹

What is more serious is that they also question whether the FDD program, or any police reform program, can work without changing the basic environment in which the ANP now operates. The police cannot exist in a vacuum. If governance is excessively corrupt and subject to powerbrokers at the national, provincial, and local levels, the police inevitably will follow. If the police operate in an environment where they have to deal with the insurgency and organized crime to survive, they will do so. If there is no functioning rule of law with formal or informal courts and adequate jails, or prosecutors and judges are corrupt or vulnerable to political pressure, the police will become a law unto themselves.

A shorter-term and less resource-intensive effort called the Directed District Development Training program may offer a possible solution to provide a quick reaction capability, but it too will need continuing—and *objective*—assessment to determine its actual success and what scale of effort is practical. Both programs also need to be tightly focused on ensuring that they meet the needs in the population areas most threatened by insurgent activity and where providing the hold function is most urgent. Both will be a waste of effort if they are not tied to success in dealing with powerbrokers, the insurgent threat, the outside pressures that corrupt the police, and the presence of the other elements of a justice system.

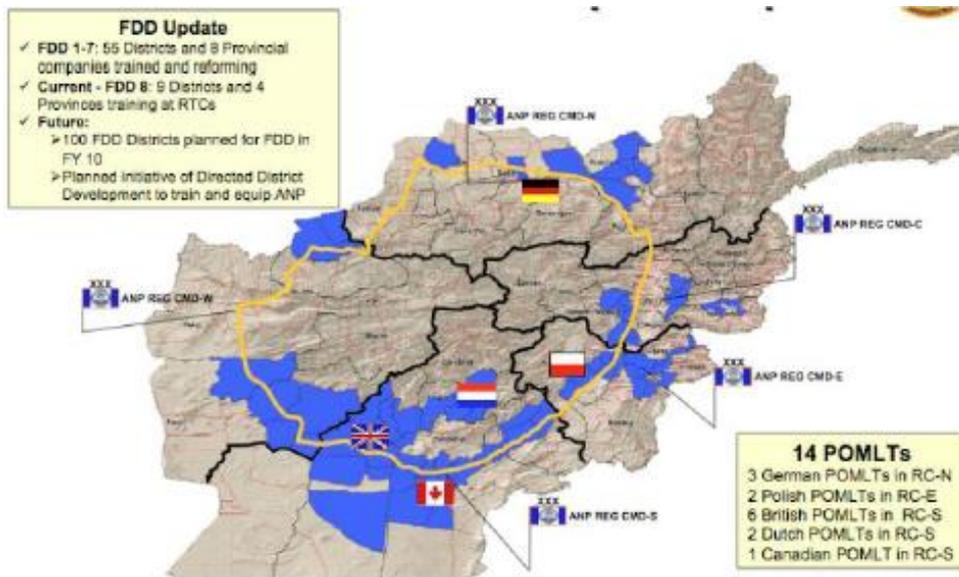
²⁶⁹ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

Figure 8.10: The ANP Focused District Development Program in March 2009



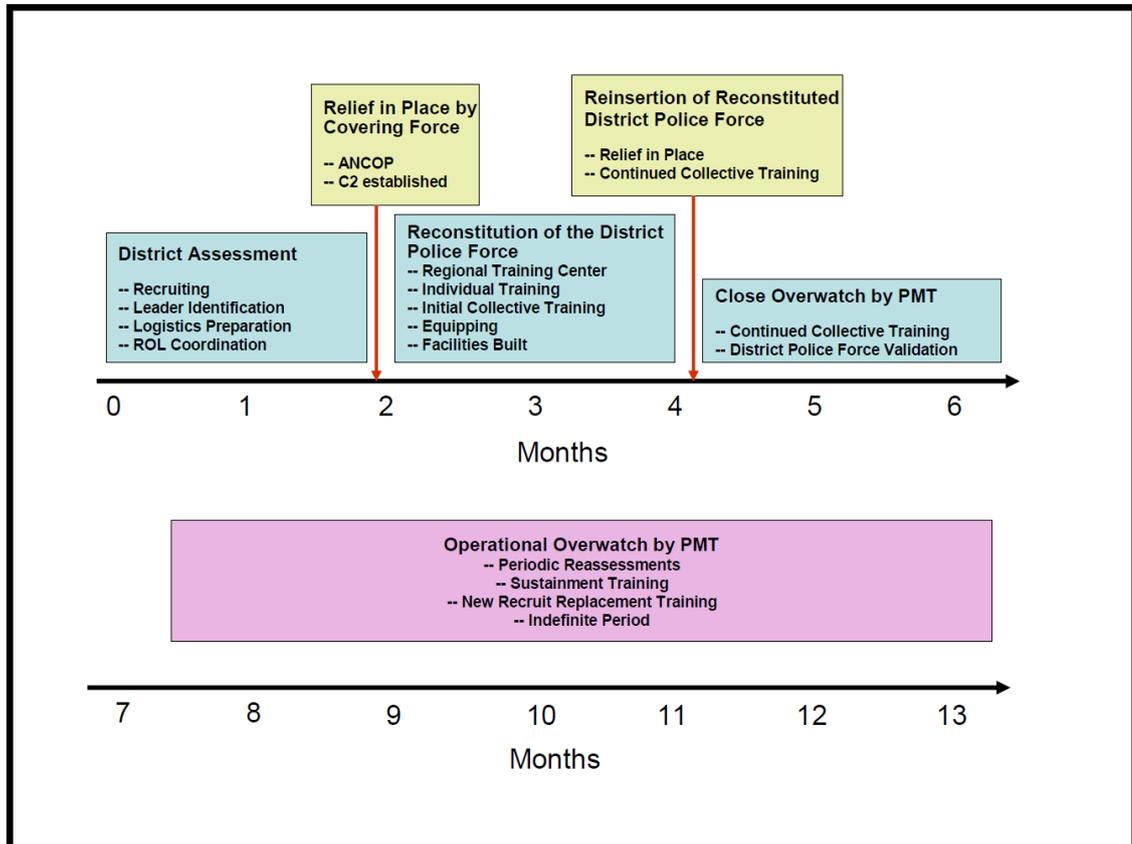
Source: CSTC-A, "Command Overview," March 28, 2009.

Figure 8.11: The Focused District Development Program in July 2009



Source: CSTC-A, "Command Overview," March 28, 2009.

Figure 8.12: Typical FDD Time Phases



Source: DoD Office of Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans to Train, Equip, and Field the Afghan National Security Forces*, September 30, 2009, p. 126.

Developing the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP)

Afghanistan may not need to train most of its police to the standard currently being sought by NTM-A and CSTC-A, but there is a need for some kind of police presence that the Afghan people can trust in every area that can be *cleared*, and provided with enough of an Afghan government and criminal justice system to made credible efforts at *hold* and *build*. The Afghan Uniformed Police falls far short of the numbers required in the field, and it seems likely that a zero-based review would conclude that major efforts need to be made to nearly double the size and quality of the AUP. Recent decisions to add 4,800 police to Kabul, and 10,000 more in 14 provinces (including folding in some existing but non-tashkil police officers), are steps in the right direction, but only a first step.

The key issue, however, is what kind of police performing what kinds of functions in what real-world justice system with what real-world district and local government support. It simply is not clear that either the Afghan government or ISAF have the resources to create a police force large enough to cover critical areas of the country that has more than minimal effectiveness. It is even more unclear that expanding the police will succeed unless it is possible to do more to change the culture in which the police operate, make balanced improvements in local governance and the other elements of the

justice system, and create a force that can deal with the combination of insurgents, powerbrokers, and informal militias in much of the nation.

There are strong indications that the current program is repeating classic problems in police development in broken states and counterinsurgency efforts. Introducing Western concepts of policing in a place where the other elements of the rule of law are dysfunctional at best can be a major waste of resources, and fail to meet popular needs for stability, security, and justice on the terms a given nation and culture expects. It can consume trainers and money in efforts that make things worse rather than better. It also often means losing focus on what can be done: Creating a smaller, but effective national paramilitary force to deal with critical wartime security tasks and protect civil-military programs, creating a different police that can have some effectiveness by local standards, and creating key investigative and forensic elements at the national level that meet urgent—but highly selective—operational needs.

Too Light to Survive, Too Light to Win

The ANP now lacks the equipment to support the “hold” and “build” missions in the face of insurgent attacks, bombings, and subversion. Many current AUP lack adequate equipment and facilities—and such gaps urgently need to be addressed. The Department of Defense stated in its June 2009 report on *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* that progress was being made, but this progress still leaves the ANP too vulnerable for the “hold” and “build” phases of the conflict and to protect itself in high threat areas:

The ANP is equipped with light weapons, including AK-47s and 9mm pistols. Most police elements also have light machine guns. The ABP will be provided heavy machine guns later in 2009 in recognition of the increased threat and capabilities of enemy forces operating in the border regions. ANCOP units will also be provided heavy machine guns. Former Warsaw Pact weapons are provided through donations or through U.S.-funded purchases. Specialty organizations, such as counternarcotics and counterterrorism police receive equipment consistent with their mission.

The ANP is provided Ford Rangers as light tactical vehicles (LTVs) and International Harvesters as Medium Tactical Vehicles (MTVs). The ANCOP is currently fielded with LTVs and MTVs, but these will be replaced with armored HMMWVs in late fall 2009. Ambulances are scheduled to be provided in March 2009 to ANCOP and ABP elements. CSTC-A is building an Internet Protocol-based network and a wireless radio network for the ANP and the MoI. The networks will connect the five regional commands, all 34 provinces, and as many of the districts as possible. CSTC-A is also installing network and radio systems in Regional and Provincial Operational Coordination Centers that will be linked to the MoI National Police Command Center (NPCC) and the MoD NMCC. Based on current fielding plans, the networks will be completed by 2012.

The lack of proper weapons and equipment, the lack of accountability and maintenance for the equipment actually supplied, and an almost inevitable lack of effective training and experienced leadership cadres have been major causes of the high casualties the ANP has suffered. Yet this also stems from a tendency to employ the ANP as if it were a smaller branch of the ANA. The regular ANP simply cannot survive in high-threat

environments. As one Afghan police officer pointed out, “firing rockets is not the job of police officers.”²⁷⁰

According to a 2009 USIP report, “ANP officers accompanied coalition and ANA patrols and were expected to operate as “little soldiers” helping to seize and hold territory and prevent the return of the Taliban. According to the Interior Ministry’s National Internal Security Strategy, coalition forces, ANA, and the ANP “continue to wage war against armed groups.” Police were used to man isolated checkpoints and to establish a government presence in rural villages. Operating in small groups with no means of communication and no backup, the police were no match for insurgent groups that targeted ANP convoys, checkpoints, and bases.”²⁷¹

Mentors and Trainers

As has been highlighted throughout this analysis, the ANP’s most urgent need is for more trainers and mentors—and it is far from clear that ISAF can meet both this need and the higher priority needs of the ANA. The AUP faces even more severe shortfalls in partnering and training than the ANA, and any end-strength increases, though very welcome, will only exacerbate the gap. According to IJC, the ANP required 475 POMLTs with a projected shortfall of 108 POMLTs or 4,320 personnel (40 members per team). The deployment of a third U.S. BCT would help meet the most urgent of these needs, but the goal of 475 POMLTs represents the impact of past under-resourcing of the ANSF, and is roughly half the real requirement.²⁷²

Even if no decision is taken to double the ANP, past plans indicate that CSTC-A will need at least 98 additional POMLTs plus added U.S. PMT trainer/mentors by the end of CY 2010, and 46 more by the end of CY 2011. These requirements will, however, be substantially increased if the goal for the end-strength of *all* elements of the police is raised to 160,000 by the end of CY 2014.

Developing the Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP)

The Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP) are designed to provide a higher quality and more demanding set of police capabilities—specifically, to maintain civil order in urban areas, and to provide a police presence in less secure remote areas. In April 2010, the MoI reported 48 ANCOP companies with total authorized force strength of 5,802, which was above the goal of 5,365. However, it was unclear how real these numbers were, with senior NTM-A officers estimating that ANCOP had roughly 3,500 active personnel.

The ANCOP’s extremely high operational tempo has equated to an astounding 70 percent attrition rate according to the MoI.²⁷³ This figure, high as it is, masks the much higher

²⁷⁰ Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, “US Helps Afghans Assume Control of Local Security,” NPR, June 2, 2009, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104796412>.

²⁷¹ Perito, *Afghanistan’s Police*, p. 8.

²⁷² DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

rate in certain units – the 3rd brigade had 104.2 percent attrition. NTM-A officers have indicated that the overall ANCOP attrition rate had fallen to “only” 46.8 percent annually by August 2010 – an improvement but still far too high for the force to retain any real institutional knowledge or sustainability.

In May 2010, NTM-A/CSTC-A stated a goal of 1.4 percent attrition per month, or 16.8 percent annually. However, monthly attrition in the period from November 2009-April 2010 ranged from 11.7 percent to 2.2 percent, with attrition for April at 5.2 percent. As alluded to elsewhere, ANCOP operational requirements continue to rise, which is likely to push attrition rates even higher.

This attrition has been driven in large part by the fact that the ANCOP are the paramilitary police force really needed in most areas and represent an alternative to the use of the ANA that is critical to make the transition to some kind of civil order and justice system. Unlike the ANP, they have the added training and equipment to be effective in the areas where police are most needed. They also have better leadership and a better recruiting base. They have benefited from NTM-A/CSTC-A’s drive to increase leadership development, with 50 officers having received Officer Candidate School (OCS) training and 1,251 NCOs having received NCO training as of May 2010, and 8,008 NCOs projected to graduate from the NCO Course in November 2010—although they are scarcely immune to failures and corruption.

So far, the ANCOP force has never been sized to meet urgent needs and has been overused and exhausted by ISAF with little regard to the human cost in casualties and building a sustainable force that can ultimately transition to take over responsibility from ISAF. Efforts have been made within NTM-A/CSTC-A to correct this situation since mid-2009, but this is a key area of neglect on the part of U.S. policymakers and US/ISAF commanders, and represents a critical failure in leadership and realism at the highest policy levels.

By summer 2010 some ANCOP kandaks were beginning to develop an operational cycle that included a rest and refit phase, instead of simply deploying the units until its personnel either quit or are killed. U.S. SOF Operational Detachment – Alpha (ODA) teams began partnering with several ANCOP kandaks, making up roughly 40 percent of the total force. These ANCOP kandaks were put on a red-amber-green training and deployment cycle similar to the one adopted by the Afghan Commando Kandaks. Under this system, “a kandak’s three maneuver companies rotate between a ‘red’ period, when they rest, refit, and conduct professional development; an ‘amber’ period devoted mainly to training; and a ‘green’ period when they are ready to conduct operations on short notice.”²⁷⁴

The Afghan Border Police (ABP)

The Afghan Border Police had limited effectiveness and significant problems with corruption where they are deployed in areas that involve significant commercial traffic

²⁷⁴ Sean D. Naylor, “Special Forces Training Afghan Police Units,” *Army Times*, June 12, 2010, http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/06/army_special_forces_afghan_police_061110w/.

across the border. The Focused Border Development (FBD) effort may help this situation, but its effectiveness is less certain than that of the FDD. This Program is summarized in **Figure 8.13**, and the Department of Defense described it as follows in June 2009:

Focused Border Development (FBD) is a program designed to enhance the effectiveness of Afghan Border Police (ABP) line companies in the RC-East area of operations. CSTC-A and CJTF-101 have partnered to accelerate the fielding of ABP companies in these areas. FBD will man, train, and equip 52 companies. Following the training and equipping stage, the ABP companies will establish partnering relationships with CJTF-101 units. The program is in the process of expanding to six companies in RC-South and eight companies in RC-North. Initial reports from partner units indicate positive progress, with ABP companies returning from training with increased capability to conduct operations. Eighteen companies have completed the training as of March 2009, which amounts to 1,677 border police trained. Additionally, 784 ABP are currently in training. ABP companies are provided with vehicles, weapons, and communication assets as they complete their training cycle.

The FBD program is different from and less effective than the FDD program in a number of ways. ABP units did not come offline to attend training as a unit. Instead, groups of 30-40 personnel at a time were selected by the commander to undergo training. This was done because there was no ANCOF equivalent to backfill for an entire ABP unit. Additionally, there were no assigned military training teams to carry out FBD. Instead, local Coalition battle commanders assigned mentoring teams. Finally, two different contractors (DynCorp and Blackwater) had contracts to carry out FBD in different areas. Each contractor had a different training program, depriving the ABP of a homogeneously trained force. CSTC-A has since adopted a single standardized FBD program.²⁷⁵

The ABP had an authorized strength of 17,482 and 13,912 assigned in April 2010.²⁷⁶ Attrition reached a six-month low in April, down to 1.1 percent from 4.15 percent in November 2009. This percentage is probably unsustainable given the anticipated summer rise in kinetic activity. Border forces are notoriously difficult to create, and Afghanistan's geography and historical border disputes make border enforcement all the more difficult. Furthermore, ISAF and the ANSF have more urgent priorities. This raises important issues about the effort that should go into building the ABP.

Present plans to develop the ABP should be executed, and the Focused Border Development program may help to improve performance and reduce corruption. As is the case with the ANP, these efforts should be complemented by specific technologies including biometrics and ISR to the extent feasible. They can potentially be important in increasing government revenues from import fees and duties.

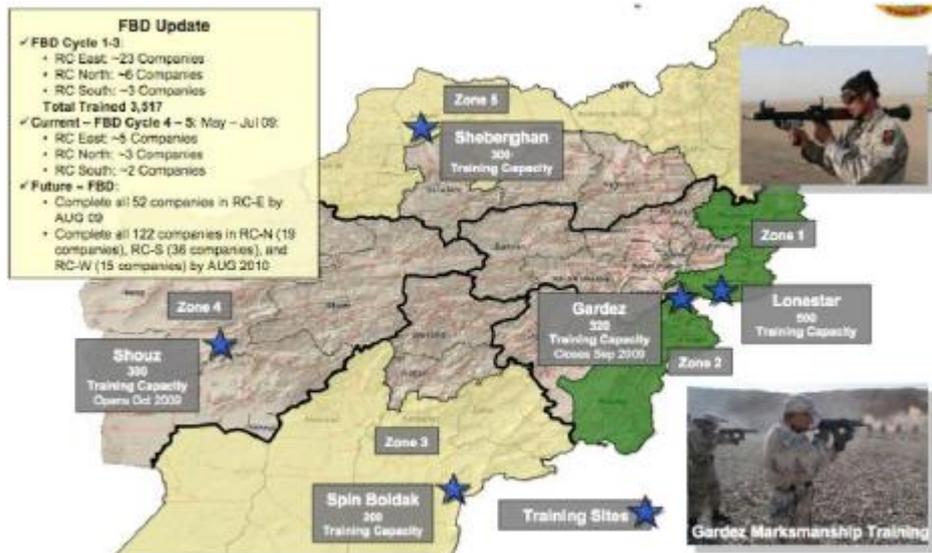
Border protection, however, should not be a priority area for ISAF action relative to building up the ANA or ANP, or for allocating additional forces, resources and other capabilities. A tightly focused effort could help the Afghan government get more revenue from commercial vehicle traffic across the border than is lost through corruption. There is no prospect, however, that the ABP can seal the borders or do more in the near-term than harass the insurgency while becoming a source of casualties and more corruption. This is

²⁷⁵ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 134.

²⁷⁶ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

predominantly true as long as elements of the Pakistan government and ISI covertly support key elements of the Taliban. Moreover, it is not clear just how much additional revenue will be provided, how well it will be collected and allocated, and whether it will make a real difference in reducing GIROA dependence on outside aid.

Figure 8.13: The Focused Border Development Program



Source: CSTC-A/NTM-A.

The Rule of Law/Prompt Justice Gap

The ANP must also deal with civil issues the ANA does not face and with critical failures in ISAF and U.S. planning for real-world police efforts in Afghanistan. Like the corrupting impact of the foreign aid and military contracting effort, the police development effort has been crippled by U.S. and allied decisions that have decoupled it from the realities of insurgency, Afghan politics and power brokering, and above all from the rule of law. The police have been expected to operate effectively in an environment where the aid efforts in the rule of law set unworkable goals even for a peacetime environment. They have emphasized Western concepts of a formal rule of law that would take a decade or more to implement—if Afghans wanted and would accept it. This has both undercut the police and greatly strengthened the Taliban.

David Kilcullen has noted that “nobody is doing the job of actual policing—rule of law, keeping the population safe...civil and criminal law enforcement.”²⁷⁷ A number of polls and interviews suggest that regular crime and disputes are far more important to average

²⁷⁷ David Kilcullen, quoted in George Packer, “Kilcullen on Afghanistan: ‘It’s Still Winnable, but Only Just,’” *New Yorker*, November 14, 2008, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/georgepacker/2008/11/kilcullen-on-af.html>.

Afghans than fighting the Taliban or counternarcotics.²⁷⁸ The ANP cannot succeed in meeting one of the most critical demands of the Afghan people—the need for prompt justice—unless ANP development is linked to the creation of effective courts and the rest of the formal justice and corrections systems, or the use of Afghanistan’s informal justice system. Unfortunately, a gap exists between the ANP and the justice system. The DoD IG found that “the professional connection and cooperation between the ANP and the criminal justice/Rule of Law (ROL) system at the district level in Afghanistan was tenuous at best.”²⁷⁹

One major reason for this gap is the lack of an effective justice system at the district and local levels and adequate personnel. Some districts simply have too few judges and prosecutors, and many have none at all. The DoD IG found that “Regional Command-West PMTs reported in their monthly Capability Evaluation that in one district there was no prosecutor or judge available locally and, therefore, the police were unable (or unwilling) to arrest any suspect because a prosecutor’s guidance was required. Another report on a district in Regional Command-Central simply stated that its district AUP had no coordination with the prosecutors, and therefore conducted no investigations and no arrests. As a consequence, the AUP does not develop the effectiveness intended or the credibility with the population.”²⁸⁰

This police-justice system gap is exacerbated by cultural and bureaucratic factors. According to representatives of the ROL Office at Embassy Kabul, “prior to 2005, the police were not treated as part of the justice system in Afghanistan.” This problem was compounded because “the police have been primarily trained as a military force, not a police force.”²⁸¹ The relationship between justice personnel and the ANP has never been close, with MoJ officials describing the police as “thugs and non-professionals.”²⁸²

The FDD program does not seem to have been successful in erasing this gap. According to the DoD IG,

A review of the basic eight-week ANP Program of Instruction revealed that of the total 263 hours allotted, only 28 hours were collectively devoted to topics such as ethics, the Constitution, penal code, criminal procedures, and human rights. The preponderance of instruction was directed at safety/survival instruction, terrorist tactics, counterterrorism, defense, and weapons qualification. Training in criminal investigations during basic police training received little attention.

The Regional Training Centers (RTCs), where the FDD training for the police is being accomplished, were also used to train Ministry of Justice personnel (prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges) through the State Department’s Justice Sector Support Program. Despite using common facilities, however there has been no overlapping training between Justice Ministry students and ANP students. While at the RTC, in effect the two groups did not formally interact through any joint training on how to professionally cooperate to assist one another in their respective functions to

²⁷⁸ RUSI, *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, p. 14.

²⁷⁹ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*, p. 117.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

achieve common goals. This compartmentalized operational and training philosophy has repeatedly been identified as a potential problem by PMTs, PRTs, and Justice Training Teams.²⁸³

Unfortunately, much of the Rule of Law development program in Afghanistan has been run by the U.S. State Department in ways more suited to post-conflict reconstruction at the top than a nation with broad, urgent wartime needs. In the past, this fundamental decoupling from reality has been compounded by a myriad of personnel, budgetary, cultural, and bureaucratic problems in coming to grips with a large armed-nation-building effort:

There are currently more Foreign Service officers working in Rome, for example, than there are in southern and eastern Afghanistan. In Vietnam, there were hundreds of Foreign Service officers deployed in country at any given time after 1968. In southern Afghanistan today, there are less than 20...In the eight years since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom, only 13 Foreign Service officers have been trained to speak Pashto, and only two of them are apparently in Afghanistan today, a pathetic counterinsurgency effort by the State Department by any reasonable standard.²⁸⁴

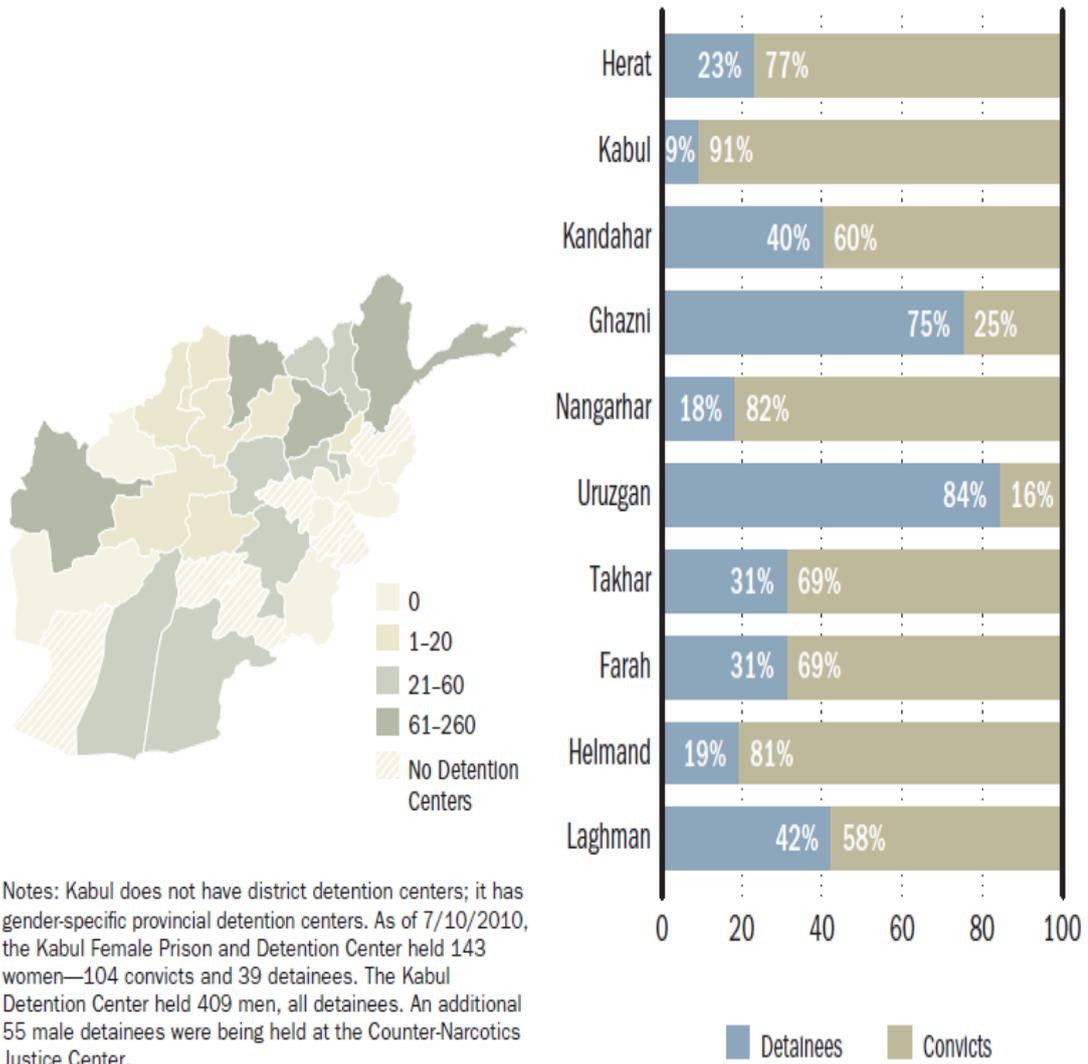
Another factor hindering ROL in Afghanistan is the chronic overcrowding of its prisons, as seen in **Figures 8.14** and **8.15**. According to SIGAR, “As of June 30, 2010, there were a total of 17,169 prisoners in Afghanistan, including 15,902 individuals in provincial prisons (12,263 convicted prisoners and 3,639 detainees), and 1,267 detainees in district detention centers. According to INL [U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement], the Afghan court system has no parole provisions; as a result, prison populations have increased exponentially.”²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Ibid., pp. 120–121.

²⁸⁴ Johnson and Mason, “Afghanistan and the Vietnam Template,” p. 12.

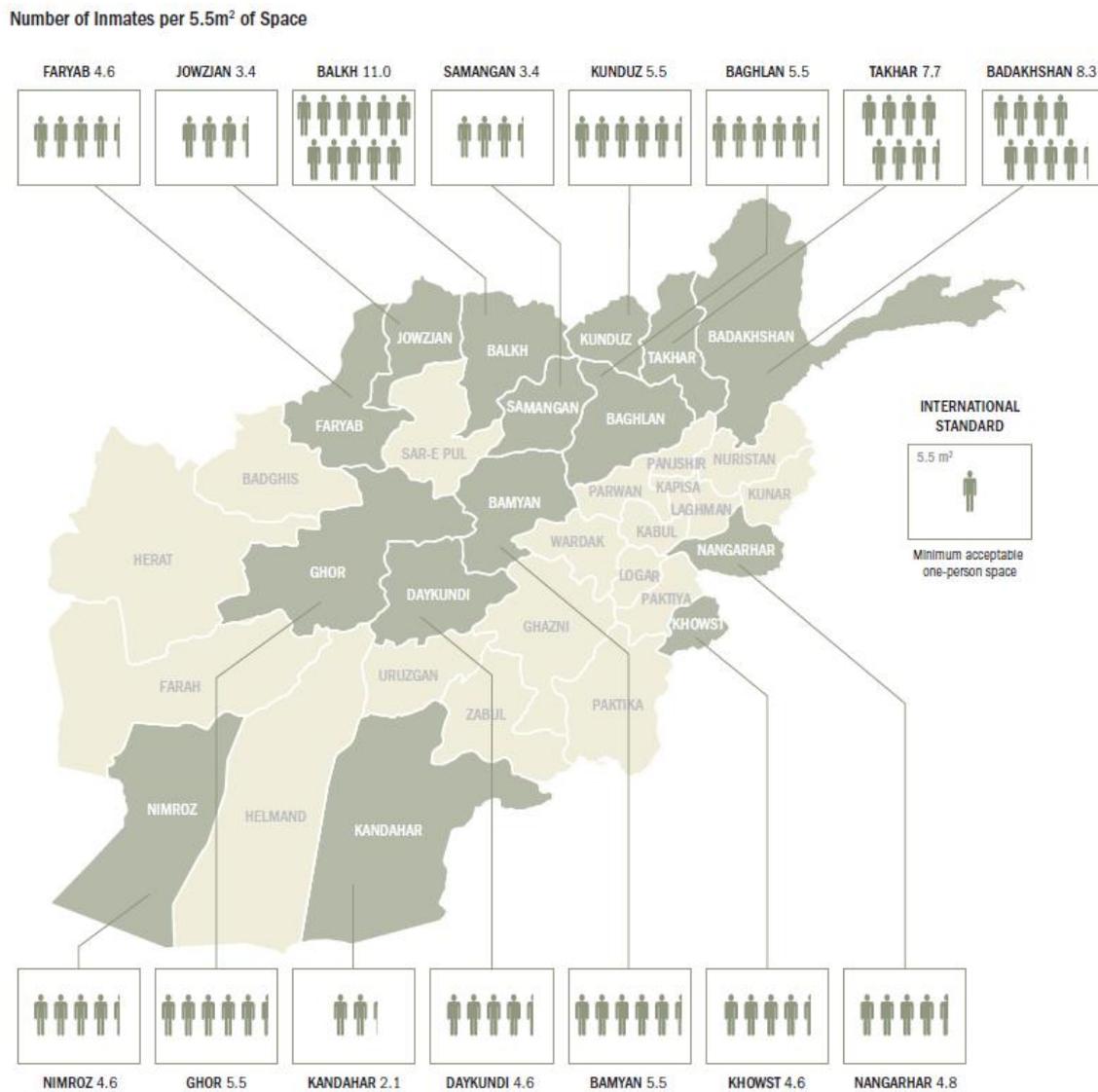
²⁸⁵ SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 2010, p. 81.

Figure 8.14: Detainees in District Detention Centers and Inmates in Selected Provincial Prisons, as of June 30, 2010



Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 2010, p. 83.

Figure 8.15: Overcrowding in Selected Provincial Prisons, 2010



Notes: Numbers are averages. Minimum acceptable one-person space (5.5 m²) determined by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 2010, p. 85.

Improving the Rule of Law effort in ways necessary to support the ANP and win the war requires strengthening of the informal justice system, while slowly building up the formal justice system that is currently too weak, too limited in coverage, and too corrupt to meet the needs of some 90 percent of Afghanistan’s population. Military security is not security, and there is no time to wait the decade or so that it will take to create an effective formal justice system—if, indeed, the Afghan people want or will ever trust the systems Western nations are now trying to implement. There must be some form of functioning civil and criminal justice, and one that is administered locally, promptly, and in ways ordinary Afghans can access.

The ANP's problems with corruption cannot be corrected unless the criminal justice system becomes less corrupt and less subject to political influence. Fixing these problems reflects one of the most urgent demands of the Afghan people. An integrated approach to ANP development and improved popular justice is mission critical and may need substantially more resources on the justice side of the equation. If this effort is not made a key part of the hold and build phase, the problems that have done so much to empower the Taliban in so many areas—and to demonstrate that the Afghan government lacks practical legitimacy regardless of how it is chosen—will continue. Like the other key failures in civil-military operations that have been warned about earlier, a failure in this area risks losing the war.

The Challenges to ISAF and the United States If the Current Police Development Effort Is Continued

Creating the right police force in an operational context of military operations, governance, and a justice system is an ongoing crisis in the successful implementation of the overall strategy in Afghanistan. “Clear, hold, build, and transition” require ISAF, the United States, and aid workers to work together to ensure that corrupt and incompetent ANP officials and officers are bypassed, excluded from ISAF support, publicly identified, and pushed out of office. It also means, however, using the same combination of incentives and disincentives to give the ANP protection from corrupt and incompetent Afghan officials and powerbrokers when this threatens the integrity of the force and its ability to perform its mission.

To date, ISAF, the United States and other country efforts have often been part of the problem. They have tolerated too much or applied too little pressure at the top to support commanders and officials in the field. Empowering failure may be politic, but it is also a way to lose. The ANP faces critical problems in winning popular support and acceptance. Unlike the ANA, which is the most respected institution in the Afghan government, there is a wide consensus that many elements of the ANP are too corrupt and too tied to politics and powerbrokers to either be effective or win/retain popular support.

Reducing current levels of corruption in the ANP and limiting the impact of political abuses and powerbrokers must be part of the operational plan in “shape, clear, hold, and build” (SCHB). ISAF cannot succeed in its mission unless these problems are sharply reduced and the ANP can support the governance aspects of the hold mission by showing that they provide real security and prompt justice. As is the case with the ANA, fighting corruption and political misuse of the ANP are as critical as expanding forces. This can only be done through great improvements in ANP leadership, facilitated by far more robust mentoring and training efforts.

Creating an Afghan National Police (ANP) that Can Clear, Hold, and Build

Fundamental changes may well be needed in the current approach to police development, but if ISAF and the Afghan government do go on with current plans, key decisions need to be made about some aspects of those plans. Improving the various elements of the ANP, while less time-critical in terms of direct combat operations, is critical if the ANP

is to play its key role in performing the *hold* function in population centers and securing the *build* activities that are essential to the success of a population-centric strategy.

Current ISAF plans raise serious questions as to whether the *hold* function can be performed with the ISAF and ANSF resources available, and without a major expansion of an improvement in the ANP. Time is critical because the initial phase of the *hold* function will require a transition to regular policing activity and supporting the prompt administration of justice, and ANP are not yet sufficiently trained, effective, or free of corruption in this regard. At the same time, the *build* phase cannot be properly implemented unless the ANP has the capacity and integrity to support an effective civil rule of law by Afghan standards and customs. Moreover, the real need seems to be for a paramilitary force like the ANCOPs, and ISAF and the Afghan government so far lack the resources to train and sustain both the ANCOP forces they need and the current goals for the ANP.

Police Force Development

If anything like the current program is to be sustained, there are several areas where ISAF and the United States need to work with the Afghan government at the central, provincial, and local level to find better ways to shape the future of the ANP. Some are narrowly focused on police force development:

- ISAF regional and task force commanders need to work with mentors to integrate partnering, mentoring, and training ANP units in the field in ways that will help create effective forces. It also is not enough to use the current rating system; ISAF commanders at every level must make partnering and training key real-world parts of their operations and ensure that ANP units achieve true operational readiness and it must be clear where such activity is adequate and where it is not.
- Partnering means ensuring that ANP forces must have proper support when they come under attack from insurgent forces and are capable of dealing with infiltration and stay-behind cadres. ISAF and ANA quick reaction forces should perform part of this mission, but high priority needs to be given to strengthening the ANCOP or other paramilitary, forces and providing armored vehicles. Furthermore, this is another reason for fully supporting the ANA Air Force development plan to provide mobility and air support.
- As long as the effective elements of ANP forces are so limited, ISAF needs to press the GIROA to ensure that ANP forces that have been re-blued and judged competent are allocated where they are actually needed and not for political purposes.
- ISAF must provide the equipment necessary for ANP forces to survive engagement with limited numbers of insurgent forces and mobility necessary to perform their mission.
- ISAF must adjust its readiness rating system for the ANP that explicitly assess the degree of corruption in individual units and areas. There should be public pressure for performance and reform, and to show ISAF is making real efforts to aid the Afghan people.
- ISAF needs to accelerate efforts to expand the role of regional training centers to relieve the burden on existing centers.
- Finally, NATO nations need to commit the fiscal and human resources to making ANP development work, or cut the force goals accordingly. This may involve approaches with which some countries are uncomfortable, such as using non-governmental hiring practices to get sufficient numbers of qualified police mentors. This includes not only police trainers, but police

managers who can help the ANP and the MOI improve the structure and performance of Afghan law enforcement systems.

Rethinking the Overall Police Development Effort

Quantity and quality are only part of the problem in developing an effective ANP. The ANP faces critical problems in winning popular support and acceptance. Unlike the ANA, which is the most respected institution in the Afghan government, there is a wide consensus that many elements of the ANP are too corrupt and too tied to politics and powerbrokers to be effective and win/retain popular support. Extortion, bribes, theft, and intimidation remain the rule rather than the exception. Controlling police abuses is even more important than improving police size or capability. This effort must be tailored to work within the constraints imposed by incapable Afghan civil governance and a grossly weak and corrupt justice system. Police, governance, and the justice system interact so closely that any police development effort that is not part of an integrated development (and assessment) effort borders on fantasy.

These problems are so severe that they require a new degree of realism in implementing the new strategy. Civil-military operations need to be tailored to what can actually be accomplished and the time it will take to accomplish it. The initial phase of the *hold* function requires a transition to regular policing activity and supporting the prompt administration of justice. The ANCOP are too small to perform even the most critical aspects of this mission and the rest of the ANP are not sufficiently trained, effective, and free of corruption in this regard. At the same time, the *build* phase cannot be properly implemented until the ANP has the capacity and integrity to support an effective civil rule of law by Afghan standards and custom *and* until the government and judiciary have the capacity and integrity to support the ANP. This will require years of additional ISAF and aid efforts, and may require far more emphasis on the informal justice system.

A comprehensive reexamination is needed of the police training effort to determine whether more of the resources now available should go to creating an ANCOP force large enough and enduring enough to meet the need for paramilitary police forces. It seems likely that such a review will conclude that there is no practical prospect of training and retaining a force of the kind that ISAF is now seeking to build; that the Afghan government is not capable of sustaining such a force even if it can be built for a short period; and that no credible plans exist for an “end state” that could deprive powerbrokers of their influence and create the mix of a justice system and the level of governance required.

If the United States, ISAF, and Afghan government do decide to try to implement the current plans for police development, there are several areas where ISAF and the United States need to work with the Afghan government at the central, provincial, and local level to find better ways to shape the future of the ANP:

- *First, reducing current levels of corruption in the ANP and limiting the impact of political abuses and powerbrokers, must be made an integral part of the operational plan for shape, clear, hold, and build.* A public opinion survey reported in July 2010 found that 42 percent of Afghans felt the MoI was one of the three most corrupt ministries in the country, followed by 32 percent for the Ministry of Justice, and 30 percent for the Directorate of National Security (DNS). (18 percent of

those polled ranked all three ministries as equally corrupt.)²⁸⁶ ISAF cannot succeed in its mission unless these problems are sharply reduced and unless the ANP can carry out the political aspects of the hold mission and show that they provide real security and prompt justice. As is the case with the ANA, fighting corruption and political misuse of the ANP are as critical as expanding forces. This can only be done through improvements in ANP leadership, facilitated by far more robust mentoring and training efforts.

Efforts like the Focused District Development (FDD) program offer some hope, but that hope remains uncertain. The program is still evolving, and any effort to apply it nationally is necessarily slow because it takes time, elite police elements, and skilled trainer/mentors. The FDD effort has also been praised without the support of credible reports as to its degree of relative and lasting success. The Directed District Development program may offer another possible solution in the form of an additional quick reaction capability, but it too needs continuing reassessment to determine what scale of effort is practical. Given the resources available, both programs also need to be tightly focused on ensuring that they meet the needs in the population areas most threatened by insurgent activity and where providing the hold function is most urgent.

All these efforts will fail, however, if they are not tied to matching improvements in governance and the judiciary. No ANP program can succeed where political interference, corruption, and powerbrokers block effective ANP action or ensure it cannot be reformed. Powerbrokers have a clear incentive and need to disrupt this process, as it directly threatens their operations. This must be understood and be included as part of the planning for ANP improvement. The political dimension of ANP development is as critical as the military and civil dimensions.

- *Second, major efforts need to be made to simultaneously increase the size and quality of the ANP, but primary emphasis should be on ensuring minimal levels of quality in the most critical areas rather than on generating force numbers or overall force quality.* NTM-A/CSTC-A reported that the ANP had an authorized strength of 94,958 in December 2009, and there were tentative plans for it to grow to 109,000 by October 31, 2010, 134,000 by October 2011, and 160,000 by 2013. Plans called for eliminating the backlog of untrained police (which, as mentioned before, some experts put as high as 78 percent of the existing force) within two years. Yet these plans seemed to leave the ANP underequipped for some aspects of its mission, and problems remain in leadership and facilities.

According to ISAF, ANP authorized strength had reached 104,500 by April 2010, although actual manning remained unclear. ISAF reported some progress toward leadership training in May 2010. The number of students enrolled in officer courses was projected to reach 3,100 by November 2010, up from 600 in November 2009. Similarly, the number of students enrolled in command and staff courses was projected to reach 568 in November 2010, up from only 4 in November 2009. However, more than 50 percent of the force was still untrained, and retention rates remained an issue.

- *Third, force goals should not exceed the number of qualified trainers and mentors actually present and should not be based on authorized manning rather than the number of police that are actually present and can be retained over time.* The ANP's most immediate need to execute its planned expansion is for adequate numbers of qualified trainers and mentors who have the military experience and counterinsurgency background that will be required for several years to come. The day may come when the ANP's main mission is conventional law enforcement in a secure environment, but that day is years away and the ANP needs to focus on security.

In the interim, the ANP faces even more severe shortfalls in training, mentoring, and partnering than the ANA. A CSTC-A report in July 2009 stated that the ANP needed at least 98 additional POMLTs plus added PMT trainer/mentors by the end of CY 2010, and 46 more by the end of CY 2011. It is requesting a total of 182 POMLTs and BMTs by the end of CY2011. There was a major need for added PMTs as well.

²⁸⁶ Londono, "Afghans View Police, Judiciary as Corrupt."

These problems are unlikely to be solved in the near term with trainers and mentors with the quality and effectiveness required. The updated 2-year timeline for training the police force is based upon estimates of police trainer contributions from European nations that seem likely to prove sharply over-optimistic. In March 29, 2010, the IJC reported that NATO was short 163 POMLTs.²⁸⁷ In April 2010, DoD stated that there were 108 unfilled POMLT's or 4,320 personnel (40 members per team).²⁸⁸ In June 2010, NATO stated that an additional 143 POMLTs would be required by October 2010.²⁸⁹ If European partner nations do not deliver the required numbers of trainers, NTM-A/CSTC-A will have to reassess its police training timelines. However, these requirements have been substantially increased since the goal for the end-strength of the police was raised to 160,000.

- *Fourth, a major reorganization is needed to strengthen several elements within the ANP. These include elite gendarmeries or paramilitary elements to deal with counterinsurgency and key hold missions.* These could build on ANCOP and police commando cadres. The Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP) are designed to provide more capable forces that can defend themselves, perform key hold functions in urban areas, and provide a lasting police presence in less secure remote areas. Its assigned strength was 3,345 in July 2009, and it had four fielded brigade headquarters and 16 fielded battalion headquarters. As of April 2010, the MoI reported ANCOP end-strength at 5,802, with 48 companies fielded.²⁹⁰

Despite NTM-A's considerable efforts to stem ANCOP attrition with Heroes Return and other programs, yearly attrition remained above 70 percent in May 2010 while operational requirements were on the upswing. Other special elements may be needed to work with the NDS and ANA to eliminate any remaining insurgent shadow government, justice systems, and networks; and to deal with the investigation of organized crime and powerbrokers involved in gross corruption. The majority of the Afghan police can be trained to lower levels of police capability suited to meet Afghan standards and needs.

- *Fifth, as with the ANA, ISAF must focus on building up the capability of deployed units rather than over-relying on formal training.* Once again, even the best formal training process is only the prelude to shaping the capabilities of new units, testing leaders, providing practical experience, and supporting ANA and key ANP units with experienced cadres of mentors and partner units. Practical training in both operations and unit management and leadership are more critical with newly-formed units than is formal training, and are critical to limiting corruption and the scale of retention and AWOL problems.
- *Sixth, the development of the ANP must be linked to improvements in the Afghan formal and informal legal processes to provide prompt and effective justice.* The ANP cannot succeed in meeting one of the most critical demands of the Afghan people—the need for prompt justice—unless ANP development is linked to the creation of effective courts and the rest of the formal justice and corrections systems, or use of Afghanistan's informal justice system. The ANP's problems with corruption also cannot be corrected unless the criminal justice system is seen as much less corrupt and subject to political influence. Fixing these problems reflects one of the most urgent demands of the Afghan people. An integrated approach to ANP development and improved popular justice is critical and may need substantially more resources on the justice side of the equation.

This latter point is critical. The current ANP development effort is crippled by the failure to integrate the overall civil-military effort. The rule of law program in Afghanistan

²⁸⁷ SIGAR, "Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments."

²⁸⁸ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010.

²⁸⁹ SIGAR, "SIGAR's Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams."

²⁹⁰ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010.

seems largely decoupled from reality. ANSF and ISAF success in developing the ANP will have limited impact if the ANP cannot perform alongside a combination of the Afghan formal and informal justice systems and cannot function at the civil level. They are in competition to replace the Taliban, which now dominates the prompt justice system at the local level. So far, GIRoA, UNAMA, the United States and other nations have yet to demonstrate that they have effective plans to combine civil policing with an effective civil justice effort.

This is especially troubling because past rule of law programs have usually been failures described as successes. They have been programs that lacked the scale and coverage to meet immediate and urgent needs, which focused far too much on formal justice systems that were not in place and could not be put in place for years, and focused on foreign values rather than Afghan values. Like far too many civilian programs in Afghanistan, they did not seek an effective partnership with ISAF military and tie such efforts to successfully implementing hold, build, and transfer—and winning the war.

9. THE AFGHAN PUBLIC PROTECTION PROGRAM (AP3), COMMUNITY AND VILLAGE DEFENSE FORCES, MILITIAS, AND OTHER LOCAL SECURITY FORCES

The use of local forces and militias like the AP-3 remains one of the more uncertain and controversial aspects of Afghan force development. The concept of minimally trained local security forces that augment more traditional police and security forces is not a new one in COIN history, and has been both successful and unsuccessful in the past.

The fact that there will not be sufficient ANSF to cover the country for at least the next two years and the severe problems in the police development program make the use of militias and local defense forces worth exploring. It also provides a potential substitute for the inability to deal with the corruption of the ANP and its ties to powerbrokers; for shortfalls in ANP forces; and for the lack of an ability to provide a working mix of local governance, police, and the other elements of a formal justice system.

There is a strong Pashtun tradition of forming local defense forces.²⁹¹ While Afghanistan has not seen anything approaching the “Awakening” movement in Iraq, an increasing number of local forces have been forming to fight off insurgent influence. According to RAND:²⁹²

In Arghandab District, Kandahar Province, Alikozais revolted against the Taliban and established local defense forces to protect their own villages, with the support of the Afghan National Police and NATO forces. In Shindand District, Herat Province, local Noorzais mobilized against insurgents in the Zer-e Koh Valley. In May, a local force in Parmakan Village fought off local Taliban with assistance from Afghan Army commandos and U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF). In Gizab District, Day Kundi Province, Hazara and Pashtun communities successfully resisted insurgents and reached out to the Afghan government for assistance. In Khakrez District, Kandahar Province, local forces established an expanding security zone in the district center with the help of Afghan and NATO forces. In Paktia Province, Jaji, Chamkani, Moqbil, and Mangal tribes created local defense forces to protect themselves against insurgents in such districts as Chamkani and Jani Kheyl, with the aid of the Afghan government and NATO. In all these areas, which the authors visited, local communities protected their populations, reintegrated insurgents, increased development with help from Afghan and international agencies, and established a better connection with the Afghan government.

At the same time, failed past experiments with community-based forces—most notably the Afghan Auxiliary Police—underscore the fact that the GIROA and ISAF must exercise caution:

²⁹¹ Seth Jones and Arturo Munoz, “Afghanistan’s Local War: Building Local Defense Forces,” RAND, July 26, 2010, p. 50, <http://securityinfonet.blogspot.com/2010/07/afghanistans-local-war-building-local.html>.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

- Such forces only tend to work as long as key cadres of trainers and advisers are present on the scene. This can make them either “boutique” forces that are more resource-intensive than they are worth or failures that cannot outlast the departure of trainers.
- There are no clear reasons why they should be loyal to the Afghan government, particularly in the many areas where the government does nothing to earn that loyalty.
- They are vulnerable to being taken over by given powerbrokers or tribal leaders.
- They have strong temptations to abuse their status and extort from the local population, and
- There is no one model that works. They can be successful in one local area and fail in the next valley. Trying to manage small elements of locally tailored forces is sometimes worth the cost but adds to the general problems caused by a lack of resource and Afghan government capacity.

Shaping the Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3)

The Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3) is, however, a potential model for such forces. The underlying premise of the AP3 is that neither ISAF nor the ANSF have sufficient strength to provide security for local communities, and that members of local communities—if properly selected, trained, and overseen—are capable of providing some first-layer security. The AP3 is also intended to free up some Afghan Uniform Police (AUP) from providing fixed-site security, or manning local checkpoints, thus allowing them to focus on policing tasks.

In practice, the AP3 program has focused on securing areas roughly the size of a district (note that traditional structures, such as shuras, may not line up with district boundaries, so they may not exactly mirror districts). The goal of the program is to involve the people in keeping their neighborhoods clear of insurgents once they have been cleared and while they are being held. The program can best be described as a contract among three primary groups:

- Coalition forces (both battle space owners and special forces, who train the guardians);
- The GIRoA, to include the Governor, MOI and the ANP;
- The people of a district

The Department of Defense described the AP3 program as follows in its June 2009 report on Afghanistan:

The Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3) is a current MoI initiative. The AP3 is an Afghan-initiated and Afghan-led program that relies on increased community responsibility for security. The AP3’s mission is to enhance security and stability, strengthen community development, and extend the legitimate governance of the GIRoA to designated districts in key provinces through community-based security forces. The AP3 comprises security forces under MoI authority, closely coordinated with the ANA, ANP, and international forces. The AP3 leverages the same community elder groups that the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) has worked with through the Afghan Social Outreach Program.

These community elder groups select members of the security forces. The AP3 pilot began in Wardak province in RC-East in March 2009. Wardak province was selected to facilitate partnering

and monitoring by U.S. forces. Once the program has been validated it will be expanded to other areas.

In an April 2010 interview, Major General Sadaat, Director General of the APPF—which encompasses the AP3 program—gave a broad outline of the current state of the AP3 program.²⁹³ He said their mission was a limited responsibility to include guarding private construction sites, public buildings (i.e., UN and EU facilities), and radio stations. AP3 personnel also provide intelligence to NDS.

The program has been centered in Wardak. According to the DoD April 2010 report, however, the AP3 “Guardian” force strength was 1,010 out of a planned 1,212.²⁹⁴ The ethnicity of AP3 members was said to roughly reflect the ethnicity of the districts in which they operate. The current AP3 force is 63 percent Pashtun, 24 percent Tajik, 7 percent Hazar, and 6 percent Sadat.²⁹⁵

Major General Sadaat felt that some of the recent improvements in security in Wardak Province can be attributed to the AP3 program. Casualties have been relatively light for AP3 personnel. Sadaat did not identify any specific local leaders, but he was probably referring to Ghulman Muhammad, who was appointed provincial commander of the AP3 in December 2009. Muhammad was a member of the Taliban government before 2001, and spent 2 years in U.S. detention in Bagram. Muhammad brought 500 men with him into the program when he was appointed commander. These men are almost all Pashtun, comprise almost half the force, and were clearly not recruited through official channels. SF forces believe that Muhammad has performed “exceptionally well” and has helped recruit additional AP3 personnel. However, many residents of the province are less convinced of Muhammad’s sincerity.²⁹⁶

Major General Sadaat also believed that the GIROA might be able to transform AP3 into a source of income for the government. For example, the Asian development project, established to build a railroad in northern Afghanistan, provides money directly to the MoI which transfers it to the AP3 program for securing the construction sites.

ISAF’s main role in supporting the AP3 was to try to ensure that the district is secure enough so that they will not be overmatched by organized insurgent forces. The GIROA’s role has been to try to provide both proper administration and oversight of the effort through the MoI and ANP, respectively, and to develop consensus among the key local leaders so that they will not only support the program but also provide reliable manpower for it. The people’s role is, through community and district councils as well as informal structures, to nominate military-aged men (25-45) to serve in the guardian force and to provide popular support to it.

²⁹³ M. G. Sadaat, interview with author, April 2010.

²⁹⁴ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 116.

²⁹⁵ Lefevre, “Local Defence in Afghanistan,” p. 10.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

All three sets of players, as well as the NDS, helped in vetting recruits. Special Forces trained and mentored them to ensure they continue to improve and do not become militias. The ANP commander for a province oversaw the program, and the MoI paid them through direct deposit.

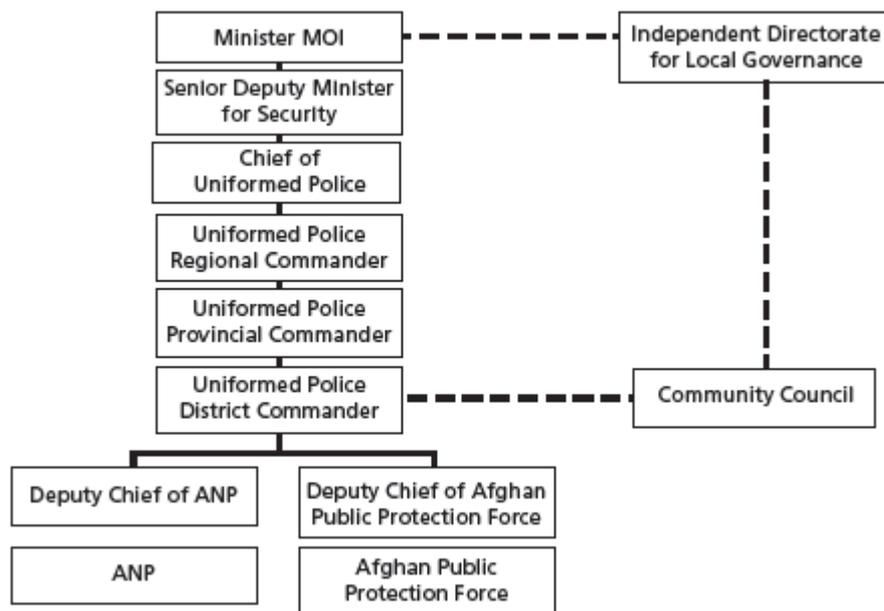
The recruitment process was initiated by local elders who selected reliable villagers. The recruits were then vetted by NDS, local and provincial government officials. However, due to capacity limitations, the NDS and U.S. SF were not able to vet all of the candidates.²⁹⁷

Upon successful screening, the recruits attend a three-week orientation which includes training, drug screening, biometrics upload, and the assignment of a uniform and weapon. AP3 personnel sign a one-year contract. They are issued one AK-47 from the MoI, uniforms from U.S. SF, and are paid \$170. The number of personnel required in each district is determined by the local security commander.

The Command and Control organization of the Afghan Public Protection Force is shown in **Figure 9.1**

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

Figure 9.1: Command and Control of the Afghan Public Protection Force



Source: Seth Jones and Arturo Munoz, “Afghanistan’s Local War-Building Local Defense Forces,” RAND, July 26, 2010, p. 62, <http://securityinfonet.blogspot.com/2010/07/afghanistans-local-war-building-local.html>.

Since recruits are selected by village elders, this does raise questions about loyalty to GIROA versus loyalty to local elders and leaders. Major General Sadaat stated, however, that the program had so far succeeded where elders and GIROA had a common desire for security and business growth, and that the AP3 can succeed while being loyal. Further, he asserted that as long as the government continued to provide the supplies, payment and support for the program, the program would continue to be successful. He estimated that roughly 60-70 percent of AP3 personnel were loyal to the GIROA chain of command, with 30–40 percent loyal to local leaders. It will be important to facilitate the overlapping of these loyalties wherever possible.

Scaling Up the AP3?

Most reports indicate that the training of the initial AP3 class proceeded smoothly and the group was well-received in their home community, but subsequent classes encountered some glitches. Relations between the AP3 and ANP have been poor.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, some experts speculate that the AP3 could be used to provide a springboard for potential recruits to the ANP when they demonstrate competence and can transfer their experience into the ANSF.

This suggests some familiar lessons about the broader use of local defense forces:

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

- First, community-based security forces need to be fully supported and vetted by local community leaders; they should be overseen in some form by the ANSF; for the foreseeable future ISAF needs to play a strong advisory and oversight role; and like many other security efforts, success may be catalyzed by linkage to locally-based development initiatives.
- Second, ISAF commanders and Afghan officials at all levels caution against a blanket application of a single AP3 model in all geographic areas. Community-based security forces will only work if they enjoy full legitimacy from their home communities, and their shape and nature may need to vary by area. Furthermore, in some areas, the basic premise of a community-based force linked to official GIRoA structures may founder as a result of the community's strong antipathy toward Kabul.
- Third, it is essential that GIRoA retain approval authority over the formation of community-based security forces, on the principle that the state exercises a monopoly on the legitimate use of force in its territory. Though little known outside the theater, there is already a small proliferation of 'home-grown' forces, including not only AP3, but also the KAU in Uruzgan, and the Helmandi Scouts...and possibly more.

Like all pilot projects, however, the key question is whether the AP3 can be effectively scaled-up on a broader or national basis. Regional and task force commanders across the theater have actively—and sometimes skeptically—considered the application of AP3 to their battle spaces. This has led to careful attention to several additional lessons tailored to conditions in Afghanistan:

- First, ISAF HQ, ICW, ANSF and security ministries should take a hard look at options and opportunities to expand AP3 in both political and military terms. This hard look needs to include a clear definition of the requirement for a local force for any given geographic area, clearly assigning training and oversight roles to ANSF and coalition forces respectively, ensuring the result is loyal and does not lead to local tensions and conflicts.
- Second, such forces cannot continue to rely on elite trainers and monitors. They must become forces that the ANSF can shape, train and control. In Wardak province, U.S. SF are playing two key roles—training the ANP trainers, and providing embedded oversight of trained AP3 units, and links to U.S. enablers and fire support. However, U.S. SF is a precious and limited commodity and likely cannot play that role for all AP3 should the program expand significantly. The next pilot, scheduled for Kunduz province, seems not yet to have met these prerequisites—and seems to have taken the RC Commander by surprise.
- Third, the creation and use of AP3 or other militia-like forces must also be based on a coordinated approach developed by regional and local ISAF, ANA, and ANP commanders—working closely with the provincial and district governor where this is possible. AP3 forces should not be imposed, and must be tailored to support all local conditions in ways that do not compete with other elements of the GIRoA, the ANSF, and ISAF forces.
- Fourth, ISAF should also work closely with the ANSF and security ministries to plan the 'way forward' for the AP3, including transition into service in the ANSF or vocational training and transition into civilian jobs.

Community Defense Initiative, ALDI, and Local Police

The AP3 program was implemented as an experimental and relatively resource-intensive program. It made enough progress, however, to suggest that similar models could work in selected areas with less ISAF and ANSAF support. Moreover, the deteriorating security situation is virtually forcing local leaders to find some way to

build local security. Local militias have independently emerged in many parts of the country. They have already begun to resist the Taliban, and/or already serve the interest of local powerbrokers and tribal leaders. In addition, a number of militias were recruited to provide security during the August 2009 elections, including 12,500 men in 22 provinces recruited by Arif Noorzai, an Afghan politician from Helmand.²⁹⁹

The United States encouraged the emergence of some of these militias, and created the Community Defense Initiative (CDI)—or village defense forces -- to support and supervise them. These militias were operating in at least 14 different areas in the country as of late 2009.³⁰⁰ The CDI organized the militias mainly through shuras and ran them through jirgas. Small U.S. SF teams deployed to areas where these militias were operating and offered assistance. Thus far, this assistance was light, consisting mainly of food and ammunition.³⁰¹ Afghan intelligence officials also played a role in leading the CDI. U.S. officials stress that they are not creating militias, but rather are “trying to reach out to these groups that have organized themselves.”³⁰²

Officially, the United States and ISAF did not arm these militias, although the local Afghan government or security forces did in some cases.³⁰³ The United States also provided “critical backup when needed, including transportation, communications and medical treatment.”³⁰⁴ The United States has thus far focused on training and defensive deployments of the local militias, although the militias have assisted ANSF and ISAF forces in clearing areas as well.³⁰⁵ The relationship between these militias and the ANSF is unclear, although U.S. Special Forces personnel involved in the initiative report that Afghan Special Forces, once they are trained and equipped, will take over their role in running the CDI.³⁰⁶

According to General Petraeus, the CDI “essentially involves small special forces teams that have members who know the language, culture, and area, and essentially live in the village with the people and seek to empower them to involve them and empower them in the maintenance of their own security. This is not quite the same as the Sons of Iraq; this is more of a village by village and valley by valley because of the nature of the situation in Afghanistan.”³⁰⁷

²⁹⁹ Boone, “US Pours Millions into Anti-Taliban Militias in Afghanistan.”

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Dexter Filkins, “Afghan Militias Battle Taliban with Aid of U.S.,” *New York Times*, November 21, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/22/world/asia/22militias.html?hp=&pagewanted=all>.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Gall, “Afghans Answering the Call to Fight.”

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Lefevre, “Local Defence in Afghanistan,” p. 21.

³⁰⁷ Petraeus, radio interview.

The CDI program expanded into the Afghan Local Defense Initiative (ALDI) program in late 2009. It is not clear what, if any, differences existed between the two programs besides the name change. The locations of various Local Defense militias are shown in **Figure 9.2**, although there are likely more militias than shown on this map.³⁰⁸ These militias vary widely in size and structure, and there does not seem to be any standard way to set them up. The official strategy for LDIs bears little resemblance to how many of them are run.³⁰⁹

General Petraeus gave such forces even higher priority after taking command of ISAF in July 2010, and obtained President Karzai's agreement to hire as many as "10,000 community police officers."³¹⁰ These forces will be placed under the Afghan Ministry of the Interior and are supposed to work with the Afghan police and Afghan Army. They will evidently have some continued support from U.S. Special Forces and other U.S. units, although with less support per man than the AP3.

This agreement only came after General Petraeus agreed with President Karzai that the program would seek to create lasting support for the government and not simply a force that would provide temporary tactical advantages that left the Afghan government without control or loyalty over such local elements. Recruiting, leadership, and the structure of the force will be tailored to avoid empowering a given tribe or local leader at the expense of others or central government influence. There will be a clear chain of command through the MoI, and it will control or vet leaders, structure, recruiting, and any funding and equipping.

The efforts to shape such programs were far more controversial than the AP3 because they risked becoming a tool for warlords or creating power centers with no ties to the central government. Some analysts feel that such programs risk undoing the work of the 2001 UN effort to dissolve the anti-Taliban militias and incorporate them into the ANSF. According Nader Nadery of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, the CDI "is indeed a matter of concern for us who work to promote the rule of law and protect human rights . . . They would produce a new round of warlords who would fight for resources and positions of power for a long time."³¹¹ The Afghan NGO Safety Office is even more strongly opposed to local defense force formation:

The use of Local Defense Forces (LDI) and Arbaki [local tribal militias] . . . continues to undermine the Governments claim to a 'monopoly on violence' and fracture the security landscape. Reminiscent of the 1963 South Vietnamese 'Self Defense Corps', LDIs are falling prey to all the same vices with active ones being murdered en-masse (Kandahar); smart ones partnering with Armed Opposition Groups [AOG] to exploit the population and Government supplies (Kunduz/Takhar); bold ones just being the AOG (Parwan) and timid ones keeping the status quo (Wardak). Some Arbaki have joined AOG when Government failed to give them weapons while others still have scared neighboring villagers to turn to the AOG for protection.

³⁰⁸ Lefevre, "Local Defence in Afghanistan," p. 15.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ DeYoung and Chandrasekaran, "Afghan President Karzai Approves Plan for Local Defense Forces"; Rubin, "Afghans to Form Local Forces to Fight Taliban"; Rubin, "Afghan Program Adds Local Units to Resist Taliban."

³¹¹ Ackerman, "Afghan Human Rights Official Criticizes McChrystal 'Tribes' Initiative."

The “Village Stability Program” (VSP, the U.S. catchall moniker for such activities) is perhaps the most disturbing development of the year not least because it is so opaque with no single institution having an overview, let alone control, of all activities under this rubric.³¹²

GIRoA officials have shown similar concerns and warned that militias can not only form centers of power that become independent of the central government, but they can also cause conflict in the areas they are supposed to protect. Coalition forces hoping to set up local forces often must choose sides in local power struggles. This is particularly problematic in areas with multiple ethnicities and tribes. There have been unconfirmed reports of ALDI forces causing inter- and intra-tribal clashes in several districts.³¹³

These issues have been addressed in U.S. and ISAF plans and in the agreement with President Karzai. An ISAF official stated at the time the agreement was announced that the local forces would be “purely defensive...In some cases, people may bring their own stuff, but part of getting government support is to standardize equipment. They will be armed and equipped and trained to defend their communities....Our position has been to develop a solution that bridge between having nothing and having Afghan National Police, and this program does that...So, it’s a good development and especially so since it has consensus within the Afghan government and the ownership that comes with that.”³¹⁴ ISAF indicated that other local forces would be “gradually disbanded and reintegrated into a single local police force.”³¹⁵

Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon spokesman, stated,³¹⁶

They would not be militias. These would be government-formed, government-paid, government-uniformed local police units that would keep an eye out for bad guys—in their neighborhoods, in their communities—and who would, in turn, work with the Afghan police forces and the Afghan Army to keep them out of their towns...It is a temporary solution to a very real near-term problem.

The risk that such forces will still favor one side in local or tribal rivalries and power struggles is a real one, and it is not clear how many Afghans will support the formation of such forces: “The people were afraid of the commanders, but now they have a choice—they have to choose between the Taliban and the commanders.”³¹⁷ These concerns seem to have been a reason why Ambassador Eikenberry intervened in late 2009 to “put the brakes” on the ALDI program.³¹⁸ His intervention, however,

³¹² Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO), *ANSO Quarterly Data Report, Q.2 2010*, http://afgnso.org/index_files/Page595.htm.

³¹³ ANSO, *ANSO Quarterly Data Report, Q.1 2010*.

³¹⁴ Rubin, “Afghans to Form Local Forces to Fight Taliban”; DeYoung and Chandrasekaran, “Afghan President Karzai Approves Plan for Local Defense Forces.”

³¹⁵ Rubin, “Afghans to Form Local Forces to Fight Taliban.”

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ Gall, “Afghans Answering the Call to Fight.”

³¹⁸ Jaffe and Chandrasekaran, “U.S. Ambassador Puts Brakes on Plan to Utilize Afghan Militias against Taliban.”

appears to have only cut off some USAID aid to the program, which is ISAF run and remained largely unaffected.³¹⁹

Columbia professor Austin Long reported in June 2010 that the LDI initiative in Khakrez, Kandahar had failed to inspire a community watch program after five months of effort, despite a high level of motivation and proficiency on the part of the U.S. Special Forces ODA assigned to the village. Though insurgent mobility was limited by the ODA presence, it could not be eliminated and villagers did not feel comfortable providing intelligence despite the team's cultural proficiency. Furthermore, the corruption of the Khakrez district government challenged the notion of MoI oversight—in this case, had a community watch formed and connected the population more intimately to the corrupt government, the result would have likely made the local situation even worse.³²⁰

General Petraeus found that supporting a somewhat similar program in Iraq had major benefits. Moreover, the real choice is one between an ISAF/GIRoA effort to create and encourage such militias and having them continue to grow without any ties to the ANSF.

The size, role, and location of local militias, personal protection forces, contract security forces, and elements of the ANA and ANP loyal to powerbrokers are major gaps in reporting on the ANSF and the military balance in Afghanistan. It is clear, however, that substantial elements of the ANP are subject to either the influence or control of powerbrokers (or “warlords”), and that many other powerbrokers, local leaders, and contractors have independent security forces or militias. This is a particularly serious problem within the ANP. The scale of such elements within the ANP is unclear, but the problem is serious enough to reflect a major problem in understanding the dynamics of power in Afghanistan, and a reason that critical aspects of reporting on the ANP are fundamentally dishonest. ANP elements that are loyal to local leaders, or their own leaders rather than the central government, need to be clearly identified and not treated as if they were really part of the ANSF that is under the control of the central government.

Creating official local forces is better than unofficial local forces both in terms of loyalty to the government and in dealing with the Taliban. Many tribal groups already have their own forces, while others attempted to create them without outside support and were defeated by the Taliban or their inability to create workable forces without outside support.

As is the case with so much of the war in Afghanistan, it is far better to choose the least bad real-world solution than a more ideal solution based on a goal that can never be achieved. Locally organized militias have been a feature of a number of successful COIN campaigns, and are a part of COIN doctrine. Indeed, the ALDI program was inspired by the success of the Awakening movement in Iraq. The key factors in determining whether these militias become independent sources of power are how

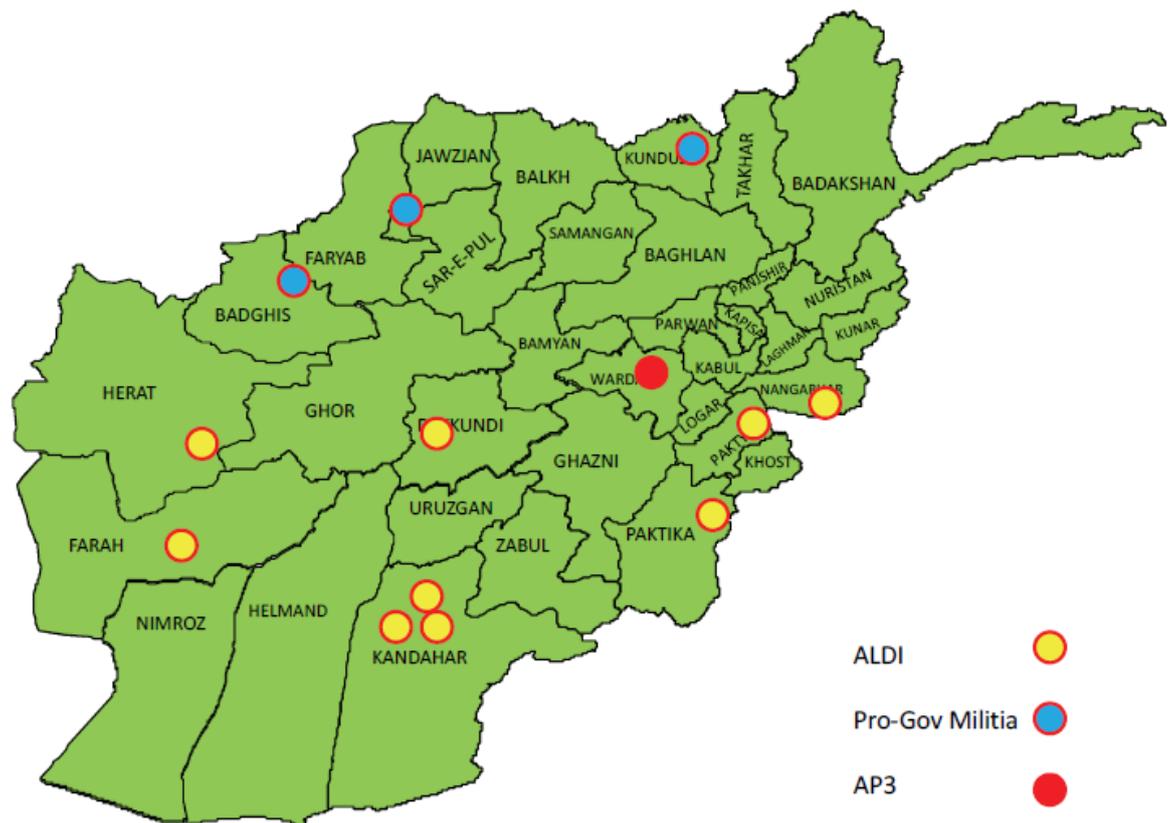
³¹⁹ Lefevre, “Local Defence in Afghanistan,” p. 19.

³²⁰ Long, “Going Old School: U.S. Army Special Forces Return to the Villages.”

they are supervised and employed and how well they are integrated (and eventually merged) into the official government-run security forces.

Moreover, Geoff Morrell may well be wrong about the temporary nature of this force. It may be years before an effective combination of local police, governance, and a functioning formal justice system are really present in many areas. In the interim, local police may do far more to help the Afghans in many areas than a more formal program whose only substance is a vague fog of conceptual PowerPoints and good intentions.

Figure 9.2: Militia Formation as of March 2010



Source: Afghan NGO Safety Office, *ANSO Quarterly Data Report Q.1 2010*, April, 2010, <http://www.afgnso.org/2010Q/ANSO%20Quarterly%20Data%20Report%20%28Q1%202010%29.pdf>.

Afghan Contract Security Personnel

All of these problems are compounded by President Karzai's directive in August 2010 to abolish the roughly 24,000 to 30,000-man private contract security forces that guard most military and aid convoy and transport movements, as well as many aid workers and foreign and Afghan facilities. There is good reason to abolish at least some of these forces:³²¹

- While 52 such companies are legally registered, many factions and groups are not. There are some 23 security forces in Kandahar alone, and some groups are as large as 1,500 men.
- Their competence is mixed at best.
- They are very expensive, add to the high overhead rates of all in-country activity, and often sharply overcharge.
- They are paid far more than the police and other Afghan security forces, and many ANA and ANP personnel leave to join such forces. Changes in the ANSF personnel system require a formal length of service commitment since August 2010, but such arrangements are of very uncertain effectiveness and do not affect older enlistments.
- Other personnel are of low quality and most can be bribed. Many steal from shipments and the contracting group.
- Many are tied to warlords and powerbrokers, with no loyalty to the central government. Some have effectively taken over given districts or transport and roads in given areas.
- Some extort money and services from the local population.
- Most pay bribes to ANP and ANB checkpoints and border crossings and often pay off insurgent groups.
- Fighting between groups for contracts or control in given areas add to the level of violence in Afghanistan.

The fact remains, however, that there simply are far too few ANSF to do the job, and the United States and ISAF lack the manpower to do this relatively low priority security task and perform key missions at the same time. The U.S. military alone hires some 10,000 legal contractors. For all the shortfalls of such private contract forces, many elements of the ANSF are considerably worse and even more vulnerable to intimidation and bribery. Moreover, a SIGAR audit in the spring of 2010 found that only 23 percent of the ANA and 12 percent of the ANP were capable of operating on their own.³²² As a result, implementing the President's directive, particularly by his deadline of December 2010, could have a major negative impact on ANSF development.³²³

³²¹ Thomas, "Making Afghanistan More Dangerous"; Filkins and Shane, "Afghan Sees Plan to Ban Private Guards."

³²² Ibid.

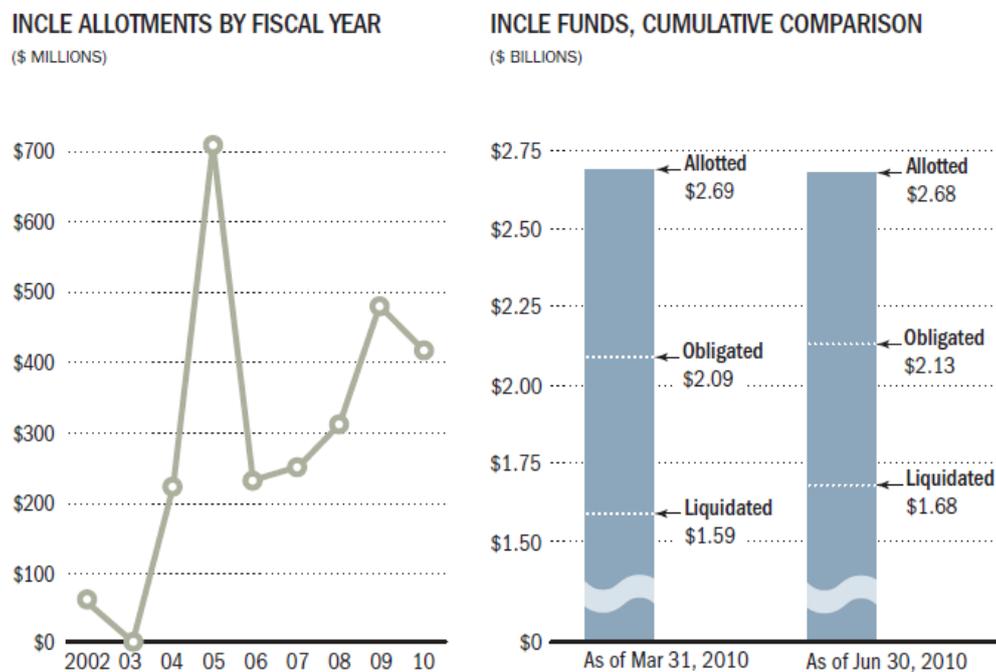
³²³ Thomas, "Making Afghanistan More Dangerous."

10. COUNTERNARCOTICS AND THE COUNTERNARCOTICS POLICE OF AFGHANISTAN (CNPA)

The impact of narcotics in corrupting the ANSF has already been discussed in detail. There is also a wide range of reporting that warns that the major impact of the counternarcotics effort from 2002-2009 was to drive opium growing into Taliban controlled or influenced areas without affecting crop output or world street prices. In fact, the only major reductions in crop output occurred when oversupply reached the point that it sharply lowered farm gate prices in Afghanistan and led farmers to shift to other crops.

Like politics and counterinsurgency, all counternarcotics efforts are “local.” So far, the end result has been a disaster that has done little—if anything—to halt the flow of drugs, has left narcotraffickers intact in areas that do not grow narcotics, and has systematically pushed poppy growing and hashish production into Taliban controlled areas while creating a major new source of corruption. The counternarcotics effort has also been an enormous waste of money, as seen in **Figures 10.1** and **10.2**.

Figure 10.1: Funding for International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement

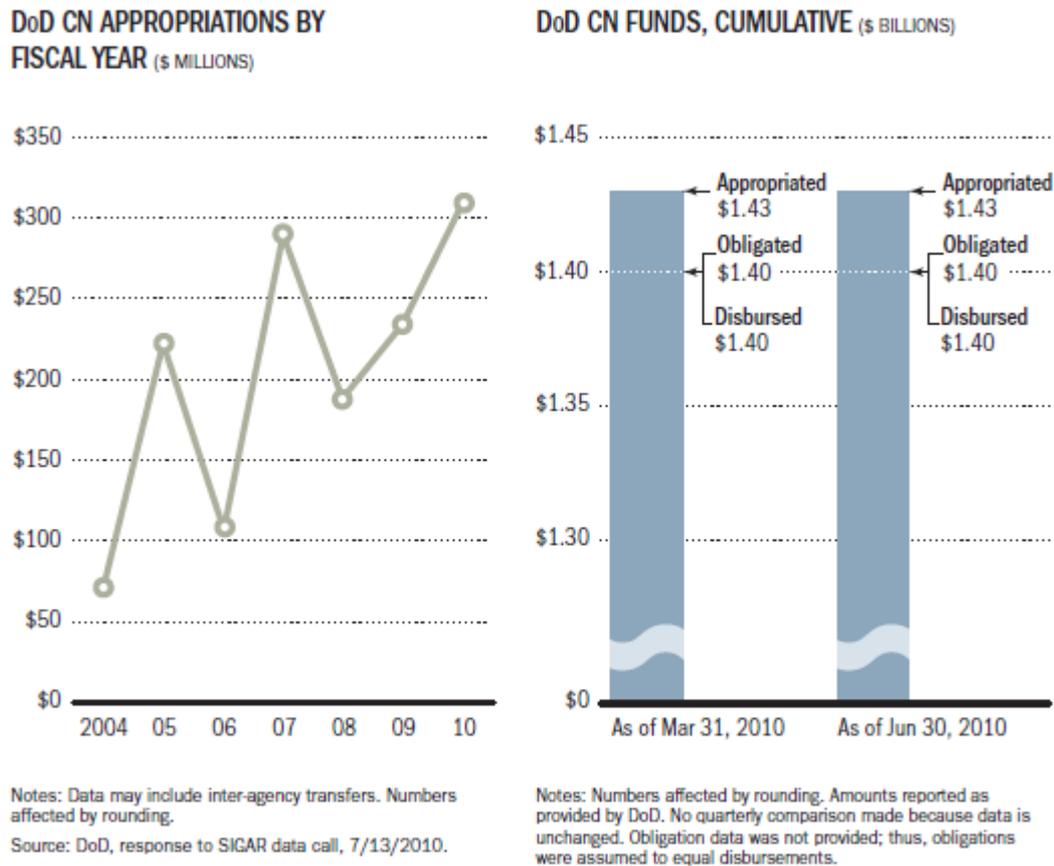


Notes: Data may include inter-agency transfers. Numbers affected by rounding.
Source: DoS, response to SIGAR data call, 7/13/2010.

Notes: Data may include inter-agency transfers. Numbers affected by rounding. Updated data from DoS resulted in a lower figure for allotments than the figure reported last quarter by OMB for appropriations.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 2010, p. 50.

Figure 10.2: Funding for DoD Counternarcotics



Source: SIGAR, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, July 2010, p. 48

An absurdly mismanaged effort by the United States and allied countries helped make narcotics a major source of corruption and problems for the Afghan government—as well as a source of suffering for the Afghan people and nations throughout the world. The solution, if there is one, lies in providing substitute crops and the markets and food processing that will give Afghan farmers a living and not in eradication per se. However, this is a long term solution that can only come with security and effective programs at the local level, as well as ANSF aid and development. Efforts to combine eradication with alternative crops must be combined and carefully phased so as to not alienate the Afghan people and thus empower insurgents in contested areas.

Choosing the Right Missions for Counternarcotics and the CNPA

This does not mean, however, that some types of counternarcotics efforts are not an important part of security operations. Narcotraffickers both help fund the insurgency and are a key source of excessive corruption and the abuses by various powerbrokers. They undermine support for the Afghan government and undermine the effectiveness of the ANP and ANB. Accordingly, ISAF should focus on helping the Afghan security forces to arrest the traffickers and related criminal networks, and clarify which officials and

informal powerbrokers are tied to drugs as a public way of pressuring them to change their behavior.

ISAF should work with the ANSF to eradicate drugs in areas where they clearly help finance the Taliban. Such action, however, must be carefully targeted and should not interfere with shape, clear, hold, and build operations which require popular support. In these cases eradication should take place only where there are immediate and credible options to provide alternative crops.

Getting Real About the CNPA

ISAF already seems to be encouraging such a shift, but it is far from clear that the effort to build up a Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) is effective. Most U.S. reporting exaggerates the capabilities of the CNPA. For example, DoD sharply downplayed the problems in the CNPA in its April 2010 report on Afghanistan, and focused on the “progress” the CNPA is making in terms of force size rather than force capability and effectiveness.³²⁴

The DEA, with DOD and DOS funding, continues to support, train, and equip three specialized units within the CNPA. The 220-member National Interdiction Unit—established by the DEA as a specialized tactical arm of the CNPA—is capable of safely conducting interdiction operations and seizures and serving arrest and search warrants in a high-threat environment, much like a U.S. special weapons and tactics (SWAT) team.

. . . In August 2008, the National Security Council’s Deputies Committee recommended the formation of the Afghan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC) to identify and disrupt the sources of funding that support insurgent and terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan. The ATFC works to develop information that will be used to prosecute individuals, either in the United States or Afghanistan, who provide financial support to insurgents. The ATFC conducts a vast majority of its investigations and operations with vetted Afghan personnel from the DEA-mentored Sensitive Interdiction Unit members, the Public Prosecutors Office, and vetted judges. Information developed by the ATFC is passed to Afghan counterparts for their assistance and action, as well as to U.S. Government and ISAF law enforcement, military, and intelligence communities.

At this time, the ATFC is led by DEA and comprised of personnel from the DEA, DOD, Treasury, Joint Warfare Analysis Center, Institute for Defense Analysis, FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, and the Office of Foreign Asset Control. Personnel from the UK Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA) and the Australian Federal Police are also assigned to work with the ATFC.

....DOD established a CNPA Development Cell under CSTC-A/NTM-A to allow for targeted training of the CNPA. As a result of an assessment trip done during the summer of 2009 (referenced in the previous report), DOJ assigned a criminal justice sector expert from its International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program to assist with the development of the broader CNPA. During the reporting period, DOD, DOS, and DEA combined resources to further develop CNPA’s specialized units. DOD continued to provide transportation and lodging support to DEA and its counterparts in the Regional Commands. DOD is completing the construction of a forward operating base in Herat that is scheduled to be finished in May. The Herat forward operating base will enable CNPA’s specialized units to conduct investigations and interdiction operations in the region. During the reporting period,

³²⁴ DoD, *Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, April 2010, p. 79.

the CN Training Academy trained 210 CNPA officers and 55 customs officers. The courses at CN Training Academy are designed to provide professional training beyond the basic police courses. The DEA continued its expansion with support from DOD, increasing mentoring opportunities for personnel in CNPA's specialized units. DOD, DOJ, DOS and DEA will continue to work together to build the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan.

According to the DoD:³²⁵

The existing CNPA structure was envisioned in 2004, memorialized in the 1383 tashkil in 2005, and documented in the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy in 2006. CNPA is authorized to have a total of 2,519 personnel with offices in all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. CNPA's specialized units (Sensitive Investigation Unit, National Interdiction Unit, and Intelligence and Investigations Unit) work closely with the DEA and the United Kingdom's Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA). DOD, DOS and DEA coordinate training and support for the specialized units. DOD has established a CNPA Development Cell under CSTC-A/NTM-A in order to coordinate the development of CNPA. DOD is providing support for four experts from the Department of Justice's International Investigative Criminal Training Assistance Program to operate the CNPA Development Cell under CSTC-A/NTM-A.

Training and education to support development of the ANSF's CN capabilities continued during the reporting period. The Counter-narcotics Training Academy, with support from DOD, continued to provide CN courses for the CNPA officers. Over 200 CNPA personnel received training at the Counter-narcotics Training Academy. The training at Counter-narcotics Training Academy provides CNPA personnel with additional CN-specific education after completion of basic police training. DOD support for the CNPA is coordinated with the interagency in Afghanistan and in Washington. DOD formally meets with an interagency team, comprised of members from DOJ, DEA [Drug Enforcement Agency] and DOS/INL [Bureau of International Narcotics & Law Enforcement], to conduct bi-annual Program Management Review for the CNPA. In Afghanistan, USCENTCOM personnel work with DOS/INL from U.S. Embassy's Narcotics Affairs section to coordinate projects on a daily basis. In Washington, DOD works with DEA and INL on a daily basis to coordinate future programs and ongoing efforts.

The reality is that CNPA have faced many of the same problems the rest of the ANP have faced and more problems with corruption. Their training and retention has been no better than the ANP as a whole. Moreover, an interview with Major General Sadaat revealed an additional problem: Miscommunication and redundancies abound in the British and American CNPA development program.³²⁶ According to Sadaat, NATO/ISAF trainers have created 3 separate and partially redundant special units that regularly interfere with each other: The National Interdiction Unit (NIU), the Technical Investigation Unit (TIU), and the Sensitive Investigations unit (SIU).

According to the State Department, the SIU "is a DEA/INL sponsored, vetted, and highly trained group of 45 investigators whose mission is to gather and exploit evidence, work undercover and confidential informants, and build cases against High Value Drug Trafficking. The officers were trained at Quantico." The TIU is "a DEA/INL sponsored, vetted and highly trained group of investigators who will utilize legally authorized Afghan wire intercepts to gather evidence against High Value Drug Trafficking. This unit consists of 11 officers with 100 interpreters to log, monitor and

³²⁵ Ibid., p. 127.

³²⁶ M. G. Sadaat, interview with author, March 2010.

conduct intercepted calls. The officers were trained at Quantico.” The NIU is “a DEA/INL sponsored and mentored, tactically trained Afghan law enforcement unit. It will soon be a 288-(authorized strength) officer National Interdiction Unit (NIU) of the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) trained to execute search warrants, conduct raids, interdict and seize narcotics and precursor chemicals, secure evidence and make arrests. The NIU is a sub-unit of the CNP-A.”³²⁷ Others, like Major General Sadaat, feel the SIU and TIU are redundant and harm unity of effort.

There is no clear way to establish just how good or bad the CNPA really is, but current reporting simply has zero credibility. No one can place the slightest trust in counternarcotics reporting that does not address the vulnerabilities and problems in the force or provide some meaningful assessment of the forces effectiveness. The current unclassified reporting is little more than useless rubbish.

³²⁷ U.S. Department of State, “Afghanistan Program Overview,” <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/narc/c27187.htm>.

11. THE BATTLE OF MARJAH—A TEST OF THE ROLE OF THE ANSF IN THE NEW STRATEGY?

It is far too early to judge how the efforts to reorganize and properly resource ANSF development that began in the summer of 2009 will affect the future development of the ANSF. There are still critical shortfalls in trainers, partnering remains an experiment that is only beginning to have its effect, and the critical tests of whether the ANSF can be effective in civil-military operations, and serve as the base for Afghan transition to responsibility for security are still in progress.

Marjah is, however, a useful—if highly uncertain—preliminary case study in the effectiveness of the new strategy and the role the ANSF will play within it. The battle, Operation *Moshtarak* (Dari for “Together”) was the first major offensive for U.S. coalition and Afghan forces employing the new reinforcements ordered by President Obama in December of 2009. The mission was to retake and then hold the town of Marjah in Helmand province, a Taliban stronghold and center of the opium network.³²⁸ As a result, the operation had many aspects of the “Shape, Clear, Hold and Build” strategy advocated by General McChrystal and other U.S. and ISAF leaders and planners—although the ANSF, GIRoA and aid workers were scarcely fully ready to support such a strategy when the operation began.

As **Figure 11.1** shows, Marjah is located in the volatile region of Southern Afghanistan, 25 miles southwest of Helmand’s provincial capital of Lashkar Gah. The battle for Marjah took place in a small (600-750 square kilometer) area divided by water barriers with a total population of some 80,000 Afghans. Like many densely populated areas throughout Afghanistan, Marjah is less a city in the Western sense of the word and more a union of several small impoverished villages linked together by poorly-maintained roads. A majority of the homes lack running water or electricity and depend on wells and irrigation canals for water. Marjah’s irrigation canals, which today support rich opium fields, were built in the 1950s and 1960s by U.S. engineers in order to promote legitimate agriculture. Ironically, these same canals were later bombed by ISAF forces following 9/11.

Marjah’s strategic importance lies largely in the fact that it has been a key center for Taliban control of the opium trade, and it was impossible to secure Helmand Province without eliminating major Taliban power centers. According to a Parliamentary representative from Marjah, the Taliban administer the local drug business and have “registered 187 processing factories” that convert opium paste into heroin. Each factory reportedly pays a tax to the Taliban at a rate of approximately \$1,200 per month, which equates to over \$200,000 per month in revenue from Marjah alone.³²⁹ In

³²⁸ Jeffrey Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak: Preparing for the Battle of Marjah,” Institute for the Study of War, February 11, 2010, http://www.understandingwar.org/files/Operation_Moshtarak_1.pdf.

³²⁹ Ibid.

addition, securing Marjah was critical to giving British forces a major secure position in the province.

At the same time, Marjah is a difficult objective. Both Marjah and Helmand province are dominated by the southern part of the ethnic Pashtun majority in Afghanistan. The Taliban are largely a southern Pashtun movement and were founded in nearby Kandahar Province. Many citizens of Marjah developed a deep ideological connection with the Taliban. They have also had little reason to be loyal to a new Afghan government whose officials were often abusive and corrupt early in the war, and then virtually disappeared from the scene. As recently as two years prior to Operation Moshtarak, the ANP occupied the city under the command of Police Chief Abdul Rahman Jan, a man described in *The Herald-Sun* as

the man with the most sway in Marjah...His officers in Helmand were so corrupt and ruthless—their trademark was summary executions—that many residents welcomed the Taliban as a more humane alternative. U.S. officials have made it clear in private meetings with Afghan officials that Jan will not be allowed to reconstitute his police militia. The Marines intend to set up a new police department, drawn in part from men selected by tribal leaders. Recruits will be screened for past violations and will undergo weeks of training at the main Marine base in Helmand. U.S. officials think most Marjah residents would rather not have Jan call the shots in the area. They are hoping Zahir will win over the population and mute Jan's influence, but they are not certain that will occur.³³⁰

ABC polling in Afghanistan underscores these challenges and the additional problems ISAF faced in minimizing civilian casualties, given the antipathy associated with those casualties. In all of Afghanistan, 16 percent of the population reports U.S. or ISAF bombing or shelling in their area. The percentage soars to 60 percent in Helmand (as in the South more generally). Similarly, 58 percent in Helmand report civilians killed or injured in the last year as a result of actions by U.S. or ISAF forces. The figure for Afghanistan is 19 percent.

Just 36 percent of those polled in Helmand personally support a presence of U.S. forces in their area. Support is at 42 percent in the South and the East of the country. In the rest of Afghanistan, support is at 78 percent. In another measure, just 18 percent of those polled in Helmand reported strong local support for the United States among the people in their area. However, twenty-five percent report strong local support for the Taliban.

Positive ratings of U.S. performance were only 19 percent in Helmand vs. 39 percent in the rest of the country. Just 27 percent of those polled in Helmand are confident in the ability of U.S. and NATO forces to provide security, compared with 49 percent elsewhere. Ratings of the central government, the provincial government and the local police—including confidence in their ability to provide security—likewise are much lower in Helmand than in the country as a whole. The results of the ABC poll are detailed in **Figure 11.2**. This lack of effective GIRoA governance, and of a meaningful ANSF and ISAF presence, gave the Taliban freedom of action in the

³³⁰ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “Challenges Mount in Establishing Leadership,” *Durham Herald-Sun*, March 3, 2010, http://www.heraldsun.com/view/full_story/6420140/article-Challenges-mount-in-establishing-leadership?instance=homefirstleft.

South. As a U.S. official stated, “the Taliban has reaped a recruiting bonanza the past two years, capitalizing on NATO's stagnant posture in southern Afghanistan by increasing fighter ranks by 35 percent.”³³¹

When Operation Moshtarak began on February 13, 2010, it served as an uncertain test of several key aspects of “Shape, Clear, Hold and Build.” ISAF and GIRoA used some 8,000-12,000 ISAF and ANSF forces at various phases of the operations in a small area with only around 80,000 Afghans. The U.S. military estimated that only 400-1000 insurgents were in Marjah prior to the operation. This made the operation one in which ISAF could not duplicate the high troop-to-task ratio in most other areas. It also took place before many of the efforts to create the stronger Afghan and allied civilian capabilities necessary for the new strategy were ready.

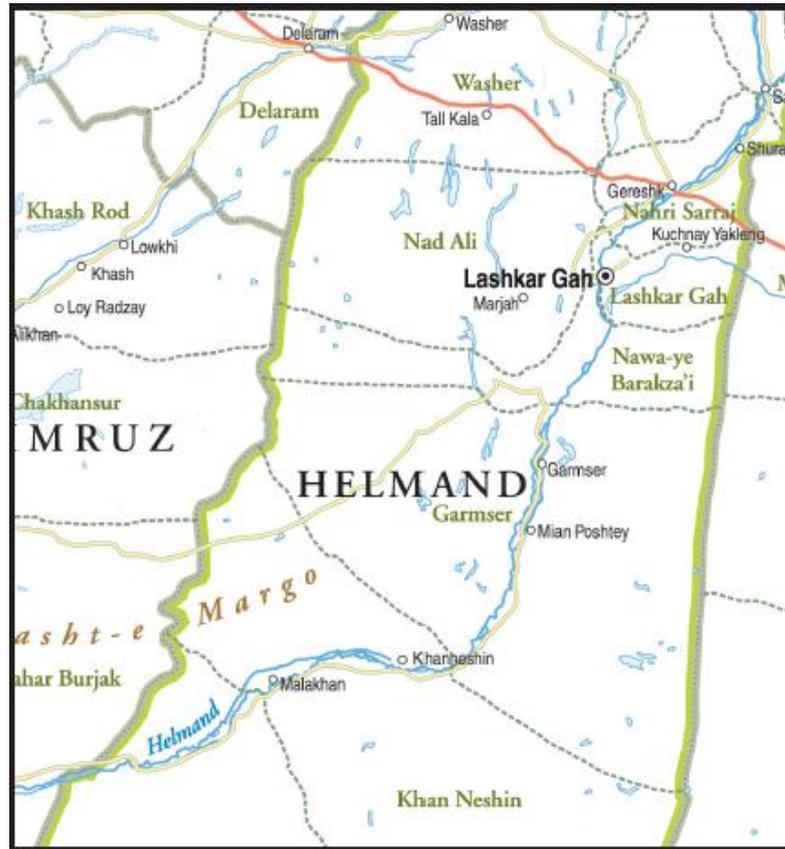
The Role of Marjah in a Population-centric Strategy

Nevertheless, there were several reasons ISAF chose Marjah as a springboard to launch its new civil-military “population-centric” strategy. First, the core of the Marjah area is relatively dense with a population of 65,000-75,000 within 200 square kilometers. Second, the operation was part of a broader offensive that both rescued British Forces from an untenable position in Helmand, where they lacked strength, and strategically placed ISAF forces for a much larger and more strategically critical operation in neighboring Kandahar Province. Third, poppy cultivation thrived in Helmand Province and the Taliban used this cash crop to fund operations throughout Afghanistan. Fourth, from a psychological operations perspective, it showed the Taliban that the ISAF will not hesitate to enter perceived or actual Taliban safe havens. According to BG Nichols: “Central Helmand is extremely important to everybody...and I think if you can bring those other ungoverned parts of Nad-e-Ali you will have them in central Helmand area where 750,000 people live which will be properly under the control of the government.”³³²

³³¹ Rowan Scarborough, “NATO Neglect Lets Taliban Build 35% More Strength” *Washington Post*, February 22, 2010, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/feb/22/nato-neglect-lets-taliban-build-35-more-strength/>.

³³² DoD, “DOD News Briefing with Maj. Gen. Carter from Afghanistan,” press briefing, February 18, 2010, <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4569>.

Figure 11.1: Helmand Province



Source: Jeffrey Dressler, "Operation Moshtarak: Taking and Holding Marjah," Institute for the Study of War, March 2, 2010, <http://www.understandingwar.org/report/operation-moshtarak-taking-and-holding-marjah>.

Figure 11.2: Differences in Popular Opinion in Helmand vs. in Afghanistan as a Whole

	Helmand	Afghanistan	Difference
U.S./NATO shelling/bombing Civilian casualties Caused by U.S./NATO	60%	16%	44%
Positive ratings of:			
Central government	25	62	37
U.S. performance	19	39	20
Provincial government	17	59	42
Support U.S. presence	36	69	33
Strong local support:			
for United States	18	40	22
for Taliban	25	11	14
Any local support			
for United States	58	73	15
for Taliban	44	25	19
Confident in security from:			
Provincial government	36	77	41
Central government	54	85	31
Local police	22	77	55
U.S. forces	27	49	22

Source: Migal Marquez, “The Challenges in Marjah,” ABC News, February 4, 2010, <http://blogs.abcnews.com/thenumbers/2010/02/the-challenges-in-Marjah.html>.

The Battle for Marjah

Major military action in Marjah began as early as May 2009, when Afghan and British forces launched several offensive operations based on intelligence that Marjah was the staging ground for the Taliban, from which they were to launch a major operation to take provincial capital Lashkar Gah. Shaping the battlefield for Operation Moshtarak began in the summer of 2009 as part of the effort to recapture key terrain adjacent to the major population centers of Lashkar Gah and Gereshk. However, lack of resources prevented the Marines and British from holding Marjah.³³³ Without a major logistical support or a troop influx, the ISAF or Afghan forces were reluctant to maintain areas outside their operating bases for prolonged amounts of time.

The timelines for what became Operation Moshtarak are shown in **Figure 11.3**. ISAF began staging larger forces on the outskirts of Marjah. In order to accomplish this, Marines, British Forces and the ANSF needed to regain territory in and around the city. Thousands of U.S. Marines, British and Afghan forces successfully drove the majority of insurgent elements away from key terrain north and south of Helmand’s capital but they did not have enough resources to tackle the Taliban bastion of

³³³ Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak.”

Marjah. Many insurgents fled west to Nad Ali and Marjah where they consolidated their positions, probing the perimeter of Afghan and coalition forces to the northeast and southeast while only occasionally striking within Coalition-dominated battle space.³³⁴

The structure of the operation is shown in **Figure 11.4**. On February 6, 2010, the British press reported that U.S. Navy SEALs and British Special Forces had begun infiltrating the town, airlifting in on “kinetic” missions during the night. The missions were described as kill or capture raids targeting top Taliban commanders in the town.³³⁵ During these “shape and clear” operations, Brig. Gen. Nicholson and Afghan Brig. Gen. Mahayoodin Ghoori, set up a shura (leadership council) with Marjah’s most important district elders in which they encouraged them to convince residents to stay inside once the fighting began.³³⁶

Figure 11.3: Shaping Operation Timeline, May 2009–March 2010

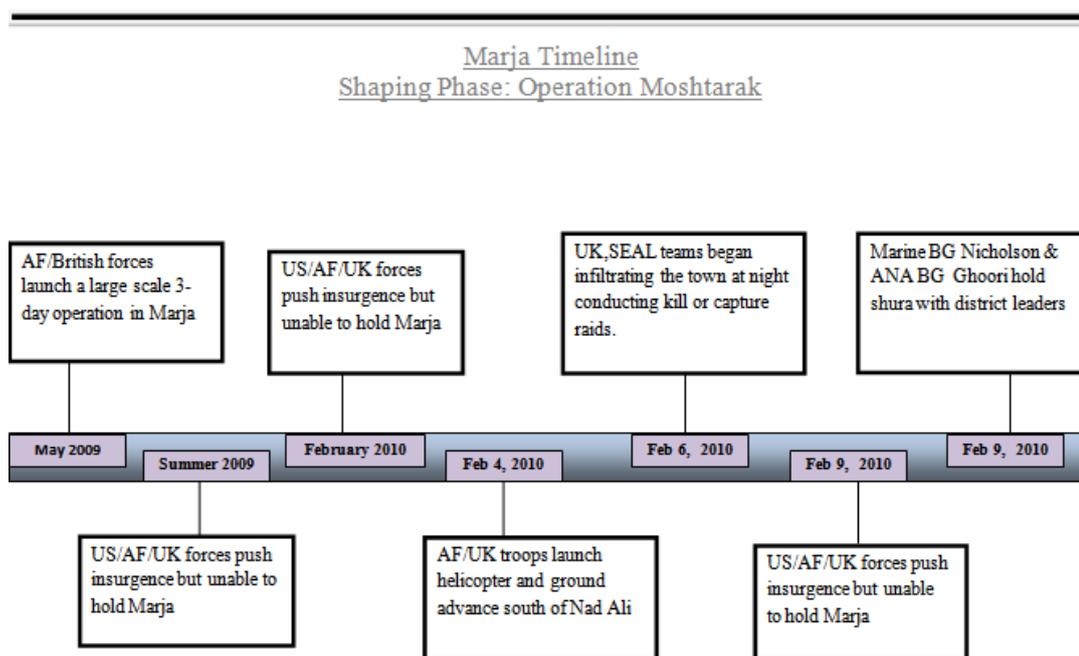


Figure: VIII.3

Source: Jeffrey Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak: Preparing For The Battle Of Marjah,” Institute for the Study of War (February 11, 2010).

Source: Jeffrey Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak: Taking and Holding Marjah,” Institute for the Study of War, February 11, 2010.

³³⁴ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “Marines Plan Joint Mission to Eject Insurgents from Last Helmand Stronghold,” *Washington Post*, February 10, 2010.

³³⁵ Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak.”

³³⁶ Tony Perry and Laura King, “Marines Focus on Civilian Safety in Afghanistan,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 2010.

Military Operations

On February 9, 2010, the pace of the shaping operations increased. Approximately 400 troops from the U.S. Army's 5th Stryker Brigade along with 250 Afghan Army soldiers and their 30 Canadian trainers moved to take up positions northeast of Marjah.³³⁷ The main assault force was composed of U.S. Marines. One battalion of Marines, along with squads of Afghan soldiers, DEA agents, and private contractors were based seven miles north of Marjah at Outpost Belleau Wood.³³⁸

Afghan and ISAF troops surrounded Marjah before launching the main assault.³³⁹ The only major road in or out of Marjah was secured by U.S. and Afghan forces after clearing a multitude of mines and bombs. In an attempt to draw pockets of the blocking force into a premature engagement, Taliban mortar and small-arms teams repeatedly harassed elements of the force, such as Lima Company of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines who was positioned on the northern edge of the town.³⁴⁰

These operations had a major impact on the local population. By Friday, February 12th, the road between Marjah and Lashkar Gah was clogged with cars and trucks fleeing the pending offensive. Over 2,700 people reportedly fled to the provincial capital just miles northeast of Marjah—some hastily escaping to avoid the impending invasion and others fearing recrimination from Taliban commanders.³⁴¹

On February 12th, the Marine and ANSF set up broad cordons to the East and West with an assault force moving in from the South. Taliban fighters were seen fleeing the north and southeast corners of Marjah. On Saturday the 13th of February, British troops air-assaulted in to Nad Ali in three waves to secure several compounds and a bazaar, attempting to control both sides of the main canal running into Nad Ali. British and Afghan National Army (ANA) troops conducted patrols, set up checkpoints and conducted shuras with locals to inform them of their intent to “provide them with the security they need.”³⁴² The initial phase of the assault is shown in **Figure 11.5**.

³³⁷ Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak.”

³³⁸ Alfred de Montesquiou, “Marines Wait in the Cold for Afghan Offensive,” Associated Press, February 9, 2010.

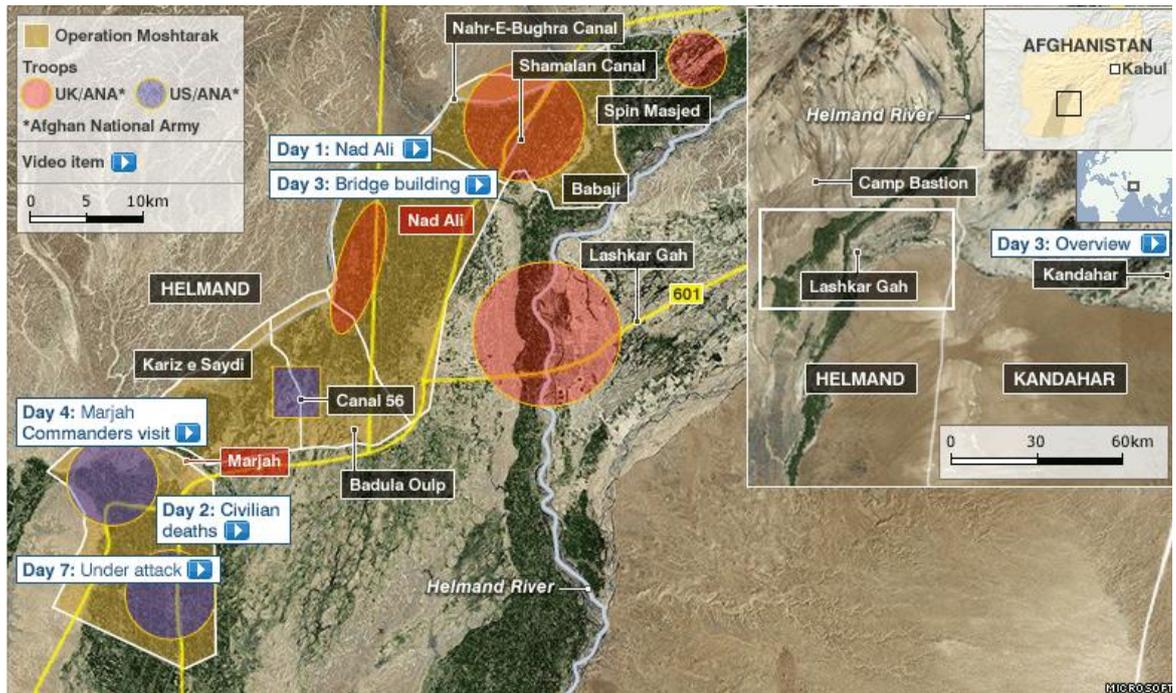
³³⁹ Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak.”

³⁴⁰ Alfred de Montesquiou and Christopher Torchia, “Taliban, Marines Trade Fire as Battle Looms,” Associated Press, February 12, 2010.

³⁴¹ Christopher Torchia and Noor Khan, “Afghan Elders Plea for Quick Attack on Marjah,” Associated Press, February 12, 2010.

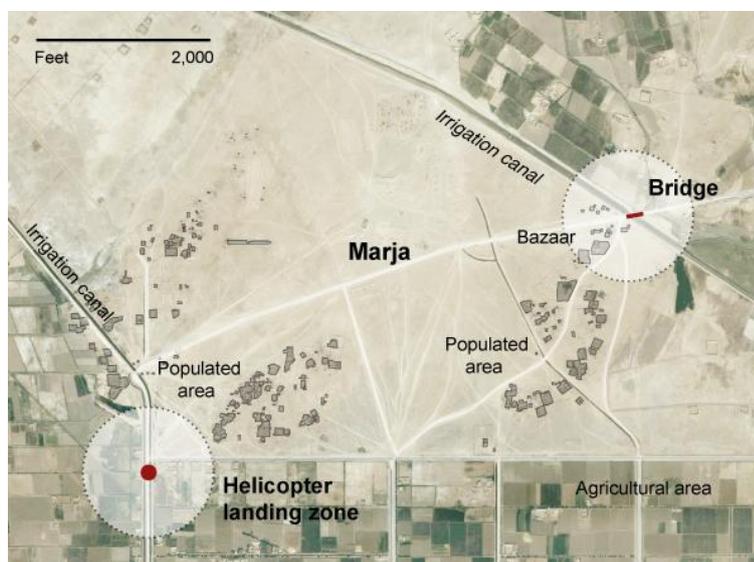
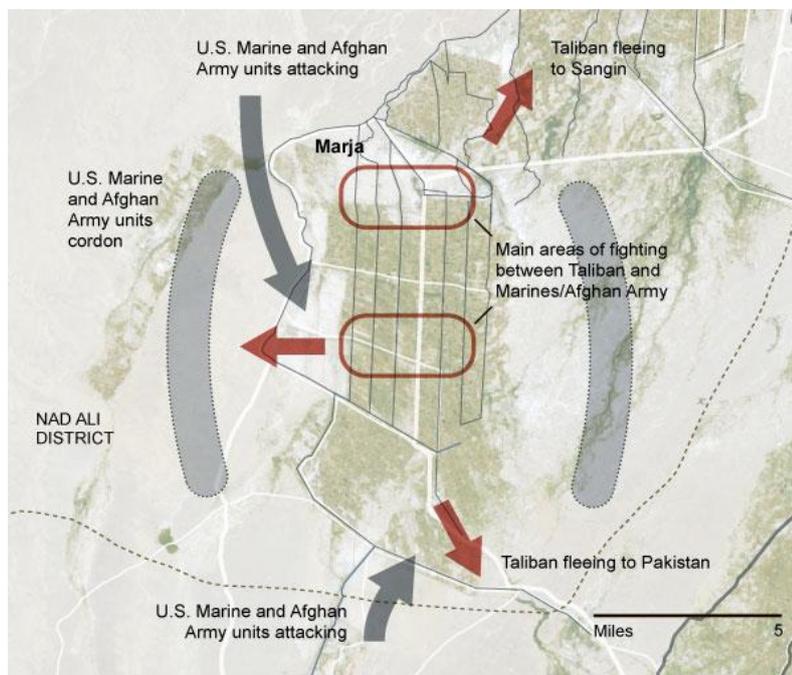
³⁴² Ministry of Defence, UK, “Afghan, British Soldiers Establish New Patrol Base,” February 16, 2010.

Figure 11.4: Operation Moshtarak—Assault in Helmand Province



Source: BBC, "Operation Moshtarak: Assault in Helmand Province," February 18, 2010.

Figure 11.5: The Initial Assault



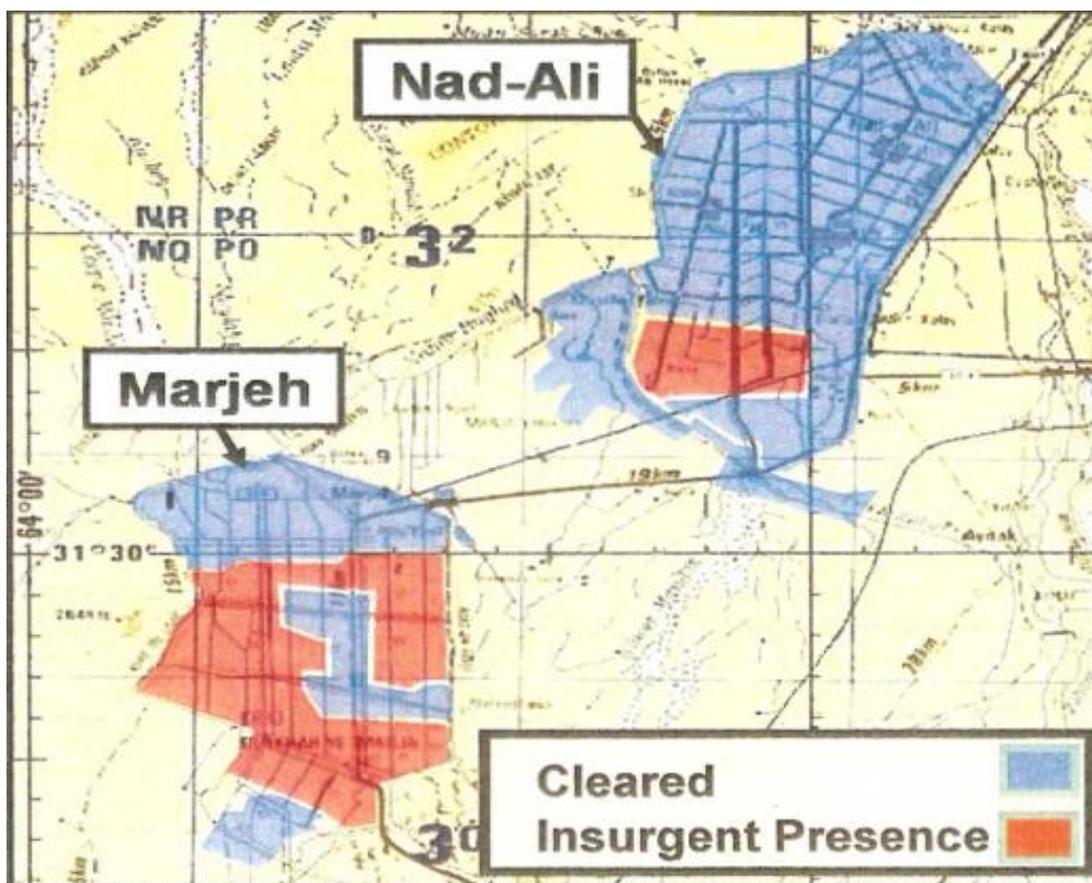
Source: Joe Burgess, C. J. Chivers, Dexter Filkins, and Rod Nordland, “The Continuing Assault,” *New York Times*, February 15, 2010.

The air and ground assault was successful, according to Marine Brig. Gen. Nicholson. Ground units were staged in deception positions days prior while on February 13th at 2 a.m., air insertion dropped troops into key locations inside Marjah. These air-assault units were manned with portable bridges to cross the dozens of irrigation canals while ground units awaited the sunrise to begin movement into the city. The ground assault was slowed and predominantly dealt with IED’s and small arms fire.

The main tactical phase of Operation Moshtarak commenced just hours before dawn on Saturday morning (local time). More than sixty helicopters inserted thousands of U.S. and Afghan combat troops into the town and surrounding farmland.³⁴³

By Monday the 15th of February, the initial assault phase was winding down. Marines from 1/6 and 3/6 and their Afghan counterparts began piecemeal clearing operations to secure the areas around key objectives.³⁴⁴ Most of Marjah was clear of active insurgent resistance—if scarcely clear of insurgents—and the remaining insurgent held areas were isolated from each other, as seen in **Figure 11.6**.

Figure 11.6: Marjah as of February 15, 2010



Source: U.S. Department of Defense.

³⁴³ Tony Perry and Laura King, “Marines Take Key Positions in Marjah,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 13, 2010.

³⁴⁴ Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak.”

“Clearing” without Clearing

The rest of the operation focused on clearing the remaining isolated pockets of resistance, as seen in **Figure 11.7**. By Wednesday, February 17, Marines and Afghan troops reported “sustained but less frequent insurgent activity,” mostly limited to small-scale attacks.³⁴⁵ On Sunday, February 21, Marines and ANA focused on a two-square-mile area in the western quarter of the town where they believed more than forty insurgents to be entrenched.³⁴⁶ Progress was slow, but it appeared as though the approximately 100 fighters that were thought to have regrouped in the area may have fled.³⁴⁷

During their advance, the force within Marjah uncovered what was estimated to be four million dollars worth of raw opium and roughly 500 pounds of ammonium nitrate and other bomb-making materials.³⁴⁸ These were relatively small amounts, and either indicated that much of the Taliban had removed many stocks or that Marjah was of more limited importance than some had indicated.

Figure 11.8 depicts Marjah as of February 28, 2010. On Saturday, February 27, Marines and Afghan troops linked-up with a U.S. Army Stryker battalion north of Marjah. Lima Company of 3/6 Marines linked up with the Stryker battalion after days of meticulous advance and comprehensive clearing of northern compounds.³⁴⁹ As of March 5, there had been several consecutive days without any major firefights and the area was largely secure. The initial part of the “clear” phase of the operation was effectively over, although the prolonged effort necessary to deal with “stay-behinds,” sympathizers, and reinforcements had not yet begun.

Moreover, the ANA was the only Afghan element to play a meaningful tactical role up to this point, and even this role was almost completely one of support and follow-on. There was no meaningful ANCOP or other police effort, Afghan government effort, or civil effort from ISAF.

³⁴⁵ Alfred de Montesquiou and Rahim Faiez, “Afghan Army Raises Flag on Embattled Marjah,” Associated Press, February 17, 2010.

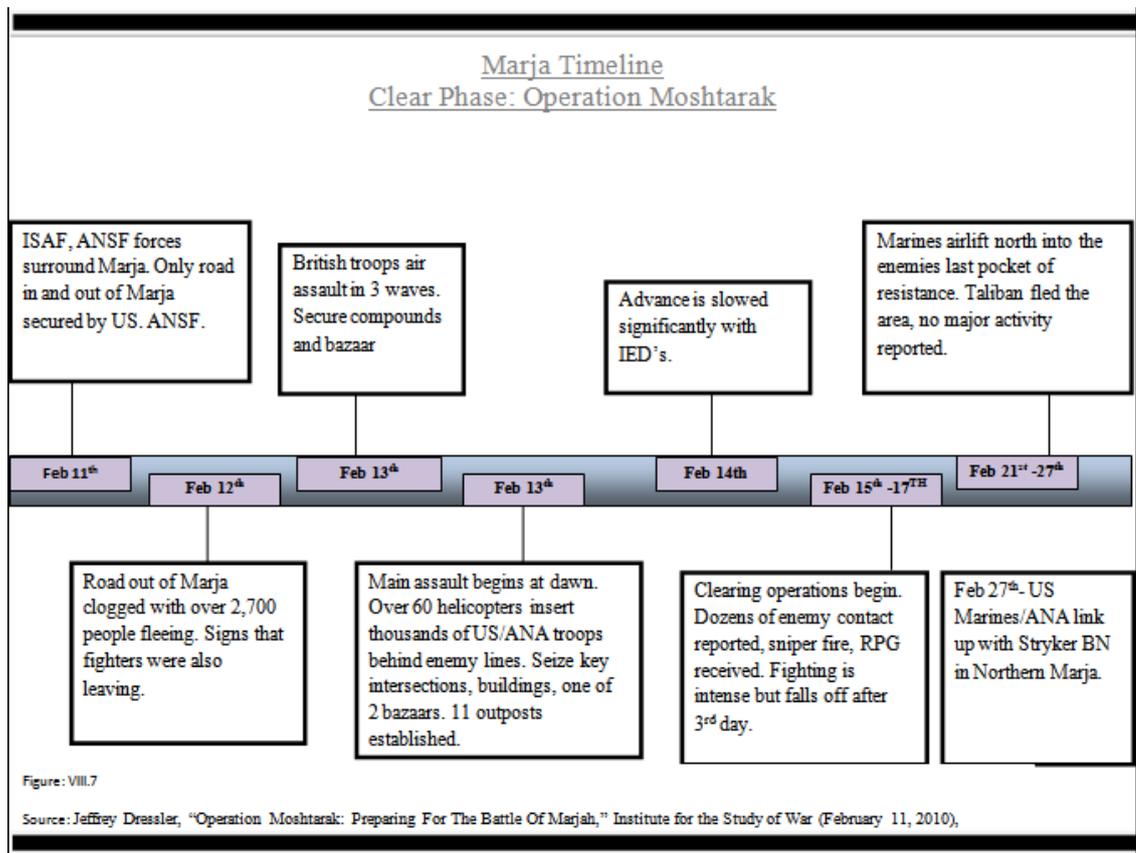
³⁴⁶ Alfred de Montesquiou, “Marines Converge on Taliban Holdouts in Marjah,” Associated Press, February 21, 2010.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ DVIDS (Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System), “Moshtarak, Other Operations Continue in Afghanistan,” February 14, 2010; Michael M. Phillips, “U.S. and Afghan Troops Expand Control in Marjah,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 14, 2010.

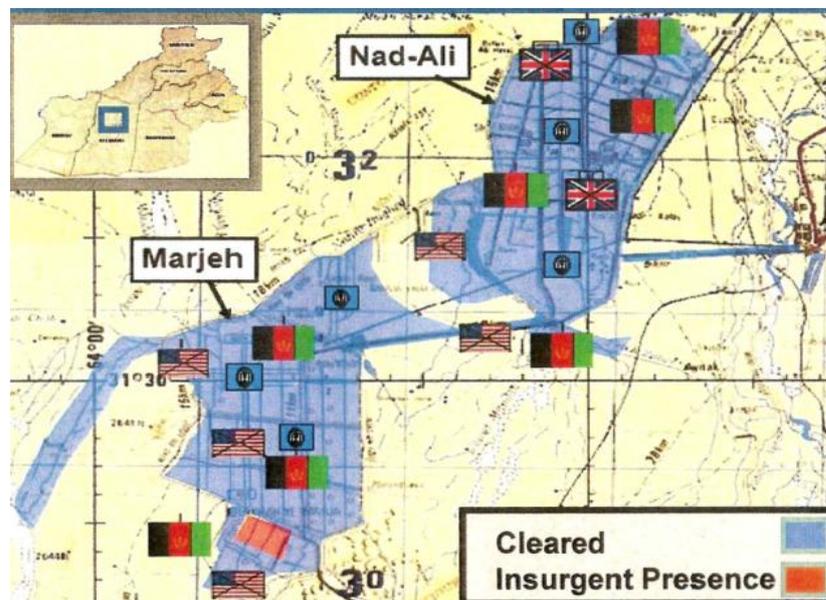
³⁴⁹ Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak.”

Figure 11.7: Clearing Operation Timeline, February 2010



Source: Jeffrey Dressler, "Operation Moshtarak," February 11, 2010.

Figure 11.8: Marjah as of February 28, 2010



Source: U.S. Department of Defense.

The Taliban Reaction

This was not a population-centric effort, except in the narrow tactical sense that it took place in a heavily populated area. It was also an effort in which the Taliban could initially use the same strategy in Marjah that they had used in reacting to past ISAF offensives, which was to melt away into the population and choose the time and location to strike or to leave the area altogether. By most accounts, the leadership had left the area and moved to either Pakistan or outlying villages. They did, however, leave behind local soldiers who provided stiff resistance, laced the area with massive numbers of IED's and left other cadre who could continue to intimidate the local populace.

The Taliban's tactical weapons of choice were small arms fire, snipers and roadside bombs. Since many villages and population clusters were inaccessible or difficult to reach by vehicles due to poor road conditions, roadside bombs served the insurgency in two ways. First, they caused casualties and delayed ISAF forces while limiting local villagers' ability to move out of their homes. Taliban forces used weeks of advance warning to place an extraordinary number of IEDs and booby traps. ISAF military commanders were surprised by the "determined resistance" and the amount of militants who stayed to fight.³⁵⁰ Inevitably, the local population reacted by both placing much of the blame on and by expecting ISAF forces to clear the IEDs.

Securing the population presented critical problems from the start. Once ISAF and the ANSF entered the area, it became clear that only a constant forward presence could stop Taliban re-infiltration, stay-behind operations, intimidation and assassination. Moreover, ANSF performance was often poor. The initial timeline for the "clear" phase of the operation was delayed due to both the resistance of the enemy and the rules of engagement intended to protect the civilian population. The terrain and ISAF rules of engagement clearly favored enemy forces during this operation as the military committed to limit airstrikes, nighttime raids and mortar fire while only allowing the ANSF the role of foot soldier.

This illustrated the need for both effective and larger Afghan forces. Some 8,000-12,000 U.S., British, and Afghan security forces deployed into a geographically defined area of some 750 square kilometers, with some 80,000 civilians in the population. This cannot possibly be repeated on a national level, or even within the 80 of 364 districts identified as high priority by ISAF. Far larger ANA, ANSOP, ANP forces—and ones that are effective and not corrupt—will be the only way to get enough forces to secure the most critical areas in a country of some 652,000 square kilometers and a total population of well over 28 million.

At the same time, the operation sent other messages. Efforts to rush in a GIRoA presence—"government in a box"—and aid had little impact and sent at least as many negative messages as positive ones. GIRoA also had problems in dealing with

³⁵⁰ Tony Perry and Laura King, "The Military Sweep of Marjah Focuses on Pockets of Determined Resistance," *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/feb/22/world/la-fg-afghan-Marjah22-2010feb22>.

narcotics. Opium is woven into the economy of southern Afghanistan and has acted as a major source of funding for Taliban operations. International drug syndicates have utilized the Taliban at the local level as force protection.

Two-thirds of the poppy fields were in bloom as of mid-March, and ISAF, the United States, and GIRoA were left with little time to make a decision on the poppy fields that would neither bind Taliban and locals' interests nor counter the government's laws. According to the UN, the Taliban took in \$300 million dollars from the drug trade, but it is not clear how real such figures are or what Marjah's contribution was. U.S. forces made a tactical decision, in coordination with the Provincial Governor of Helmand Mr. Mangal, to remain neutral in the harvest of poppy in 2010. The decision ran counter to the Afghan constitution which placed a ban on opium cultivation. However, United Nations drug officials believed that "postponing eradication in this particular case is a sensible one." Cmdr Jeffrey Eggers, a member of Gen. McChrystal's strategic advisory group stated, "Marjah is a special case right now."³⁵¹

The operation also did not *clear* Marjah of large numbers of weapons. Abdul Rahman Jan, former Provincial police chief, stated, "Hardly a single gun was captured by NATO forces." This is a sign that many Taliban fighters remain in Marjah and are working for the government but will consolidate and reorganize once the NATO forces move out to Kandahar in the summer. Local citizens stated that newly installed government officials and poorly paid ANSF will eventually take bribes, vis-à-vis the role of the Taliban, in order to move drugs out of Marjah.³⁵²

More serious difficulties in the "clear" phase became a problem within days. Signs of a Taliban re-emergence began to appear on March 14 with one confirmed beheading and two cases under investigation. Intimidation has long been a common and effective Taliban tactic to offset Afghan citizens working with the government or military forces. It took roughly one month for Taliban forces to consolidate and reorganize their influence in Marjah. Locals have reported beatings, menacing, intimidation and threats made by the Taliban to anyone who works with the government or ISAF forces. Trust in the Afghan government and ANSF was a central issue among residents prior to the operation and the Taliban was able to quickly exploit the incompetence of the Afghan government in its inability to follow-up ISAFs progress in securing Marjah.³⁵³ Even in areas where the locals showed a desire to cooperate with ISAF/ANSF, reports of Taliban intimidation continued well into mid-June.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ Rod Nordland, "U.S. Turns a Blind Eye to Opium in Afghan Town," *New York Times*, March 20, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/21/world/asia/21Marjah.html?pagewanted=print>.

³⁵² Tim McGirk, "Afghanistan's Fix," *Time*, March 22, 2010, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1971405,00.html>.

³⁵³ Dion Nissenbaum, "Knocked Out of Power in Afghan Town, Taliban Turn to Intimidation," *Miami Herald*, March 14, 2010, <http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/03/14/1529414/knocked-out-of-power-in-afghan.html>.

³⁵⁴ BBC Online, "Afghanistan: Marjah battle not yet won," June 24, 2010, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/south_asia/10403213.stm; Matthew Green, "New U.S. Push to Secure Marjah Area," *Financial Times*, June 30, 2010, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/07f564ee-8418-11df-b9f8-00144feabdc0.html>.

Waiting for Godot: Holding Operations

“Hold” had to be attempted long before “clear” could be accomplished, and without anything like the necessary support from the Afghan government, ANP, and U.S. and other civilians. Even the military side of “clear and hold” called for major resources over an extended period. First and Second Battalion, Sixth Marines—along with their Afghan counterparts—had to construct combat outposts and patrol bases to the North, South and West in order to conduct patrols and hold terrain. Approximately 2,000 Marines and 1,000 ANA were to remain in Marjah for several months, likely until the end of the coming summer to ensure lasting security. At the same time, efforts were made to enable the Afghan police to slowly take over security duties, initially in bazaars and checkpoints and eventually throughout the entire town.³⁵⁵ These efforts proved to have uncertain credibility given that ANP units began looting in some areas as they entered them.

The symbolic (or token public relations) aspects of “hold” were relatively easy to accomplish. Helmand Governor Gulab Mangal raised the Afghan flag over the center of town in Marjah towards the end of the second week of Moshtarak. The ceremony was attended by nearly 700 residents and the newly appointed town administrator, Abdul Zahir Aryan and a team of advisers.³⁵⁶ To the north in Nad Ali, Afghan and coalition forces were also reporting progress by February 28. District Governor Habibullah held a large shura of 450 people, which was supported by the district community council and Afghan security forces. A market had opened for the first time in eighteen months—supported by a new patrol base in a strategic junction nearby.³⁵⁷

Rounding up a temporary crowd did not, however, reflect broad popular support or stop the Taliban from “owning the night.” It also did little to show success in developing the ANSF. The regular ANP are the force that should serve as a long-term local security force, but the U.S. and Afghan governments were all too aware of the ANP’s past performance in Marjah and did not permit any regular ANP to return to the city. Instead, the MoI sent 900 ANCOP to serve as a security stopgap while parts of the ANP were being given special training. Marines trained locals, brought forth by tribal leaders, to serve as permanent ANP.

Over 900 Afghan Counter Narcotics Police and ANCOP began conducting security operations following the February 27 flag raising ceremony. These police, along with 1,000 ANA soldiers under the command of Gen. Sher Mohammed Zazai—who was commander of the Afghan National Army’s 205th Corps and top Afghan officer involved in the offensive—were expected to stay alongside 2,000 Marines in Marjah.³⁵⁸ By bringing in ANCOP from outside the province, U.S. officials believed

³⁵⁵ Alfred de Montesquiou, “Marines to Remain in Marjah for Months,” *Boston Globe*, March 1, 2010.

³⁵⁶ Alfred de Montesquiou, “Afghan Government Claims Taliban Stronghold,” Associated Press, February 25, 2010.

³⁵⁷ Ministry of Defence, UK, “While Operation Moshtarak Continues, Afghan Forces Take Up Dealing Local Security Issues,” February 25, 2010.

³⁵⁸ Dressler, “Operation Moshtarak.”

they could curb corruption and disenchantment with the ANP throughout the city.³⁵⁹ In practice, some elements of the ANP created immediate problems by looting a market, and others were anything but proactive.

Even if this part of the effort had been fully successful, it would have said little about the coming success of the new strategy. It involved far too large a number of both ISAF and ANSF to be a model for future activity on anything approaching a national or even regional scale. Since the ANP will be recruited from the local tribal leaders and trained by Marines in Helmand, there is a possibility of “buy-in” from the religious leadership. However, homegrown ANP units have typically resulted in large-scale inefficiency and corruption. Furthermore, a group of fresh recruits indicates that the government will need patience from the local population, reliable support by the ISAF, and continual security from the ANA.

Growing civilian casualties and refugees presented other problems for “clear and hold.” ISAF forces scored tactical victories during the initial phases of the operations with minimal civilian casualties. Yet civilian casualties, refugees, and collateral damage still became a point of contention between the Afghan people and ISAF forces. Indiscriminate fire and killing of civilians by the ANA remained an issue even when ISAF forces operated alongside the ANSF. As in other operations, it was reported in Marjah that the ANA continually pointed their weapons at broad targets or mud huts, without aiming, and pulled the trigger with total disregard for the civilian population.³⁶⁰

Military and civilian planners did prepare for the influx of refugees. The UN reported, “At least 900 families have fled Marjah and Nad Ali districts of Helmand province for the nearby city of Lashkar Gah.” Additionally, “UN aid agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the area around Lashkar Gah have been mobilized to help the displaced families, distributing 750 kits containing food supplies and other items and organizing emergency shelter. Another 6,000 kits are already in place if needed, as well as water and sanitation equipment.”³⁶¹

Performance of the ANSF

Some elements of the ANSF showed that they were making progress, but it was all too clear that the ANSF was far from ready to assume responsibility for any key aspect of such an operation. Prior to Marjah, the ANA had dealt largely with smaller clearing operations and the protection of villages. About 2,100 Afghan soldiers and 4,000 coalition service members participated in this offensive to clear the Taliban's

³⁵⁹ Tom Bowman, “Marjah Effort Shows Values, Flaws of Afghan Forces,” NPR, March 2, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124211413>.

³⁶⁰ C. J. Chivers, “Marines Do Heavy Lifting as Afghan Army Lags in Battle,” *New York Times*, February 20, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/21/world/asia/21afghan.html?scp=1&sq=Fledgling%20Afghan%20army%20units%20...%20follow%20behind%20the%20Americans%20and%20do%20what%20they%20&st=cse>.

³⁶¹ United Nations, “UN Officials Warn of Threat to Aid as Fighting Steps up in Southern Afghanistan,” February 15, 2010, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=33768&Cr=Afghan&Cr1=>.

largest remaining bastion in southern Afghanistan.³⁶² Properly resourcing the ANSF mission for stabilization in “hold and build” operations in Marjah was a top priority for ISAF and GIRoA. The Afghan Force consisted of six ANA kandaks, two of the special commando kandaks and approximately 1,000 ANCOP.³⁶³

This made Marjah an important test of the ANSF, and the ANSF did have at least some high level support. In coordination with President Karzai, General Wardak (who runs the regional police that corresponds to RC South), and General Zazai, who commands the 205th Corps of the Afghan National Army, led a delegation to Kabul prior to operations. Cabinet and government viability approved and supported the operations while ISAF planners played a supportive role in this phase of the operation.³⁶⁴ ANSF officers also played a limited role in approving, planning, and carrying out the Moshtarak operation, although it is clear that the bulk of the work was done by Coalition forces in all of these areas.

Successes and Failures

There were successes by both ANA and ANCOP forces as well as failures. While on a video conference on March 4, BGen Nicholson stated that he was proud of the ANSF and while some senior commando units performed well, junior ANA units just out of the recruiting center were paired with the Marines and British forces during the assault. While the ratio of ISAF to ANSF stood at 3-1 during the “shape, clear and hold” phases, 1 ANA BN has operated completely independently.

These units, along with the ANCOP, are solely responsible for searching homes. The responsibility of training the ANP will fall on the Marines. General Nicholson stated that 2 Marine Battalions (2,500 Marines) and 1,500 ANA will remain in Marjah until the summer. Long term security for the city may see 1/3 local hires, 2/3 outside Helmand Province. According to senior military officials, 400 ANCOP will remain in Marjah.

Nevertheless, ISAF reporting exaggerated the role and capabilities of the ANSF once the operation began. ANSF performance was mixed at best, even in a limited support role. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen initially stated that the Afghans were in the “lead,” implying that this was an Afghan-led mission. However senior military officials later reported that the Afghans were not leading in combat, only in the planning phase. Even this claim later proved to be exaggerated. They certainly played a strong role as partners, but did not “lead” the planning. By all accounts, ISAF ran all ground operations and controlled close air support, logistics and heavy artillery. The ANSF remained in a supporting role.³⁶⁵

³⁶² Jim Michaels, “Afghan Military Gains Strength,” USA Today, February 13, 2010, <http://content.usatoday.net/dist/custom/gci/InsidePage.aspx?cId=tucson&sParam=37632280.story&>.

³⁶³ U.S. Department of Defense Public Affairs, February 18, 2010, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2010/02/mil-100218-dod01.htm>.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Bowman, “Marjah Effort Shows Values, Flaws of Afghan Forces.”

U.S. Marines varied in grading the performance of the ANSF during the operation. Sgt. Joseph G. Harms, a squad leader in Sixth Marines, spent a week on the western limit of his company's area with what he described as a competent Afghan contingent. "They are a lot better than the Iraqis," said the sergeant, who also completed a tour in Iraq. "They understand all of our formations, they understand how to move. They know how to flank and they can recognize the bad guys a lot better than we can."³⁶⁶

Corruption and Looting

Others were not as positive. Marine Companies C and K of First Battalion faced heavy fighting during the operation. New ANA recruits were embedded with the Marines companies, who, after suffering 17 casualties, did not make positive assessments of the ANA performance.³⁶⁷

Reports of ANA corruption and misbehavior also started to emerge early in the operation. Following a foot patrol in Marjah, Capt. Stephan P. Karabin II of the U.S. Marines reported to his counterparts that, en route to their location, the ANA had looted the local bazaar, refused to stand post or fill sandbags, and instead spent time walking around smoking hashish.³⁶⁸ U.S. Marines had to go back to the bazaar following combat operations and pay shop owners \$300-\$500 in an effort to apologize for the blatant disrespect and crooked behavior of ANA soldiers.³⁶⁹

Other reports of looting by ANSF operating alongside U.S. Marines during the initial assault of Marjah were reported and continue to haunt the reputation of the ANSF. In shuras prior to the operation, village elders clearly stated that trust in the ANSF has been a major problem.

ANSF leadership remained a problem and reflected the sense of entitlement, recruiting shortfalls, and lack of quality that has plagued the ANSF since its inception. An example of such leadership problems was demonstrated as Marines prepared to load up and walk food, water, and supplies to an adjacent US/ANA company in Marjah. The ANA refused to carry supplies to their counterparts, expecting their U.S. soldiers to provide them with supplies. It took the threat of losing their own rations and a stern warning from the Company Commander for the ANA leadership to reluctantly order soldiers to carry supplies. ANSF leaders also continually eat, drink or take the best supplies before giving the rest to lower ranking soldiers.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ Chivers, "Marines Do Heavy Lifting as Afghan Army Lags in Battle."

³⁶⁷ C. J. Chivers, "After Push in Marjah, Marines Try to Win Trust," February 28, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/01/world/asia/01Marjah.html?pagewanted=1>.

³⁶⁸ Chivers, "Marines Do Heavy Lifting as Afghan Army Lags in Battle."

³⁶⁹ Chivers, "After Push in Marjah, Marines Try to Win Trust."

³⁷⁰ Chivers, "Marines Do Heavy Lifting as Afghan Army Lags in Battle."

Spinning Up the ANSF

Statements from GIRoA in Kabul also exaggerated the role Afghan forces played in ground operations between February 13 and February 27. Afghan officials stated that the ANSF military had planned the missions and led both the fight and the effort to engage with Afghan civilians caught between the Taliban and the newly arrived troops. That assertion conflicts with what occurred in battle. In every engagement between the Taliban and one front-line American Marine unit, the operation was led in almost every significant sense by American officers and troops.

At the same time, President Karzai kept a distance from the operation and showed limited interest in appointing effective and popular officials. U.S. pressure did, however, lead him to visit the area. On March 7, President Karzai visited Marjah alongside General McChrystal. During their short stop, President Karzai took direct questions and statements from roughly 300 village elders. Ultimately, ANSF conduct of looting shops and home raids continued to be a major point of contention amongst elders who were united, in the short term, to support President Karzai but apprehensive about ANSF behavior.³⁷¹

In short, Marjah continued to reflect the lack of an effective military culture in the ANSF and created friction between ANSF units and their ISAF counterparts. The ANSF culture of entitlement and inability to lead by example was a continued problem in paired missions.

The Lessons of Marjah

As for future operations, Marjah does show that the twin pillars of success are local security and effective governance. It is clear from both Afghan civilian reactions and the Taliban response that “clear, hold, and build” will have to be a continuing goal. At the same time, the Taliban is improving its approach to political governance. Last year, Taliban leader Mullah Omar issued a “code of conduct” that directed Taliban fighters to limit civilian casualties.³⁷² Although most Afghans are not enthusiastic about many aspects of the Taliban’s practices, they do prefer its stricter but more principled rule to government-sanctioned ANSF corruption.

Several quotes illustrate the challenges involved:

“The Taliban provided us with a very peaceful environment,” said Fakir Mohammed, 32, a tractor driver. “They did not bother us. We were very happy with them here.”³⁷³

³⁷¹ “Karzai Pledges to Rebuild Marjah,” Al Jazeera, March 10, 2010, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia/2010/03/201037124652122355.html>.

³⁷² Mark Mazzetti and Dexter Filkins, “Secret Joint Raid Captures Taliban’s Top Commander,” *New York Times*, February 15, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/16/world/asia/16intel.html?pagewanted=1>.

³⁷³ Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “With Taliban Gone, Residents Luke Warm to New Mayors Visit,” *Boston Globe*, February 23, 2010, http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2010/02/23/with_taliban_gone_residents_lukewarm_to_new_mayors_visit/.

As residents watched the flag raising, some expressed mixed feelings about the change of power. They said that the Taliban had provided order and security and that the Afghan Army now needed to prove that it could open schools, clear mines and explosives from the roads and fields, and keep the population safe.³⁷⁴

Prospects and Lessons

It is far too soon to know what lasting level of success the ANSF and ISAF can achieve or what aspects—if any—of Marjah provide a scalable approach to implementing the race strategy. A great deal of preparation went into not only the offensive action but also the civil-military aftermath and an effort to win of a base of support from the local leaders and the population in a small area.

The GIRoA and the ANSF have yet to demonstrate they can provide lasting governance and prompt justice without corruption. Security continues to be the overwhelming concern among the population. Villagers openly state to military and civilian officials that although they were not enthusiastic about the Taliban rule, there was calm. Villagers want to get back to this sense of normalcy, tend to their fields in this largely agricultural area, and not live in fear of nighttime raids and indiscriminate shooting.

“Government in a Box” or “Government in a Coffin”?

The civil side of the Afghan government also proved to be an uncertain partner and local efforts had mixed success. These came to be called “government in a box,” a term coined by Gen McChrystal to describe the district development plan to support combat operations and COIN strategy. The U.S. State Department and other aid workers prepared a local government to be installed as the operation proceeded to ensure the installed government has the resources available to succeed. For months, Afghan government leaders including the future installed district governor Haji Zahir prepared to build a local government which could thwart corruption, create jobs and build infrastructure.³⁷⁵

There was little popularity to build upon, and GIRoA’s choices made things worse. Taliban rule had been better organized and less corrupt than GIRoA rule, so the new local government started behind the power curve. For the past two years, the Taliban had been able to provide a calm that the government failed to establish.

The insertion of an outsider like Haji Zahir, a former western Afghan governor, also presented problems. Zahir, a native of southern Afghanistan, had spent the past 15 years in Germany, four under arrest for attempted manslaughter. His arrival elicited a lukewarm endorsement from the men who gathered to meet him. Their questions made clear that the Taliban still enjoyed deep support, while the Afghan government

³⁷⁴ Taimoor Shah, “As Fighting Eases, Afghans Plant Flag and Their Hopes in Marjah,” *New York Times*, February 25, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/26/world/asia/26Marjah.html>.

³⁷⁵ Dereck Hogan, “U.S. Supports Afghanistan’s Sub-National Governance Plan,” *DipNote*, U.S. Department of State Official Blog, February 17, 2010, http://blogs.state.gov/ap/index.php/site/entry/sub-national_governance.

had little support. This illustrates the scale of the challenges ISAF forces and civilian stabilization specialists face as they try to establish basic civic administration.³⁷⁶

The local tribal leaders also stated in an early interview with the District Governor that "they want three things: they want the road from Marjah to the provincial capital to reopen, they want security, and they want their bazaar to reopen," Zahir said.³⁷⁷ With the massive amount of U.S. aid, providing these services should have been relatively easy but aid and services were slow to arrive after the initial showpiece deliveries were finished. Meanwhile, the Taliban showed it could still attack aid workers and government officials and intimidate local leaders.

It is still unclear how effective "government in a box" can be over time. As is the case in similar provinces and districts, a dichotomy exists between, on one hand, the wants and needs of the people and, on the other, the level of central government involvement. The newly installed government has a delicate balancing act to perform while showing that it is honest and ethical.

Operation Moshtarak's success in nearby Nad-e Ali district serves as an excellent contrast to Marjah. British forces under Task Force Helmand (TFH), in partnership with ANA and ANP, were responsible for Nad-e Ali. According to Professor Theo Farrell of King's College, London,

Insurgents have been pushed to the outskirts of the district. Freedom of movement for civilians and security forces within the district has dramatically improved. The district has an effective governor, public services and the police are getting better, and a new, more representative district community council has been elected.

What accounts for the difference? Nad-e Ali was better off at the outset of Operation Moshtarak. Key decisions on the part of the British also seem to have played a role. First, the Helmand PRT had been working with the district government in Nad-e Ali since Operation SOND Chara in late 2008. As a result, "government in a box" was much easier to execute in Nad-e Ali than in Marjah, which fell under Taliban control at roughly the same time that Operation SOND Chara began. The history of ISAF presence in Nad-e Ali also made it much easier to convince locals that ISAF and ANSF forces would stay until the district was stabilized. Second, the British under Brigadier Richard Felton were arguably more stringent about minimizing collateral damage—following Moshtarak, Brigadier Felton established a "ZERO civilian casualties" policy. Third, the British spent more time planning for post-clear operations than the Marines who, according to the PRT, planned for stabilization at the "very last minute."³⁷⁸

Neither the ISAF forces nor the newly installed government has yet rolled out a comprehensive plan dealing with the opium trade. NATO's mandate does not include

³⁷⁶ Chandrasekaran, "With Taliban Gone, Residents Luke Warm to New Mayors Visit."

³⁷⁷ Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, "Afghan Government Enters Cool Reception in Marjah," NPR, February 22, 2010, <http://m.wcbu.npr.org/news/World/123979363?singlePage=true>.

³⁷⁸ Theo Farrell, "Appraising Moshtarak: The Campaign in Nad-e Ali District, Helmand," Briefing Note, RUSI, 2010, http://www.rusi.org/downloads/assets/Appraising_Moshtarak.pdf.

counternarcotics operations unless there is a clear link to the insurgency, a link that patently exists in Marjah, but the fact remains that the newly installed government does not have the political clout to kill the cash crop without a viable alternative and ISAF forces are not in a rush to lose the support of the local farmers.

There is evidence that the counternarcotics message received in Marjah was confusing and counterproductive. On July 20, 2010, David Mansfield released a “Driver’s Report” detailing the effects of the 2009/2010 counternarcotics effort in Helmand. Mansfield notes that, while interviewees were aware of the GIRoA ban on poppy cultivation, they were confused about policy implementation in Helmand. Some claimed that the GIRoA initially promised not to eradicate the 2009/2010 crop, then reneged after the first phase of Operation Moshtarak. Residents were then asked to eradicate their own crops in exchange for US\$300 per hectare. It is likely that some farmers were able to harvest their crop, clear the field before verification teams arrived, then successfully claim payment as if the crop had been eradicated. Furthermore, as verification was done only after clearing, it was possible to claim payment for eradication of land on which no poppy had been planted in the first place.

Respondents in other districts reported that the ANP conducted eradication and arrested poppy-growing landowners. Eradication was spotty, sometimes clearing one field while ignoring another behind a row of trees. It is clear that no standard for eradication was enforced above the district level.³⁷⁹

Short-term measures can help. Civil-military planners quickly started 33 projects to include roads, wells, and school repair meant to bolster the economy and build confidence amongst the civilian population. This will be nothing but hollow bribes, however, unless “build” is delivered on a sustained basis.

Some longer-term effects are also underway. U.S. planners have stressed the need for President Karzai to provide civil servants to an area plagued with an uneducated workforce to properly support the newly installed government. There also are efforts to shape a longer-term aid effort: “A group of U.S., British, and Danish reconstruction specialists has devised a multimillion-dollar plan for Marjah that includes reopening schools and health clinics, installing solar lighting in the bazaars, repairing culverts and streets, and offering cleanup jobs for the many unemployed, who are sometimes recruited by the Taliban. The three governments are contributing money. Later on, the plan calls for building police stations and small hydroelectric pumps and offering microloans to farmers and merchants.”³⁸⁰ Making such plans effective, however, is still an unproven process, and one that must begin to succeed if any degree of improvement in ANSF force development is to have lasting meaning.

³⁷⁹ David Mansfield, “Helmand Counter Narcotics Impact Study May 2010,” Driver’s Report, July 20, 2010.

³⁸⁰ Tony Perry, “Normalcy Takes Root in Marjah after Allied Offensive,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 29, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/feb/28/world/la-fg-afghan-Marjah28-2010feb28>.

12. CONCLUSIONS—FULLY ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF FORCE DEVELOPMENT

It is not enough to announce a new strategy for the Afghan War and follow it up with conceptual plans and good intentions that set unrealistic goals. The United States must now work with its ISAF allies and the Afghan government to take the detailed steps necessary to give the ANSF all the capacity and capabilities it needs to implement that strategy. Major new efforts are necessary to ensure that the ANSF becomes strong enough to work with ISAF collectively, win the fight, and to accelerate the timeline for a responsible transfer of security activity to the ANSF and an eventual drawdown of ISAF forces.

This will involve increases in ANSF end strength as soon as these are practical. *However*, all involved must recognize that success is unlikely to come before 2014, and that any approach to ANSF force development requires efforts that are both innovative and necessarily experimental. Many aspects of ISAF’s “shape, clear, hold, and build” strategy involve major uncertainties, and there is no precise way to determine what combined ISAF and ANSF troop-to-task ratio will succeed. It is far easier to scale back an ANSF expansion program than to cope with one that does not meet strategic requirements. It is also clear that investments in the ANSF, CSTC-A, and added mentors will be far cheaper than any practical alternative.

Quality before Quantity—On Afghan Terms

Force expansion efforts must not race beyond either Afghan or ISAF capabilities, and taking the 2011 “deadline” too seriously can easily lose the war. There is little evidence that current efforts can produce both quality and quantity in the time available. Quality will often be far more important than quantity, and enduring ANSF capability far more important than generating large initial force strengths. ISAF expediency cannot be allowed to put half-ready and unstable units in the field. It cannot be allowed to push force expansion efforts faster than ANSF elements can absorb them or the ISAF can provide fully qualified trainers, mentors, and partner units and the proper mix of equipment, facilities, enablers, and sustainability.

Short-term political expediency is more likely to destroy a presidency, further reduce allied support, and lose the war than achieve any benefits. Moreover, the ANSF development effort cannot afford to ignore the impact of Afghan cultural needs, regional and ethnic differences, family and tribal structures, and the real-world “friction” that affects force development. Slogans and rhetoric about ideological goals, leadership, and morale cannot be allowed to delude the force development effort from Afghan material realities: problems in pay, corruption, problems in promotion, inadequate facilities and equipment, poor medical care, overstressing or over committing force elements, problems in supporting families, vulnerability to insurgent infiltration and threats, and a

lack of meaning compensation for death and disability. The U.S. military and ISAF have systematically ignored such problems in the past and have understated or lied about their impact.

The integrity and reputation of the entire ANSF are an essential part of force development. No U.S. efforts in strategic communications or aid can substitute for a host government's ability to both communicate with its own people and win legitimacy in ideological, religious, and secular terms. Key aspects of operations—winning popular support, obtaining human intelligence, minimizing civil casualties and collateral damage, and transitioning from military operations to a civil rule of law—will all depend on both the quality and quantity of Afghan forces.

Creating Real Partnering for “Clear, Hold, Build, and Transfer”

Mid-2011 is a wrong and dangerous deadline for what should be a conditions-based effort determined by real-world, achievable levels of progress. Any delays, however, face major political pressures that must be taken into account, and far more thought is needed about what the United States and ISAF must do to create an enduring force that will allow transition to take place. The emphasis must be on creating forces that are fully mission-effective, and which become the kind of partners that can really take the lead and then replace U.S. and ISAF forces. Rushing out and using up the ANSF would be a strategically self-defeating act and one of almost criminal negligence.

At the tactical level, improvements in the training base need to emphasize training at the kandak and entire unit levels before new units go out into the field. These improvements proved to be very beneficial in Iraq, and while they could make the training effort longer—not shorter—they pay off the moment units become active in the field. At the same time, no element of the ANSF can simply be trained and thrust into operations. The key to success is not the quality of the training in training centers, but the quality of the partnering, mentoring, support, and enablers once a unit enters service. This requires ongoing, expert effort for 6 to 12 months a minimum, and the CM definition of “in the lead” is little more than a joke.

Realistic efforts to shake out new units, give them continuity of effective leadership, deal with internal tensions and retention problems, and help them overcome the pressures of corruption and powerbrokers take time and require careful attention to continuity of the embedded training/mentoring effort. Partnering and the creation of effective units in the field are an exercises in sustained human relationships, and short tours and rapid changes in U.S. and ISAF trainers can be as crippling as the assumption that training is more critical than mentoring and partnering.

These, however, are largely technical measures that NTM-A/CSTC-A has already taken. What is really needed are much broader shifts in the structure of training and partnering as ANSF forces move into populated areas and take on the full range of “shape, clear, hold, and build” tasks. Every aspect of *clear*, *hold*, and *build* requires help in preparing ANSF elements to go from a combat ethos to one of effective civil-military relations. It is unclear that even the most dedicated advocates of a population-centric strategy within the

U.S. military and ISAF can really define how to implement *clear, hold, and build* in terms of tangible ways to execute and manage the tasks involved and choose truly valid measures of effectiveness. The moment such efforts become operational on a large-scale basis, they must be ready to partner ANSF forces and help them find the best way to deal with such problems.

The United States and ISAF need to address these issues with ruthless objectivity and self-criticism at every level of command and operations. They need to take warnings from junior and mid-level officers—and in far too much media reporting—fully seriously. They must not downplay the number of times that “optimism” and exaggerated declarations of success have hurt U.S. efforts in the past, or the continuing impact of problems documented by the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the General Accountability Office, and sensitive field reporting on the performance and retention problems in Afghan units in the field.³⁸¹

Adding Effective Transition Planning

Finally, the United States and ISAF need to think in strategic and grand strategic terms, and not simply focus on the ANSF or any other element of the war in terms of what – in reality – is tactical expediency. ANSF development is only one element of effective transition planning, but President Obama’s creation of a “quasi-deadline” in 2011 has made it the most immediate priority for a level of planning that needs to look forward to the day in which Afghanistan assumes most or all of the responsibility for its own stability and security. The United States, ISAF, and UNAMA must concentrate on urgent wartime needs and civil-military programs until the new strategy is tested in the field, insurgent momentum is decisively reversed, and it is clear that the war can be won.

At the same time, it is clear from this analysis that focusing too much on short-term tactical needs can emphasize ANSF quantity over quality; create a force that is “used up” rather than evolves to the point where it can assume a steadily growing responsibility for security; and can lead to a focus on an approach to “clear, hold, and build” that does not create a structure of Afghan governance capable of surviving without massive outside aid.

Transition planning is not a luxury. The United States and its allies have limited strategic patience, and much of that patience is dependent on the perception that the United States and ISAF have plans and programs that will create effective Afghan forces, governance, and civil-military capabilities to turn insurgent defeats into some form of lasting “victory.”

It is particularly critical that the formal training, the partnering, the force development, and the combat efforts that shape the ANSF and structured in ways that look far beyond 2011, and reflect a coherent – if constantly evolving – plan for the future. This planning should not only focus on creating an enduring and sustainable mix of Afghan forces, but a practical and realistic approach to tying the ANP to a workable mix of formal and

³⁸¹ DoD Inspector General, *Report on the Assessment of U.S. and Coalition Plans*.

informal justice systems. It should consider how the training and support mission will change as Afghan forces gain experience in the field, and the force development shifts away from NTM-A/CSTC-A to making deployed units more effective at every level.

Such planning should look at how the ANSF development interacts with the overall needs of the Afghan government, at credible mixes of programs to improve Afghan governance and economic development, and with Afghan self-financing and long-term aid. Such planning cannot succeed if it pursues either impossible levels of progress or ignores Afghanistan's continuing need for outside aid. Afghanistan will not, however, move towards any form of "end state" that minimizes its need for such outside aid unless transition is given practical priority over short-term expediency and is credible to Afghans, as well as to the United States and other members of ISAF.

Yes, It Is "Armed Nation Building"

Whether or not the Obama administration likes the term "nation building," it is fundamentally dishonest to deny both its necessity and the fact that this is precisely what the President's strategy is based upon. ISAF and the Afghan government will lose the war unless their military successes are matched by a timely and effective civil-military effort in the field. The United States, its ISAF allies, and the Afghan government must look beyond force development and make armed nation building a critical element of hybrid warfare. This will require an integrated civil-military effort in which providing lasting security for the population, and economic and political stability, will often be far more important than success in tactical engagements with enemy forces. It also requires the United States to understand that, as important as its traditional allies are, the key ally will be the host country and not simply its government but its population.

It is not enough for the ANSF to be able to perform its security missions and develop an effective ISAF/US/Afghan partnership in security. Even once a mix of ISAF and ANSF fighting forces can perform the *shape* and *clear* missions and part of the *hold* mission, they will still lose the war if they cannot *build*. Military action alone cannot defeat an opponent which fights a sustained battle of political attrition against an Afghan government that is perceived as over-centralized, distant, failing to provide basic services, and which is seen as corrupt as well as supporting powerbrokers rather than the people.

ISAF, the United States, and the ANSF must work together to provide civil-military action programs while security is being established and make this a key aspect of the *hold* and *build* missions. A transition to civil aid and development efforts and to Afghan provincial, district, and local government should take place as soon as this can be made effective at the local level. However, ISAF and the ANSF cannot wait to establish basic services, encourage local leaders, and provide a functioning justice system immediately.

In doing so, they must face the reality that national elections and democracy do not bring political legitimacy or loyalty without tangible actions that benefit the Afghan people. The grim reality is that the Afghan central government has been too corrupt and incapable in the past to take the necessary actions in far too many areas and far too many ways. At the same time, outside ISAF and other aid efforts have been too narrow, too

security-conscious, and too oriented toward mid- and long-term efforts to serve Afghan needs in the field.

Every effort must still be made to develop effective Afghan civilian government action. This will take time, however, and some combination of ISAF and ANSF must act in the interim to provide enough civil services and support to local governance to offer an alternative that is more attractive than the Taliban and take initial steps to hire young men and underpin security with stability. The end result must be to provide at least enough justice and local security, jobs, and progress in areas like roads, electricity, water/irrigation, clinics, and schools to establish lasting security and stability.

The mix and phasing of such civil-military efforts will vary by region and locality from meeting urban needs to those of scattered rural tribal areas. It also will require dramatic new standards of performance by the United States and other national aid donors. There must be a new degree of transparency which shows that aid efforts actually do produce effective and honest results in the field, actually do win broad local support and loyalty, and can move toward a true “build” phase.

Obeying the “Iron Laws of Force Development”

It is easy to lose a war through the wrong kind of force development efforts—as Appendix A makes all too clear. To succeed, ISAF and the United States must follow several “iron laws” for force development in carrying out these efforts. First, they must pay as much attention to ANSF force quality as to increasing force quantity. They must not create units where there are inadequate mentors, partner units, facilities, equipment, and training capacity. Pay close attention to performance in the field versus formal training and quantified readiness measures.

Second, they must properly equip and support ANSF forces or not put them into harm’s way. Every increase in ANSF force quantity must be accompanied by suitable improvements in force quality and in the size and capability of ISAF mentoring and partnering capabilities. As ISAF and USFOR-A adjust their command structures, regardless of the specific decisions about command structure, it will be critical to retain both the mentoring and partnering components of ANSF development. ISAF cannot win if it pursues the fragmented, stovepiped, and under-resourced efforts—and real-world lack of integrated civil-military efforts—that have helped cripple ANSF development in past years. “Unity of effort” has been an awkward cross between a lie and an oxymoron. Far too many national efforts have acted as if the ANSF were not involved in a real war. This cannot continue if a very real war is to be won.

Third, ISAF and the United States must act to give “partnership” real meaning. All the elements of ISAF must begin to work together with all of the elements of the ANSF to create equivalent forces that can conduct combined operations together. This will take time, resources, and patience. ISAF regional command task force commanders must understand, however, that partnering with ANSF forces does not mean simply using them as they are but rather making them effective and treating operations as key real-world aspects of training.

In the process, a significant number of national caveats and restrictions on aid will have to be lifted. Corrupt aid officials and contractors will need to be removed and blacklisted. Exercises in symbolism, ephemeral good works, fundraising and “branding” will need to be put to an end. Above all, the military must act immediately when civilians are incapable and these efforts will need ANSF support and leadership where the Afghan civil government cannot act. There is little point in fixing the efforts that can win the war and not fixing the efforts that will lose the peace.

Under-promise and Over-deliver

It is time to make a fundamental reversal in U.S. and allied behavior and start to under-promise and over-deliver. One key step in this process is for the United States and ISAF countries to look beyond complaints about the Afghans and look in the mirror. This is especially true in the case of the United States. During 2002-early 2009, the United States failed dismally to set realistic goals for the ANSF in terms of time and resources and to provide honest and objective assessments of its progress.

Since President Obama has talked about beginning U.S. force reductions in mid-2011 and accelerating transfer of responsibility to the ANSF and Afghan government, ISAF cannot react by creating a new set of unrealistic goals and timeframes. Nothing about the ANSF development effort to date indicates that it will be ready for large-scale transfer before 2014-2015. NTM-A/CSTC-A needs time and resources to develop the ANSF instead of political pressure to declare victory and leave.

Sacrificing quality for quantity and rushing the ANSF and GIRoA into transfer before they are ready cannot win the war—particularly when the civil side of GIRoA is likely to remain so weak and the role of Pakistan so uncertain. This means that the U.S. and other ISAF efforts to develop the ANSF must resist pressure from Washington, other capitals, and NATO headquarters to move more quickly than is practical and prudent. It also requires a command ethic that under-promises and over-delivers, rather than the distorted and dysfunctional command ethic that existed in 2001 and which was pressured into doing just the opposite. It must be clear to all involved in the ANSF development effort that exaggerated progress reports became career killers and not career enhancers.

It is equally necessary for ISAF, the United States, and other allied nations to create the kind of truly integrated civil-military plan needed to implement President Obama’s new strategy. Stovepipes, turf fights, and internal bickering—particularly within the State Department—have crippled the effort necessary to create a plan with the depth, detail, and content needed. The Obama administration needs to force real unity of effort—not simply talk about a whole of government approach—and do so at every level. At present, the United States is scarcely a model for ISAF or its allies. If anything, the NSC and State Department seem to be as weak in these areas, relative to a rising need, as they have been in the past.

APPENDIX

DOING IT WRONG—HOST COUNTRY FORCE DEVELOPMENT LESSONS FROM VIETNAM, LEBANON, AFGHANISTAN, AND IRAQ

Developing host country forces requires a wide range of military expertise at every level, and no one should discount the progress the U.S. military has made in these areas. At the same time, however, this progress should not lead U.S. force development efforts to ignore the practical problems it has encountered from failing to look beyond the purely military aspects of force development in past wars. The practical problems have damaged or crippled past efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Armed nation building is very different from aiding an ally with effective governance and an established force structure. An effective force development effort cannot tacitly assume that the ally is a host country capable of creating effective forces with a relatively strong central government or authority and with considerable unity of effort within its armed forces. It must address all key aspects of what happens when force development must take place under nation-building conditions, in fractured or divided states, where alignments with the United States are uncertain and civil-military operations are both difficult and critical.

These problems may not be critical to U.S. advisory and training efforts in the many less demanding cases in the world, but they are the problems that have characterized all of the critical cases the United States has had to deal with over the last half century and where the United States has had to relearn the same lessons again and again.

Critical Shortfalls in U.S. Force Development Efforts

The United States needs to look beyond the cases where the force development task is to respond to host country governments that have a high degree of unity and common objectives and where the need to provide a politically sensitive advisory effort, linked to something approaching nation building and caught up in complex irregular or asymmetric wars, is minimal.

Virtually every major U.S. military intervention since World War II has shown that U.S. force development efforts must address a checklist of critical problems that repeatedly occur in fractured or weak host countries. Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan all serve as a warning that U.S. force development efforts must make much better efforts to address several critical problems:

1. ***Fractured states and divided states require a different approach:*** Host country force development efforts often involved divided and competing security forces.

There may be large elements within the host country leadership, political structure, and forces the United States cannot trust. The force may have strong anti-US or anti-regime elements. The finance ministry or its equivalent may not function, and individual combat elements may be under rival sectarian, ethnic, tribal, or factional control—some involving serious loyalty problems. The advisory team may have to bridge critical ethnic, sectarian, and tribal differences. The basic structure for force management, procurement, and budgeting may be weak, lacking, and/or corrupt.

The United States needs to find the best way to address these conditions in a functional way. It must find better ways to analyze a country's capability or problems and work around a failed or formative system. It must make conducting a network analysis to map out the "good" and "bad" guys a key aspect of force development and find better ways to deal with rival and competing groups.

2. ***Host country force development must become an integrated part of civil-military operations, stability operations, and nation building.*** The most challenging cases exist when the nation state is fractured, divided, or formative. This means the United States must find much better ways to build ministries, develop forces that can work in a counterinsurgency environment or deeply divided state, train forces to work with civil authorities, and determine how force development can create forces than can perform all of the relevant tasks in the "hold" and "build" phases of "shape, clear, hold, and build." The problems in dealing with corruption, powerbrokers, political interference in promotion and retention, and the lack of civil capacity and the civil instruments of a rule of law need to be addressed far more explicitly.
3. ***Zero-Based Force Building:*** Creating new forces virtually from scratch is very different from improving or expanding an effective force structure already in existence and has posed crucial problems that the United States has had to relearn how to deal with every time they have arisen. They affect a key host country force development task: Deciding what force structure is needed within the elements of a nation's security forces, and how to build forces from a very limited or zero base.

Consider Iraq and Afghanistan: The United States failed to determine the proper size of the forces needed, the speed of build-up required, and the proper mix of elements within the armed forces, security forces, and police. It found that the formal training effort was only part of the force development task, and that mentoring, partnering, and enabling were critical once forces were supposedly trained and equipped. The size of the army required constant increases, often at a rate and in ways that created chronic leadership issues, promotion and retention problems, and issues with corruption in terms of pay and the creation of phantom forces.

The United States had to find ways to create battalions from scratch in ways the manual does not touch upon, phase in higher headquarters and formations, deal with issues in creating sustainability, and slowly find replacements for U.S.

enablers—where the need for such outside support was a critical part of the force development task where no clear system existed for deciding how to address the tasks. The various planning and coordinating groups lack experience and instruction and took years to function with moderate effectiveness—when they did.

4. ***Every new effort to create a police and security force in a fractured country and under the conditions of armed nation building has failed, or repeated the same initial mistakes, over the last 50 years.*** These previous problems have been even more severe in dealing with the security services, intelligence, branches, and various forms of police. Each case has led to efforts to create a civil police and formal rule of law that cannot function or survive in a counterinsurgency environment. It has repeated the same initial mistakes in deciding how to structure such forces, the same problems between DoD and State in creating forces that can survive in divided states and in a counterinsurgency environment, and the same failures of allies like Germany in Afghanistan. It has understated or ignored the need for specialized or paramilitary police and other security elements and the hard choices to be made as to what kind of training and vetting can really be provided for local police. It has also led to many of the same initial problems in creating border police, specialized anti-terrorism units, and dealing with issues like narcotics.

The effort to create civil police that could not operate in a counterinsurgency environment has been a disaster in Iraq and Afghanistan. The failure to deal with the real-world need for paramilitary police and for creating a force in a climate where the state is corrupt and/or the rule of law was tenuous-to-failed has been a problem again and again. The manual does not highlight these real world problems and issues.

This, however, is only part of the story. The United States has found itself dealing with countries that do not have a well-structured rule of law in the field. This effort to create police without the rest of the justice system has often coincided with an ongoing insurgency or civil conflict. The police have to be paramilitary to survive and are not supported by effective civil courts, jails, lawyers, etc. Moreover, force development efforts need to be structured from the start to prepare for the problems created by corrupt officials, powerbrokers, and the use of the police as players in civil conflicts.

5. ***Dealing with a corrupt, divided, and/or disloyal military.*** Divided nations, a lack of capacity, poor pay and corruption, and sectarian/ethnic/tribal issues have other impacts. The misuse of promotion and military pay, phantom soldiers, equipment and weapons theft and sales, promotion by faction or personal loyalty, bypassing of training standards, and false ratings of unit effectiveness and readiness are endemic in the developing world. The risks of such problems and how to work around them are never realistically addressed, but any review of SIGIR, GAO, and DoD IG reports on past SFA efforts would make it clear that these are critical tasks.

6. ***Dealing with a corrupt, divided, and disloyal mix of host country governance and politics:*** The United States must make clear and hard decisions regarding the ways in which its force development efforts fit into the broader U.S. country team, outside alliance, and U.S. command and intelligence problems in dealing with state building for either regular armed forces or police. How many times have we had to fix or bypass key officials and ministries in such countries? How many times have we had to deal with ministries lacking in capacity and caught up in political struggles, interference from outside powerbrokers, and problems with prime ministries and finance ministries? What guidance does an SFA team need?
7. ***Problems with contractors:*** Afghanistan and Iraq made contracting a critical problem in U.S. force development efforts and in operating where U.S. military efforts have limited control in a resource limited environment. It is not apparent that the U.S. military has yet developed anything like adequate tools to manage, audit, and control contract support. Both DoD and SIGIR have documented critical problems and failures in Iraq.
8. ***Shortfalls in trainers and mentors:*** Far too often, U.S. training and partnering efforts have glossed over shortfalls in the quality of trainers and mentors; their lack of motivation and experience; and the tendency to use, rather than partner, host country forces. In Afghanistan, ISAF still faced the problem in late 2008 that it had only about one-third the police trainers and 50% of the required army trainers needed as the force development effort scaled up. The United States was not prepared to deal with either its own shortfalls or those of its similarly delinquent allies.
9. ***Addressing the training/partnering gap:*** They also need to realize that improvements in the training base need to emphasize training at the kandak and entire unit level before new units go out into the field. These improvements proved to be very beneficial in Iraq, and while they could make the training effort longer—not shorter—they pay off the moment units become active in the field. At the same time, no element of a host country force can simply be trained and thrust into operations.

Moreover, the key to success is not the quality of the training in training centers, but the quality of the partnering, mentoring, support, and enablers once a unit enters service. This requires ongoing, expert effort for 6 to 12 months a minimum, and the CM definition of “in the lead” is little more than a joke.

10. ***Continuity of effort, and dealing with the need for sustained human relationships at the partnering and mentoring level:*** Realistic efforts to shake out new units, give them continuity of effective leadership, deal with internal tensions and retention problems, and help them overcome the pressures of corruption and powerbrokers takes time and continuity of at least the embedded training/mentoring effort. It is an exercise in sustained human relationships. Short tours and rapid changes in U.S. trainers can be as crippling as the assumption that training is more critical than mentoring and partnering.

11. ***Understanding the emerging importance of civil-military relationships and training:*** Further shifts will be needed as forces move into populated areas and take on the full range of “shape, clear, hold, and build” tasks. Every aspect of “clear, hold, and build” requires help in preparing ANSF elements to go from a combat ethos to one of effective civil-military relations.

As of April 2010, it is unclear that even the most dedicated advocates of a population-centric strategy within the U.S. military can really define how to implement “clear, hold, and build” in terms of tangible ways to execute and manage the tasks involved and chose truly valid measures of effectiveness. The moment such efforts become operational on a large-scale basis, however, they must be ready to partner ANSF forces and help them find the best way to deal with such problems.

Other Issues That Need to Be Addressed

There are a wide range of other areas that have been important in recent U.S. force development experience. They too form a checklist that effective force development efforts must explicitly address:

1. ***Case studies:*** Where does the user go to find the lessons from recent U.S. efforts? How do trainers and partners determine what experience may be most relevant?
2. ***Continuity of Effort:*** Shifts in command, particularly at the partnering and mentor level, often lead to a lack of proper continuity of effort, a breakdown or gaps in critical U.S.-host country relationships, and a mutual lack of trust. Repeated rotations have help U.S. officers reduce these problems, but they still need far more attention.
3. ***Partnering:*** The U.S. military must now find the best way to actually implement a partnering structure of the kind General McChrystal put forward in his new strategy for Afghanistan. It must move from talk about empowering host country commanders to making them more independent and shaping the use of embedded mentors and partner units in a practical way. It must address the need to develop steadily higher levels of real-world host country C2 capabilities, help host country elements move into the lead, and truly partner—not use—host country forces. So does the complex transition from being in the lead to the advisory role.
4. ***Mentoring, Embeds, and Enablers:*** Like partnering, finding the right mix of mentors, embeds, and enablers is critical, specifically in helping new units adjust to the realities of combat and in allowing effective leaders to emerge. The complex tasking and organization required in such efforts has repeatedly been underestimated and the interface with partnering and enabling U.S. and allied combat units supporting a host country force has not been realistically addressed...
5. ***Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence (C4I) / Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (IS&R):*** Modern force

development requires far more sophisticated and technically advanced C4I/IS&R capabilities. These have been critical problems in shaping host country capabilities in Iraq and Afghanistan. The practical problems encountered are not addressed, nor are the solutions worked out over time.

6. ***Sustainability***: Few areas in force development have presented more recent problems in both operations and force generation. Progress has occurred in this area, but it still poses major challenges at every level.
7. ***CM/CUAT and Readiness Ratings***: Developing meaningful ratings of unit readiness presented problems in Vietnam that helped to lose the war. It has presented major problems in both Iraq and Afghanistan—raising serious questions about whether the Strategic Framework for Afghanistan (SFA) team can develop objective independent ratings that can be trusted, and whether quantitative metrics are a substitute for narratives on how units are actually led and behave in combat. The issue of who rates the raters is not addressed, nor is the problem of rating units once they actually enter combat.

New metrics are needed that show the impact of ethnic, sectarian, and tribal divisions. A system needs to be put in place that provides practical help and experience to the actual force development effort in the field and that helps it find the right metrics for a given case and determine how to get reliable and useful data.

8. ***Retention, unit manning, and unit leadership***: These have all been interrelated and critical problems in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Retention is often country, culture, and subgroup related and requires careful assessment of local practices, values, and methods. The problems in leave/family ties/local ties and other factors affecting unit manning and the problems created by ghost manning need much more attention. So does the fact that formal training in new units can rarely provide a reliable picture of officer and NCO quality in combat, and there is a need to identify and remove weak and incapable leaders as soon as possible and help the inexperienced develop in other cases. The manual tended to assume that the SFA task is building elements in a relatively mature force when this often will not be the case.
9. ***The NCO Problem***: It is far easier to try to introduce this aspect of U.S. practice in different cultures and developing states than to make it actually work. This issue needs explicit attention in current and future U.S. force development efforts.
10. ***Donors from multiple states***: The United States needs to focus far more on creating “alliances of the effective” and much less on getting as many different allied efforts and resources as possible. ISAF has made progress, but proper coordination and the development of effective allied efforts remains a problem.
11. ***Developing pay, promotion, facility, medical, disability, death benefit, and family contact systems and ratings***. The United States had often stressed leadership and morale in its force development efforts and ignored the realities of

what actually drives human behavior and capability—particularly in forces that have a high element of politicization, corruption, and weak capacity. Any effective SFA effort and system must address all of these issues as key potential problem areas.

12. ***Counterterrorism and irregular warfare:*** U.S. force development efforts have often focused far too much on formal combat training and too little on counterterrorism and irregular warfare. Talking about hybrid warfare is not enough. The United States must find better ways to make it part of the force development effort.
13. ***Military mission:*** The United States has experienced constant problems where it sought to develop forces for its view of the mission when this differed from key elements in a divided host country military and political structure. A force development effort that pretends there is agreement on the mission within a host country, or between the United States and all key elements of the host country, has repeatedly created a climate of illusions that have presented serious problems in creating effective host country forces and operations in the field.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Anthony H. Cordesman holds the Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy at CSIS and acts as a national security analyst for ABC News. He is a recipient of the Department of Defense Distinguished Service Medal. During his time at CSIS, he has completed a wide variety of studies on energy, U.S. strategy and defense plans, defense programming and budgeting, NATO modernization, Chinese military power, the lessons of modern warfare, proliferation, counterterrorism, armed nation building, the security of the Middle East, and the Afghan and Iraq conflicts. Many of these studies can be downloaded from the Burke Chair section of the CSIS Web site at <http://www.csis.org/program/burke-chair-strategy>. At CSIS, Cordesman has been director of the Gulf Net Assessment Project, the Gulf in Transition study, and principle investigator of the Homeland Defense Project. He also directed the Middle East Net Assessment Project, acted as codirector of the Strategic Energy Initiative, and directed the project on Saudi Arabia in the twenty-first century.

Professor Cordesman has served as director of intelligence assessment in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and as civilian assistant to the deputy secretary of defense. He directed the analysis of the lessons of the October War for the secretary of defense in 1974, coordinating the U.S. military, intelligence, and civilian analysis of the conflict. He has also served in numerous other government positions, including in the State Department and on NATO International Staff. In addition, he served as director of policy and planning for resource applications in the Department of Energy and as national security assistant to Senator John McCain. He has had numerous foreign assignments, including posts in the United Kingdom, Lebanon, Egypt, and Iran, as well as with NATO in Brussels and Paris. He has worked extensively in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, and has served as an adviser to the U.S. commands in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as to USCENTCOM. He is the author of a wide range of studies on energy policy, national security, and the Middle East, and his most recent publications include *Iraq and the United States: Creating a Strategic Partnership* (CSIS, 2010), *Saudi Arabia: National Security in a Troubled Region* (Praeger, 2009), *Iranian Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Birth of a Regional Nuclear Arms Race?* (Praeger, 2009), *Withdrawal from Iraq: Assessing the Readiness of Iraqi Security Forces* (CSIS, 2009), *Winning in Afghanistan: Creating Effective Afghan Security Forces* (CSIS, 2009), and *The North African Military Balance: Force Developments in the Maghreb* (CSIS, 2009).

Adam Mausner is the research associate and program coordinator at the Burke Chair in Strategy at CSIS. Before joining CSIS, he was a research assistant at the Center for Security Studies and an assistant editor and acting executive editor at Columbia International Affairs Online. He is the coauthor with Professor Cordesman of *Iraq and the United States: Creating a Strategic Partnership* (CSIS, 2010), *Withdrawal from Iraq* (CSIS 2009), *Winning in Afghanistan* (CSIS 2009), and *Iraqi Force Development* (CSIS 2007). He received an M.A. in security studies from Georgetown University and a B.A. in political science from Vassar College.

Jason Lemieux was an intern with the CSIS Burke Chair in Strategy at the time of the writing of this report. He was honorably discharged from the U.S. Marine Corps as a sergeant in 2006. While serving in a variety of infantry billets over five years, he served three tours in Iraq, including during the 2003 invasion and in Karbala, Husaybah, and Ar Ramadi. His publications include “No, Really: Is the U.S. Military Cut Out for Courageous Restraint?” (*Small Wars Journal*, 2010). He will complete his B.A. in political science at Columbia University in December 2010.

1800 K Street, NW | Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202) 887-0200 | Fax: (202) 775-3199
E-mail: books@csis.org | Web: www.csis.org

