

# THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN:

## A Trip Report

**By Adam Mausner**

**and**

**Anthony H. Cordesman**

**Arleigh A. Burke Chair in Strategy**

**[acordesman@gmail.com](mailto:acordesman@gmail.com)**

June 20, 2011

Contents

A Race Against Time, Resources, and the Enemy..... 3

Key ANSF Development and Security Issues ..... 6

*ANSF Development: The Needs for Trainers, Embeds, and Resources Well Beyond 2014* ..... 6

*Afghan Local Police: More than Just Checkpoints* ..... 7

*Rule of Law* ..... 9

*The Counterterrorism vs. Counter Insurgency Debate* ..... 9

Political and Governance Issues..... 11

*Governance* ..... 11

*Reintegration*..... 12

Development and Civil Issues ..... 12

*Aid, Economics, and Corruption*..... 12

*Aid, the Economy, and the Risk of a Transition “Recession”* ..... 13

*The Need to Focus on the Priorities of the Afghan People and the Art of the Possible* ..... 15

*The Need to Halt All First World Solutions to Third World Problems*..... 16

*The Civilian Surge: Waiting for Godot?*..... 16

*The Problematic Present and Future of the PRTs* ..... 17

*Ten Years On: Phony Aid Metrics and No Real Measures of Effectiveness* ..... 18

Focusing on the Aftermath of the War as the Key to Transition ..... 20

## **A Race Against Time, Resources, and the Enemy**

Our recent trip to Afghanistan revealed a NATO/ISAF effort that has made progress in many areas: the fight against the Taliban, the development of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), some important aspects of Afghan governance, and some aspects of the development activities that are critical to winning the support of the Afghan people and meeting their urgent needs. It also revealed, however, that serious problems and uncertainties remain and that this progress may be wasted unless the US and its allies do a better job of assessing the risks that remain in the war, resourcing it over time, and showing the necessary strategic patience.

### ***Real Military Progress, But Still Far From “Victory”***

ISAF has achieved major tactical successes in the south, clearing and holding much of the former Taliban heartland, and they are unlikely to lose this territory in the near term. Yet as positive as many of the tactical indicators are, history warns that most successful insurgencies appeared at some point in their history to be decisively defeated in the field but survived by outlasting their opponents and by winning at the civil, political, and negotiating levels.

It is too early to determine whether ISAF and the ANSF can scale up the tactical successes they have won to date within probable timelines and succeed in “clear, hold, build, and transition” in the full range of critical districts. It is too early to determine whether they can transition such victories into lasting GIRoA and ANSF stability. Uncertain US and allied popular support for the war, an uncertain willingness to sustain success if it clearly does develop, and an uncertain willingness to fund the required effort before and after transition may render most of the current NATO/ISAF effort moot.

### ***The Growing Race Between Transition and Resources***

Our trip also revealed that NATO/ISAF and the ANSF are much better resourced than in previous year and have a much more realistic grasp of the problems facing it than in previous years. However it was all too clear that they are also in a race – a race against time, resources, and the enemy - that they simply may not win.

Largely because of the past US focus on Iraq, the NATO/ISAF effort in Afghanistan was massively under-resourced for years. Most of the major problems facing the country, from insurgent-controlled areas to corruption and a lack of development, were allowed to fester and grow for the better part of a decade. With the limited numbers of troops, aid workers, and money at their disposal, there was little NATO/ISAF could do to win the war. This is not a nine year war, nor is it a one year war being fought nine times. To date, it is really a two year war – one that really began in 2009, when Gen. McCrystal and President Obama provided the necessary resources and strategic coherence. Now that the coalition’s human, financial, and military resources have increased, victory is at least possible.

But the necessary resources may not last. Aid funding will probably peak in FY2012, and will decline substantially thereafter. Military withdrawals are already beginning this year and will likely accelerate in 2012-2014. The “Civilian Surge” never really got many personnel out into the field in the first place, but even this limited deployment will begin to decline soon. Even with current resource levels, huge problems remain in Afghanistan:

- GIRoA’s current lack of popularity, trust, and integrity at every level from Karzai to local governments compounded by favoritism, corruption, power brokers, and the impact of criminal networks.

- Tensions between the US and ISAF officials and commanders at every level in GIRoA and especially with Karzai.
- Regional, sectarian, and ethnics divisions within Afghanistan, GIRoA, and some elements of the ANSF.
- Uncertain moves toward negotiation and political accommodation with the Taliban that could result in either its return to power, or new – and possibly violent – splits of the country.
- The uncertainty as to whether current tactical gains can be scaled up to cover the entire range of critical districts, be transitioned to ANSF control within the required timeframe, and offset Taliban and other insurgent willingness to wait out the US and ISAF presence and overcome tactical defeat by fighting a war of political attrition.
- Pressure to create an ANSF capable of transition that could offset real progress with artificial deadliness and be followed by a refusal to fund the force for the need timeframe after transition.
- A civil aid effort in governance, economic, and stability operations that is vastly expensive but cannot meet current development goals and so far has not shown that it can be effectively or properly managed and assessed in the hold, build, and transition phases of the war.

### ***The Continuing Need for Performance Rather than Promises***

Senior leaders at ISAF, IJC, USAID, the State Department and the UN all were well aware of these problems, and were making serious efforts to deal with them. Many programs, however, will take a year or more to fully implement and test.

Far too often, it is also unclear whether the promised reforms that will create fiscal controls and accountability, refocus efforts on Afghan needs, and produce meaningful measures of effectiveness will actually be put into place. There have been too many conceptual efforts, too many promises, and too many failures in the past. There is another race that must be won in Afghanistan: replacing promises with performance.

### ***The Lack of a Defined Grand Strategy: Transition to What?***

More generally, five key uncertainties still dominate the strategic risks in pursuing the war to any meaningful grand strategic outcome:

- The growing instability of Pakistan and its unwillingness to fully engage Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban.
- The slow rate of improvement in the capacity and integrity of the Afghan government at the national, provincial, district and local levels.
- The growing pressure to negotiate with the Taliban and reach an accommodation, even if this involves a serious risk of premature ISAF withdrawals, and the Taliban taking power in at least part of Afghanistan.
- The growing divisions over whether a counterterrorism strategy could replace the current counterinsurgency strategy with a far smaller US and ISAF force presence far more quickly than is currently planned and lead to sharply accelerated cuts in US and allied forces and all forms of spending in Afghanistan.
- The uncertainties that still surround the nature of the mission in Afghanistan, effective planning for transition, and the ability to ensure any kind of lasting “victory” once transition takes place.

The war cannot be won without strategic patience and adequate resources, but no one can guarantee that it will be won in any sustainable way with them. Furthermore, political negotiations and accommodation with the Taliban can radically alter US transition planning, how many forces – if any – the US could retain in Afghanistan, the means and ability to carry on a counterterrorism campaign in Pakistan, and the politics of the 2014 Afghan presidential election.

There is a clear need to fully examine what the strategic goals of the war really are in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the probability that they can be achieved. There is far too much focus on narrow tactical, budget, and manpower issues; and far too little focus on what is likely to happen after 2014 and during the years to come.

## Key ANSF Development and Security Issues

The detailed results of the assessment made during our trip are available in a seven part series assessing each of the critical aspects of the war. This can be found on the CSIS web site at: <http://csis.org/program/burke-chair-afghanistan/>

There are, however, several issues that merit specific attention and these include several aspects of the progress in developing Afghan national security forces.

### *ANSF Development: The Needs for Trainers, Embeds, and Resources Well Beyond 2014*

NTM-A officials were realistic about many of the problems facing the ANSF. It is not yet clear whether the ANSF can really transition to a self-supporting force until after 2020. There are key shortfalls in foreign trainers and in partners for the police. Efforts to increase fully balanced forces with adequate leadership command structures, and logistics/sustainability are just being put into place. Above all, it is too early to judge how well ANSF units will perform without ISAF aid.

NTM-A officials, however, seemed to be overestimating two factors: the level of intermediate and post-2014 funding and resources they will have available, and the capabilities of the ANP. The large Afghan force currently being generated is clearly far beyond the capacity of Afghanistan to support on its own, a fact readily acknowledged by NTM-A. However, there is an assumption that the US or international community will continue to provide the ANSF with anywhere from 4-8 Billion dollars per year for the foreseeable future after 2014, in addition to a sizeable contingent of trainers. This assumption, in the face of popular and American congressional pressure to cut budgets and withdraw from Afghanistan, may no longer be valid. NTM-A may need to start looking into cutting its overall force generation goals, focusing more on quality and sustainability, and finding more ways to bring down the annual cost of the ANSF.

The ANP also continue to present real problems. While there are areas of progress, such as the ANCOP and elements of the Provincial Quick Reaction Forces, the regular ANP continues to face serious challenges: corruption, high attrition, low re-enlistment, little to no support from the justice system, and a general lack of capabilities. Unfortunately, the Commanders Unit Assessment Tool, which is currently used to measure the capabilities and performance of the ANA and ANP, has several flaws, and is unsuited to assess the ANP.

In the absence of a functioning official justice system, it is not clear what the role of the ANP is beyond low-level COIN. If the insurgent threat is significantly reduced in much of Afghanistan (as commanders hope it will be by 2014), and justice continues to be carried out on a local and unofficial or semi-official level, then it is not clear what the role of the ANP will be at all.

The ANA is making slow but steady progress, increasing in capacity and its ability to carry out operations. In the past, “joint” operations with the ANA often involved grabbing a few nearby ANA personnel and taking them along for the operation, just so it was not classified as an ISAF-only operation. While this practice continues, it is more common now to have truly joint operations, with many in fact led by the ANA.

The ANA has made both quantitative and qualitative progress, although qualitative progress has lagged considerably. Quantity may have a quality of its own, but in a counterinsurgency it is always better to have a small, well-trained and nimble force than a huge, bloated corrupt one. NTM-A was well aware of the qualitative problems caused by the ANSF’s rapid expansion and

plans to spend the next several years focusing on improving the existing force rather than growing it at a rapid pace – although it does seem likely to continue growing.

Local level progress, and units performing well in individual actions, is easy to measure and report. But it is the higher-level systemic and organizational progress that is now needed, and is much more difficult to both achieve and to measure. The next two years will see NTM-A focus more on developing the logistical, transport, bureaucratic, and other specialized capacities of the ANA.

NTM-A, however, it is badly short of the foreign trainers it needs to succeed in increasing force quality. Moreover, some estimates count pledged trainers as if they were there, and it is clear from the NTM-A figures that getting the right trainer quality will increasingly be more critical than simply increasing trainer numbers. It still seems to be short over 30% of critical trainers and over 50% of trainers overall – even if ISAF military with little prior training experience are counted as trainers.

There are only limited assessments of the ability of ANSF forces to transition, and of the level of corruption and ties to power brokers that limit their effectiveness, or of their capability and that of GIRA civil governance to make the transfer of responsibility real, rather than cosmetic.

### *Afghan Local Police: More than Just Checkpoints*

One of the more impressive findings of our trip was the extent to which the ALP program is tied to local governance and development. The ALP program is part of an extensive local-level counterinsurgency system called Village Stability Operations (VSO) and is not, as many fear, just setting up soon-to-be militias. The program is run by US SOF under the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A). While transitioning the program to full Afghan control may prove difficult, and the longer-term role of the ALP remains unclear, in the medium term it is clear that the force has a positive impact on local security, and thus far shows few signs of creating armed forces independent of the central government.

There have been numerous attempts to create local forces in Afghanistan, and almost all of them have been failures. Most notably, the Afghan Auxiliary Police, formed in 2006, were widely seen as extremely corrupt “thieves in uniform”, and were eventually disbanded.<sup>i</sup> More recently, local defense force programs have had a number of false starts, from the Afghan Public Protection Force to the Community Defense Initiatives. The ALP, however, is now the main local-force generation program in Afghanistan, and corrects a number the problems that have plagued similar forces in the past.

The first, and most important, difference from previous local defense force programs is that the ALP starts with local governance. Before the ALP are generated in a village, the GIRA-run Afghan Social Outreach Program (ASOP) helps villagers set up a Shura, or ruling council. Then, with MoI and CFSOCC-A approval, the local Shura picks men to become ALP. The local Shura, as the only government entity below the District center level, also acts as a dispute-resolution and local justice provider. While the relationship between the ASOP and the ALP/VSO program is unofficial, the setting up of an ASOP-approved Shura is, with very few exceptions, a prerequisite to the generation of ALP.

CERP and other aid is then funneled down from Kabul to the District center, and then out to the village. The impact and extent of this local aid funding is unclear. However, CFSOCC-A claims

that it is an integral part of the ALP program, for both local development and in strengthening the District and Village government.

What holds the whole ALP program together is the US SOF who train and supervise the ALP. In or near most ALP villages is a 12-man SOF ODA team. These teams live usually in small bases and are constantly in touch with local leaders and the ALP. Their intelligence collection on local affairs is excellent and is built on long deployments and constant contact with the people. It is this intelligence collection and analysis capability that truly sets the ALP program apart from its predecessors. The ODA teams have a good enough understanding of the local political/social environment to know if the Shuras are acting in the best interests of the people. US SOF has a long tradition of setting up local forces to fight insurgencies, and the ODA teams reflect their service's decades of experience. The ODA teams carefully track the Shura members and local ALP commanders, to make sure that they are not siding with any local power brokers. Importantly, if an ASOP-created local Shura is deemed too corrupt or tied to a local power-broker, the ODA team will not set up an ALP force in that village.

The ODA team also helps funnel aid money down to the villages. This aid is coordinated at the District level by Village Stability Coordination Centers. Finally, at the Provincial and national level, CFSOCC-A channels aid money and equipment down from Kabul through the ministries and Provincial governments to the ALP/VSO, "birddogging" it all the way down to make sure it is not stolen or held up before it reaches the field.

Unfortunately, the very proficiency CFSOCC-A has in creating and sustaining the ALP may be the program's biggest weakness. Without CFSOCC-A around to "birddog" money and equipment down from Kabul, how will the program sustain itself? Without ODA teams around to verify and watch over local Shuras, what will keep local criminal patronage networks from taking over ALP units? The official answer to this problem is that the ALP is a temporary program. But it is not clear what the ALP will transition to. The most common answer is the ANP, but that force has extensive problems of its own; and it is not clear how these locally based forces will transition into the more centrally organized and run ANP.

The other major weakness in the ALP program is its scalability. There are only so many ODA teams in Afghanistan. This will likely prevent the ALP/VSO program from being a game-changer in Afghanistan, despite its successes on a local level. If the ALP continues to expand quickly there will not be enough ODA teams to train and supervise them all.

CFSOCC-A does have an answer to the scalability problem - US conventional forces have taken over the training and management of ALP in some areas. Additionally, ANA SF are currently being generated in order to take over the training of ALP from US ODA teams. Currently there are only 2 ANA SF companies in the field training ALP, and thus it is too early to tell if they will be able to take over training tasks. The initial results are encouraging, however. Unfortunately, while the ANA SF may be able to successfully takeover the day-to-day tasks of training ALP, it is not clear that they will be able to take over the more difficult tasks of supervising/sustaining the ALP and supporting local government. Perhaps most importantly, the ANA SF may not be able to collect and analyze the detailed intelligence on local power brokers and the political/social environment. It is not clear that conventional US forces will be able to do this either.

The ALP, while not large enough to be a game changer, do seem to be making progress, and thus far show no signs of becoming local power bases independent of the central government.



Unfortunately, the ALP are not alone. There are an unknown, but sizeable number of semi-official and unofficial armed groups now operating in Afghanistan. Many seem inspired by the ALP and a desire to create local security, but many are being created for less noble reasons. ISAF does not appear to have a clear grasp of the scale or seriousness of this problem, and has only recently begun directing resources towards it.

### *Rule of Law*

NATO/ISAF has spent enormous sums of money and resources on creating an Afghan police force but has spent a comparatively paltry sum on its effort to promote the Rule of Law (ROL). This situation is currently being redressed, with a number of new and newly revitalized ROL programs. Progress in ROL is real, but uncertain, and much depends on whether the US and its allies will have the strategic patience to continue to fund and support the effort to 2014 and for many years afterwards.

Until recently, the police training and expansion effort was decoupled from a Rule of Law (ROL) effort that focused narrowly on creating a new formal justice system at the top and allow the Taliban and local power brokers to become the de facto system for local justices. Courts and jails are still often lacking or unable to operate in much of the country.

Much of this top-down ROL effort currently underway in Afghanistan is unlikely to ever have an impact outside of the major cities. We will likely face a situation similar to what has happened in Iraq, where most of the programs we implemented to change the country over to a formal, modern evidence-based justice system have failed. The money wasted to create the failed Iraqi system is truly staggering and is a mistake that Afghanistan cannot afford.

Better metrics and analysis are still needed to rate the creation and effectiveness of police forces and to address problems like ties to power brokers, insurgents, and local factions, and the level of corruption, the problem of extortion and the abuse of power.

The rule of law effort is being changed to emphasize tying the informal justice system to the formal system by giving GIRoA a role in validating decisions made by the informal justice system. There is also far more emphasis on creating an effective justice system at the local level through cooperation between the Afghan Local Police, ANP, village and local Shuras, and District officials.

As part of this renewed emphasis on promoting local justice, the Afghan MoJ has begun sending out Huqooq mediators out to the field. These Huqooqs advise and consult with local justice systems, helping to standardize and formalize their traditions. The Huqooqs act on a strictly local level, but provide legitimacy to local justice systems, and also provide a link to the district and provincial government. The Huqooq program is still small, and output metrics on its effectiveness are slim. However, Huqooqs, if combined with other similar local-focused programs, has a much greater potential to provide some form of dispute resolution and justice to Afghans than does a top-down, Western formal justice system.

### *The Counterterrorism vs. Counter Insurgency Debate*

One of the more striking aspects of our visit was that there were no advocates of shifting to a smaller counterterrorism oriented strategy vs. the present counterinsurgency strategy. This was true in spite of the fact that many recognized that it was unclear whether ISAF and the US could scale up their tactical successes in “shape clear, and hold” in Southern Afghanistan with the resources available before transition was estimated to begin, and that the civil “hold, build, and

transition” phase of the strategy lagged behind the military phases. This may have been the result of a command environment that was focused on current missions and that sought broad tactical success in most of the country by late 2012. We did not talk to the elements of US forces deeply involved in operations against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Pakistan, although the Special Forces elements directly involved in the fighting in Afghanistan did make it clear that they felt a counterterrorism strategy could not work or be sustained without success in the ongoing counterinsurgency strategy.

Leaks to the *New York Times* after our visit, however, made it clear that this is a critical issue in the Obama White House, and will be a growing area of debate. The *New York Times* reported on June 19 that US officials said the intense campaign of drone strikes and other covert operations in Pakistan - most dramatically the raid that killed Osama bin Laden - had left Al Qaeda paralyzed, with its leaders either dead or pinned down in the frontier area near Afghanistan. Of 30 prominent members of the terrorist organization in the region identified by intelligence agencies as targets, 20 have been killed in the last year and a half, they said, reducing the threat they pose.

The Times reported that officials also said that the conclusion that a counterterrorism strategy could defeat Al Qaeda was,

...reinforced by information found in Bin Laden's compound in Pakistan. They said the trove revealed disarray within Al Qaeda's leadership, with a frustrated Bin Laden indicating that he could no longer direct terrorist attacks by lieutenants who feared for their own lives.

...In 2009, intelligence officials identified 30 top Qaeda leaders in Pakistan and along the Afghan-Pakistan border, a senior administration official said. "We took 15 off the battlefield last year," he said, including Sheik Saeed al-Masri, the group's third-ranking operative until he was killed in a drone strike in 2010. In addition, he said, 5 more of the 30 leaders on the 2009 list were killed this year, including Ilyas Kashmiri, a Pakistani veteran of the Soviet-Afghan war who was accused in 2009 of conspiring with two Chicago men to attack a Danish newspaper that had published a cartoon depicting the Prophet Muhammad. While typically new operatives take the place of those killed, the rapid pace of attacks has dealt an unusually heavy blow to the organization. An American intelligence assessment concluded that the 28 drone strikes the Central Intelligence Agency has carried out in Pakistan since mid-January have killed about 150 militants, according to an official.

And then there was the spectacular raid by the Navy Seal team that killed Bin Laden in the garrison town of Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2. It produced a cache of information - documents, hard drives and other materials - which officials said contained revealing discussions between Bin Laden and his key commanders. "The sense was clear that morale was hurt," an official said, describing the findings without offering documentation or specifics about the internal communications. "They worried most about safety."

The officials interviewed Friday made no attempt to disguise their belief that the counterterrorism campaign, which was favored by Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. in 2009, has outperformed the more troop-intensive counterinsurgency campaign pushed by Mr. Gates, Gen. David H. Petraeus and other top military planners.

Like the need to develop a clear transition strategy that focuses on creating lasting gains after 2014, there is a clear and urgent need to resolve the counterterrorism vs. counterinsurgency debate on military and strategic grounds, backed by substantive analysis and a full assessment by US and ISAF commanders and the US Joint Staff. This is far too important an issue to resolve at the political levels and debate by leaks on a US-only basis.

## Political and Governance Issues

Several political and governance issues emerged as having special importance on our recent trip.

### *Governance*

Effective governance is still lacking in most of Afghanistan. Outside of the major cities, few residents have seen much tangible progress in the provision of government services. Massive problems with corruption, budget execution, incompetence and bureaucracy hamper governance at every level. This is one of the most difficult areas for the coalition to measure progress in, yet it is one of the most critical. With major progress being made in tactical security gains, and at least some progress being made in aid and development, governance remains the biggest question mark hanging over the future of Afghanistan.

The Afghan central government simply does not have the ability to execute most of its budget. Overall, the ministries currently have a 30% budget execution level per year. GIRoA may want control of the money, but it lacks the ability to manage and use it. Moreover, these problems are made far worse by concentrating the money in key central government ministries rather than allocating substantial amounts to provincial, district, and local authorities. This may prove to be a critical, if not fatal, bloc to effective transition unless major improvements take place in GIRoA capacity, and aid is sustained long beyond 2014.

This low budget execution is caused by a number of factors: corruption; sheer incompetence; a lack of organizational and bureaucratic knowledge; and paradoxically a fear of accidental misspending resulting in charges of corruption. Another major impediment to governance, particularly at the provincial level, is that PRTs duplicate many governance and aid functions, and so it is easier for projects to be run through them. However, the aforementioned problems in governance make it clear that provincial and ministerial GIRoA agencies could not handle many of the projects currently being run by PRTs either way, so this problem may not be as serious as it sounds.

Indeed provincial and district governments have become reliant upon PRTs in some areas. Were the PRTs to leave, as many if not most of them likely will in the coming years, a huge number of aid and governance projects could collapse, as local governments and the ministries simply cannot or will not handle the load.

A number of ISAF and State Department programs have attempted to fix these problems and have made great progress. A performance-based governor's fund rewards Provincial governments that govern well with an increased budget. A great number of corrupt or ineffective governors, deputy governors, and district leaders have quietly been replaced in the last 2 years. A merit-based promotions system has been established for sub-governor positions in about half of Afghanistan's provinces. There is also a civil-service training program that as of Spring 2011 had trained over 16,000 – 18,000 civil servants.

Unfortunately trends in governance are as difficult to measure. Neither ISAF, the State Department, USAID, the UN, nor any other organization currently publish reliable governance metrics for Afghanistan. This is due to all of the coordination and information-gathering problems mentioned above, as well as the political sensitivity of reporting on members of a sovereign nation's government. All of these factors have left us with mainly anecdotal reporting.

But this anecdotal reporting is largely positive. Officials in IJC, ISAF, and USAID were all quite realistic about the problems governance faces in Afghanistan, and the problems in reporting it. Yet most were certain that governance is improving in most areas. Individual success stories abound, from various governors to a few ministries, such as the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and the mining Ministry. The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund seems now to be doing a good job of getting money through the bureaucracy in Kabul and out to the provinces. But these stories get lost in the general mass of information coming out of Afghanistan, and it is impossible to determine if they truly represent a trend or an outlier.

### *Reintegration*

The reintegration of former insurgent fighters aims to help fighters return to civilian life through various incentives, from literacy classes to the issuing of ID cards. The program is still new, and is just beginning to see significant numbers of insurgents. Still the program remains small, and shows no sign of growing quickly in the immediate future. Hundreds, not thousands, of men have thus far laid down their arms and joined the program. Most men entering the program thus far are low-ranking and come from the North of Afghanistan, where the insurgency is weakest. However, in the absence of a major peace deal with any of the large insurgent factions, this is perhaps not surprising.

What was surprising was the fact that the program is already at capacity. If there is a significant uptick in insurgents wanting to join, the program will simply not be able to handle them. This is caused by all of the usual problems of corruption, personnel and resources. However, if the program is not expanded before any major peace deals, it will be swamped.

## **Development and Civil Issues**

There are also development and civil issues that merit urgent attention, some of which cannot be separated from the problems in governance.

### *Aid, Economics, and Corruption*

ISAF's major push to reduce corruption, headed by the CJIATF-Shafafiyat under BG McMaster, is fairly new, and most of its programs are just starting. Thus output metrics, not surprisingly, are lacking. However, the TF has a good grasp on the causes of corruption in Afghanistan, focusing on the corrupting impact of US and coalition money. With hundreds of billions of US dollars spent in a country with an annual GDP of around \$25 billion, the temptation to steal or divert funds has been huge. The almost completely unsupervised and unaccountable way most of this money was spent resulted in much of the massive corruption seen across the country today.

This flow of Western money has created an exclusionary political economy in some areas of the country, wherein one power broker essentially controls all of the contracts coming from the Coalition. Some sectors of the economy are likewise dominated, as are some government functions, including much of the borders and customs departments as well as much of the Justice sector.

Some level of corruption is natural, even desirable, in a developing country like Afghanistan. The TF has not had a problem distinguishing "natural" or "acceptable" corruption from

excessive and unsustainable corruption. The big, criminally corrupt power brokers are obvious. The major corrupt power brokers hide in plain sight – they have bought or otherwise acquired so much political protection that they are essentially immune from prosecution. Many, but not all of them, are tied to the narcotics trade.

To combat this, the TF has been focusing on reforming US and coalition spending, which is the main source of money and therefore corruption in the country. They have a number of initiatives:

- Breaking down huge contracts into more manageable sizes: Giant contracts end up being actually executed by sub and sub-sub-contractors, making accountability impossible. So the TF has started forcing contracts to be smaller, greatly increasing visibility.
- Blacklisting contractors: This effort is just getting started, but already 50 contractors have been banned. While some manage to change names and avoid the blacklist, this is being combated as well. While the sheer number and size of blacklisted contractors is not yet large, the deterrent effect that this has had across the contracting economy has been immediate and outsized.
- Establish a US contract oversight authority: Currently the US Army Corp of Engineers, USCENTCOM Contracting Command, the State Department, and all of the other smaller US agencies issuing contracts in Afghanistan have no common oversight or reporting requirements. The TF is in the process of changing this, establishing a central oversight authority which will collect data from all contracting agencies. The TF has also been working to increase information sharing on contracting and money spent in general across Afghanistan, among the RCs and other US government agencies. This is, unfortunately, a massive task that is just getting off the ground.
- Afghan First: This effort promotes spending money in Afghanistan on afghan-owned companies whenever possible. The effort has had some real success, but it is all anecdotal, and output metrics are lacking.
- COIN contracting guidance: The TF is issuing guidance to the RCs that links spending money to intelligence. Many commanders did not realize the power that the money they spend has – the US needs to track its money to see what effect it is having on the local and national economy. Sometimes it is better to not spend any money at all than to spend it in the wrong way - even on aid and development.

Most programs in Afghanistan have been around for years, and have no excuses for their lack of output metrics. TF Shafafiyat is new, and has not actually been around long enough to collect reliable information on the effects of its programs. All of the initiatives listed above are good ones, and should be supported. But this being Afghanistan, it is not clear that many, or even most of them will succeed enough to put a dent in overall corruption.

### *Aid, the Economy, and the Risk of a Transition “Recession”*

Too much money of the wrong kind has been thrown into the Afghan economy. Afghans do not need more contracting and aid money than they have the capacity to absorb and use effectively.

US and international aid and military contracting money have created a massive and unsustainable economic situation. In Helmand, for example, ISAF spent on aid alone a sum equal to nearly four times the total Afghan GDP – and all this in a province with a small fraction of Afghanistan’s population. According to the recent Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, foreign military and development spending now provides 97 percent of the country’s gross domestic product.<sup>ii</sup>

Afghanistan essentially has four economies – the aid economy, driven by NGO, USAID and CERP funding; the war contracting economy, driven by massive expenditures on private security and military transportation and construction; the Narco economy centered in the south, and the “real” Afghan economy. Sadly, the “real” economy is the smallest of these 4, by far.

Unfortunately, the largest two of these four economies are going to drastically shrink by 2014 and could then largely disappear. With most ISAF troops leaving by the end of 2014, the war contracting economy will dramatically shrink. The State Department estimated that ISAF spending on local contracts was roughly 13 Billion per year. All of the Afghan businesses that have sprung up to serve the huge number of bases and other Western government/military installations are going to find their market shrink radically. Many if not most of these businesses, from construction to transportation, are going to disappear.

Additionally, it is probable that aid money, both from US and international donors, will shrink precipitously after 2014. The State Department estimated that it spends about 3.9 Billion per year on local contracting currently, but is unlikely to maintain this amount. The US aid funding stream is already dropping off. Driven in part by domestic US politics, it seems likely that FY2011 and FY2012 will be the peak years in the US aid effort, followed by steady cuts.

While there is no doubt that some international aid will continue, with many Western governments facing tight fiscal situations and international attention likely shifting away from Afghanistan as military forces depart, there is likely to be a steep drop off. There is a “ticket out” phenomenon, wherein countries that are pulling out their combat personnel will give a large initial aid commitment at first in order to smooth over the pullout. But within 6 months as the headlines fade, so does the extra aid money. A key focus of UNAMA in the coming years will be to secure a sustainable long-term aid commitment from coalition countries as they pull out troops. NGO spending, currently estimated at 1 Billion per year, is much more difficult to predict, but will likely fall as well.

Had aid projects over the last 10 years been designed in a sustainable way, so that they could be handed off to Afghan management and survive in a post-ISAF economy, this problem would be mitigated somewhat. Unfortunately, while it is difficult to discern any useful metrics about aid spending in the country, it is clear that much of the aid money spent in the last 10 years was wasted on unsustainable or unsuccessful projects.

With the disappearance of two of Afghanistan’s four economies, there will be “hell to pay” come 2015, according to one official. Beyond the narco economy, it is not clear what will sustain the “real” Afghan economy after 2014. Reports of vast mineral wealth are not necessarily inaccurate, but are many years, if not decades, away from producing any significant economic activity in Afghanistan. It is not clear that Afghanistan has a competitive economic advantage in any area outside of poppy production.

### *The Need to Focus on the Priorities of the Afghan People and the Art of the Possible*

Ten years into the Afghan war, there are now focused aid efforts that are beginning to have a major impact in improving the capacity of the Afghan government, and have a new focus on realistic objectives to help Afghanistan recover from more than thirty years of crisis and conflict. Our recent visit to the country revealed a much greater level of realism among ISAF and State Department personnel than in years past, and a broad scaling-back of the previously lofty goals for Afghan development.

No one seems to now pursue the absurdly inflated goals of the Afghan Compact and Afghan National Development Plan. There is a clear recognition that Afghanistan is not going to be a modern, Western country in 2014 – indeed, it is going to continue to be one of the poorest countries on earth. Conceptual goals for regional development, mining potential, and becoming a key trade route for Central Asia all seem idealized to the point where the war will be decisively lost or won before they have any major impact – if ever.

Population growth in Afghanistan has been very rapid over the last 30 years, yet near-constant warfare has left infrastructure woefully inadequate. Afghanistan is not a subsistence economy – it is a sub-subsistence economy. The World Food Program estimates that 31% of Afghans are food-insecure.<sup>iii</sup> According to one official, it will be difficult enough to get Afghanistan back up to the level of a “normal” poor developing country, one that is not beset by corruption and instability.

Yet a legacy of mistakes has made even this seemingly achievable goal dubious. Again, senior officials seemed aware of many of these problems, although the belief that mineral wealth will somehow save the Afghan economy persists in some quarters. In response to the coming recession, and the failure of a number of past development projects, the focus has now shifted to plan B: developing basic infrastructure and preventing the lack of governance and development from derailing transition. IJC officials spoke of focusing aid on four key areas: urban development in key cities, agriculture, water management, and micro-electricity. This, in addition to the 22 national priority programs of ISAF coalition partners, would represent the main effort going forward.

Unfortunately, the almost total lack of nationwide coordination of aid and development projects makes it nearly impossible to carry out even plan B, or any coherent plan, for that matter. There is no way to measure the total flow of outside aid or know how it has been allocated. There are no meaningful data on the way in which aid requirements were determined, the effectiveness of aid, or the extent to which aid funds flowed to power brokers and corruption. Countries and NGOs act with minimal coordination and often act to meet their political or ideological goals regardless of Afghan needs and urgent priorities created by crisis and war.

UNAMA has given up trying to coordinate aid, which was “mission impossible.” ISAF officials concurred that aid coordination was “herding cats” and was not going to happen. There is little to no sharing of information on aid and development projects, even between the civilian and military branches of the same countries. Each country in the coalition essentially minds its own geographic or functional area, and does not coordinate with any other. The UN has no way to force any nation or NGO to coordinate, or even to share information, so there is little that UNAMA can do in this regard. There are positive signs that UNAMA will soon be able to at least collect better information on aid and development projects within the coalition.



### *The Need to Halt All First World Solutions to Third World Problems*

One major problem that still affects a large number of development projects seems to result from a strange form of cognitive dissonance. There is a desire among Western officials to see Afghanistan turned into a modern country - so they build modern facilities and development projects, regardless of Afghan's ability to maintain them. NTM-A officials want Afghanistan to have a modern army, so they build fully modern facilities for them, complete with air conditioning and modern fire alarm and sprinkler systems. Aid officials want Afghanistan to have a modern education system, so they build first-rate schools, complete with, in one egregious example, greywater recycling systems. Greywater recycling systems are extremely advanced, and difficult enough to run even in Western nations. In Afghanistan, maintaining such a system is not a bridge to far but a hundred bridges. The fact that such a system would even be considered, let alone approved and built does not bode well for the aid community.

An interview with a USAID engineer helped illustrate this problem. He had been tasked with building an ANP headquarters in southern Afghanistan. The building was designed with a 3 story glass atrium, as well as modern air conditioning and fire-detection/suppression systems. Yet most of the personnel who would be manning the building were "from the mountains." When pressed on what this phrase meant, he replied "most of the men had *never even seen a door.*" They literally did not know how to use a door knob. This building should not have been built for any number of reasons: the building costs, let alone the power requirements to cool a 3 story glass atrium are extreme by Afghan standards, and a 3 story glass atrium in an area with few if any other 3 story buildings makes a tempting target. But sustainability needs to be paramount - in two years this building will likely be non-functioning and abandoned. If only a fraction of the money spent had been used to build a sturdy, low-tech building that the Afghans could maintain, in 2 years the building at least has a chance of actually functioning.

This problem, like many we encountered on our trip, has been recognized by ISAF and State department officials. According to one ISAF official, ANA/ANP facilities are now built with Chinese-made ceiling fans, which are easy to repair and replace, in addition to being much cheaper than a modern air conditioning system. Similar changes across the ANSF have contributed to a significant drop in their projected annual sustainment costs after 2014. The damage has already been done, however, and it is not clear that outside of the ANSF much has been done to rectify this problem.

### *The Civilian Surge: Waiting for Godot?*

The State Department has been able to increase its aid personnel in Afghanistan by several hundred, going from around 50 personnel in 2009 to over 400 today. Yet this "civilian surge" never reached many of the critical areas of the country. The surge seems to have broken down at several levels.

The most crippling shortcoming of the civilian surge has been management. Intense pressure from Washington has indeed resulted in an increase in State department civilians in country, but progress did not go much beyond numbers. Many civilians arrive in country with virtually no support, in some cases without even a bed or desk. The vast majority of the civilian surge has remained in Kabul, either working their or waiting, sometimes fruitlessly, for a position out in the field. Despite a conceptual process in place to "cascade" personnel down from Kabul to the regional commands and out to districts, as with many conceptual frameworks in Afghanistan, implementation has not survived contact with reality.



Overly-cumbersome personnel security regulations also hindered the civilian surge – either preventing civilians from leaving Kabul, or from leaving military bases once in the field. Exact numbers are hard to come by, but in Southern Afghanistan there seems to be only about 150 State Department Civilians working full time. The number of civilians that are able to leave the large military bases with any frequency is unknown, but likely quite low.

Even if civilians are able to make it out of Kabul and into areas where they are most needed, problems continue. The lack of management that prevents most civilians from leaving Kabul also hampers those out in the field – either through arbitrary reassignments or a lack of support for projects. Finally, many of the civilians out in the field find themselves lacking in the proper training – even if they have a technical background in an area, they may not have any aid or development background, and are even less likely to have a background in Afghanistan.

Despite these problems, overall the opinion of most military commanders was that when they can get civilian partners out in the field, they are amazingly helpful. While there are exceptions to every rule, most civilian aid workers out in the field are motivated, intelligent, and hard-working. In previous years, short rotation cycles for civilians has been a major problem, as training up and transitioning out take months, leaving precious little time on the ground to build relationships and gain experience. But now most NATO civilians are on a 2 year cycle. Civilian-Military coordination has also improved in the last 2 years, and Senior Civilian Representatives are using what limited resources they have to great advantage.

But there is only so much that a few hundred aid workers can do in a country the size of Afghanistan. Many in IJC indicated that they were finished waiting for their civilian partners. Most of the skills sought out in civilian aid workers are also found within the US Army Reserves. Indeed, because of its size, there are greater numbers of personnel in the Reserves skilled in critical development areas, such as police officers or engineers. IJC has thus adapted to the lack of civilian partners, instead of waiting for a surge that never came.

### *The Problematic Present and Future of the PRTs*

Provincial Reconstruction Teams are often held up as an example of success in civ-mil coordination and development in a COIN environment. Commanders in the field reported that when PRTs work well, they are extremely useful. They also report that in general, US-led PRTs are far more efficient than their Coalition-led counterparts. Yet major problems remain.

PRTs face enormous pressure to spend money. Their primary function is, essentially, to spend money so this is not surprising. Yet this pressure has resulted in a lack of accounting and a rush to start projects regardless of need, sustainability, or results. Projects are often given to local contractors without researching the contracting company, resulting in the funding of local power brokers instead of legitimate businesses. There is little analysis done to find out what projects are most needed, let alone what projects the Afghans most desire. There is also little recognition that money spent wrong can have a negative effect – more money is not always better.

Communication between PRTs and Kabul, and between PRTs themselves is limited or nonexistent. Each seems to operate essentially independently, particularly the non-US PRTs. These non-US PRTs report first to their home embassy, and rarely to anyone else. While most PRTs have representatives from USAID, they do not facilitate much communication, and there is little coordination between PRT and USAID projects. While the military-led PRTs are better in

this regard, many PRTs do not communicate with local commanders, who often possess better intelligence on Afghan wants and needs.

This lack of communication and analysis has led to most PRTs “chasing shiny things.” For instance, building nice hospitals but not training any doctors, and in particular female doctors. There is a great gap in the development program for Afghanistan – the World Bank and USAID are focused on long-term development projects, while ISAF is proficient at short term, cash-for-work type projects. But there is nothing in the medium-term, and PRTs have been largely unable to fill this gap.

Despite all of these problems, PRTs have accomplished a great deal in Afghanistan, and in many provinces are vital to the day-to-day functioning of aid and governance. But with transition and looming budget cuts, PRTs seem to be phasing out. The State Department plans to slowly phase DSTs into the PRTs, and then PRTs into a few larger regional, as-yet-unnamed PRT-like organizations. Thus instead of a PRT for roughly each province, each PRT will cover several, until there are only 5 or so left to cover the whole country. ISAF is not in agreement with this plan, and wants to extend the current PRT system as long as possible. They fear negative consequences of the removal of PRTs. As PRTs are officially a State Department-run program, but are largely staffed by military personnel, it is not clear what exactly will happen to the program in the next 2 years. However, as with many current programs, budget and personnel cuts in State and military personnel may render these disagreements over PRT functions moot.

### *Ten Years On: Phony Aid Metrics and No Real Measures of Effectiveness*

While efforts have finally been made to create a central coordinator for civil programs, and integrated civil-military plans, these plans remain largely conceptual. There still are no meaningful unclassified metrics or analyses that show real progress, that reflect meaningful fiscal controls and measures of effectiveness, or that provide a picture of how civil programs in governance, rule of law, and economic aid relate to military efforts. Ironically, more data are available on military operations and intelligence about the insurgent threat than on the impact of civil spending and aid. Output metrics of any kind are virtually nonexistent.

Moreover, major problems occurred because of short tours by key aid personnel, and nearly annual efforts to “reconceptualize” aid efforts without creating systems that could plan and execute concepts effectively, measure Afghan perceptions and needs, validate requirements, and measure effectiveness. The lack of metrics and other reporting on aid reflects the fact that no one is effectively in charge.

National-level economic metrics are notoriously unreliable. Assessments of the overall Afghan economy and “rising prosperity” credit the direct and indirect impact of massive inflows of aid, and outside military and civil spending, as if they were some form of real growth in GDP, per capita income, and prosperity. They largely ignore income distribution and its impact on the poor and ordinary Afghans, corruption, inflationary effects, and the outflow of aid money and GIRoA revenues. Accurately estimating Afghan employment and unemployment is virtually impossible.

There is progress in a number of areas, but everything is anecdotal. Infant mortality is down, the numbers of Shuras are increasing, civil service training programs are expanding rapidly, and several district and Provincial government offices are highly successful. But in a country of 30 million, anecdotes do not suffice. There is far too little focus on the large class of impoverished

Afghans, their dependence on UN and other food aid to survive, the impact of combat, their ability to find alternative source of income to drugs, demographics pressures, and inflows to urban slums.

The latest effort to bring order to the aid effort is the District Stability Framework (DSF). This effort aims to link up all US aid personnel, having them put all of their data into the same network for analysis. The DSF certainly has the potential to improve our understanding of aid and development, but it faces a number of hurdles.

The biggest problem facing the DSF, or any metrics on development in Afghanistan, is the lack of a denominator. There is simply too little information on the Afghan economy, people, infrastructure, or any other major indicators from which we can compare current progress to. Without knowing where you are right now, let alone where you were 10 years ago, it is difficult to see where you are going.

The other major problem facing the DSF is personnel. Currently, USAID lacks the personnel to even collate the data, let alone to disaggregate and mine it. More staff are being allocated, but it remains to be seen whether they actually arrive. The other major hurdle is implementation, which has killed so many similar efforts in the past. Getting personnel in the field to actually submit data is proving difficult, although USAID officials were positive about DSF eventually becoming widely used. While the DSF is ambitious, and similar efforts have failed in the past, USAID officials were well aware of previous mistakes, and of the major hurdles facing the program.

## Focusing on the Aftermath of the War as the Key to Transition

Our trip to Afghanistan, like many in the past, was filled with both brightly hopeful moments and frustratingly discouraging ones. The tactical progress being made against the Taliban in the South was as obvious as were the massive problems facing the COIN strategy in governance and development. The realism senior leaders had in dealing with these issues was reassuring, and programs have been put in place to deal with almost all of the major problems facing the war effort. While most of these programs hold great potential, potential does not win wars.

Afghanistan being Afghanistan, it is possible that many of these programs will fail. This does not necessarily spell defeat. The senior leadership teams now in place are flexible and realistic enough to shift plans and programs as need be, given proper resources. But there are several long-term problems with our overall strategy that still need to be addressed:

- **COIN vs. CT:** this debate is not one of tactics. These two strategies are different in their grand strategic goals. The COIN strategy aims to enact a more comprehensive counterinsurgency operation: gradually building up the Afghan government while degrading the insurgency, so that eventually the Afghans can takeover the bulk of the fighting, while their government remains stable, and their economy develops at least enough not to derail transition. The CT strategy dispenses with most of this, and aims to prevent terrorist groups from forming sanctuaries in Afghanistan through Special Forces raids, building up the ANSF, and drone strikes. A CT strategy will dramatically lower the aid given to the Afghan government and economy, leaving the broader questions of the nature, power, stability, and capabilities of the Afghan government and military largely up to the Afghans. This is why senior leaders in Afghanistan were almost universally against the CT strategy – it will essentially abandon most of the programs they have been working on for years.

The COIN vs. CT debate is thus the wrong debate. These are not two comparable strategies that aim to achieve the same goals with different means. These are two different strategies with different goals. The COIN strategy aims to create a stable Afghanistan with a democratic government, capable military, and an economy that develops enough to maintain this stability. The CT strategy aims to prevent terror groups from using the territory of Afghanistan as a base – and does not address the larger questions of governance and development. The White House needs to determine what its goals are in Afghanistan, and whether they are achievable given resource constraints – backed by substantive analysis and a full assessment by US and ISAF commanders and the US Joint Staff. Once this is determined, then the DoD and State Department can come up with the civilian/military strategy needed to meet these goals.

- **Pakistan:** The deteriorating situation in Pakistan has revealed another fundamental problem with the current strategy in Afghanistan. Pakistan is much more important than Afghanistan in virtually every way: it is larger; it actually has a significant number of terrorist training camps and sanctuaries, including Al Qaeda; and, perhaps most significantly, it has nuclear weapons. Pakistan is growing steadily more unstable and faces challenges far beyond the militants in its Western region. The US can no longer depend on Pakistan cooperating in its border region and moving against militants on its territory. More importantly, the US must come to terms with the very real possibility that Pakistan may become a failed state in the medium term. A failed or failing state with

nuclear weapons and multiple anti-American terrorist groups operating freely is a US national security nightmare and must be prevented at all costs. Thus the US effort in Afghanistan must increasingly be viewed in terms of stabilizing both countries.

- **Governance:** While there were a number of good programs and good people in place working on governance in Afghanistan, the sad fact remains that by 2014 much of the country outside of Kabul may have nonexistent, inefficient, or corrupt governance. This does not mean that the overall COIN strategy is doomed, but the possibility of widespread failure in governance must be taken into account.
- **Negotiations:** There was a growing disconnect between the transition planning of various Coalition efforts, and the potential of GIROA negotiations with the insurgents to render them moot. Afghanistan is a sovereign country, and Karzai may agree to terms with the Taliban or other insurgent groups with or without US approval. Thus negotiations may result in the Taliban joining the government, gaining autonomy in parts of Afghanistan, forcing an accelerated withdrawal of US troops or even aid personnel, or restricting women's and other human rights in all or part of the country. Negotiations may even restrict US basing options, which could prevent even the more limited CT strategy from working.
- **Transition Planning:** Almost without exception, every program we saw in Afghanistan had at least a conceptual transition plan, and many had far more than concepts. Yet the overall transition plan was lacking. Having each individual civilian and military plan transition over to Afghan lead does not knit the entire strategy together. Transition planning needs to take into account the various rates at which different elements of the plan will take to transition. In particular, it is clear that the governance and development side of our strategy is severely lagging, and transition planning needs to take this into account. There is also a great risk that one or more aspects of the transition plan may fail, and while this is not necessarily a deal-breaker it needs to be taken into consideration as well. Furthermore, transition planning needs to better account for the wider alliance outside of the core US government and NATO/ISAF programs, including the UN and NGOs.

Afghanistan is winnable. Given a great deal of resources, a flexible leadership, and several more years, the current strategy will succeed. But at this point resources and time are running out. Senior leaders were realistic about the problems facing them, and many recognized that they were in a race against time, resources, and the enemy. But few of them fully realized that they are now losing this race. Resources are already dropping, and without substantive and demonstrable progress in the next year, they are likely to drop even faster.

This does not mean that the current strategy cannot succeed within resource limits. It means that the US must determine what its end-state goals are in Afghanistan, whether they are achievable, and what resources it is willing to spend in order to achieve them. It does not mean that the US should promote a comprehensive COIN strategy and then under-resource it. Nor should the US enact a CT strategy and expect all of the results that only a COIN strategy can achieve. But this decision must be made, and once made it must be swiftly carried out – because the enemy has already made his decision.

---

<sup>i</sup> “Afghanistan's auxiliary police: there's marijuana in their socks and their feet point the wrong way.” The Economist. 16 November 2006. Web. 20 June 2011. [http://www.economist.com/node/8173711?story\\_id=8173711](http://www.economist.com/node/8173711?story_id=8173711)

<sup>ii</sup> Karen DeYoung, “Afghan nation-building programs not sustainable, report says.” The Washington Post National. 7 June 2011. Web. 20 June 2011. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/national-security/afghan-nation-building-programs-not-sustainable-report-says/2011/06/07/AG5cPSLH\\_story.html?tid=wp\\_ipad](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/national-security/afghan-nation-building-programs-not-sustainable-report-says/2011/06/07/AG5cPSLH_story.html?tid=wp_ipad)

<sup>iii</sup> Roya Zalmi, “WFP And Government Of Afghanistan Strengthen Coordination On Food Assistance.” World Food Hunger Programme. 19 January 2011. Web. 20 June 2011. <http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-and-government-afghanistan-strengthen-coordination-food-assistance>