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# Military Developments in the Afghan War

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# Introduction

The war in Afghanistan is at a critical stage. There is no clear end in sight that will result in a U.S. military victory or in the creation of a stable Afghan state. A peace settlement may be possible, but so far, this only seems possible on terms sufficiently favorable to the Taliban so that such peace may become an extension of war by other means and allow the Taliban to exploit such a settlement to the point where it comes to control large parts of the country.

The ongoing U.S. peace effort is a highly uncertain option. There are no official descriptions of the terms of the peace that the Administration is now seeking to negotiate, but media reports indicate that it may be considering significant near-term U.S. force cuts, and a full withdrawal within one to two years of any settlement.

Media reports indicate that the Administration is considering a roughly 50% cut in the total number of U.S. military personnel now deployed in Afghanistan — even if a peace is not negotiated. No plans have been advanced to guarantee a peace settlement, disarm part or all of the force on either side, provide any form of peace keeping forces, or provide levels of civil and security aid that would give all sides an incentive to cooperate and help stabilize the country.

The Taliban has continued to reject formal peace negotiations with the Afghan government, and has steadily stepped up its military activity and acts of violence while it negotiates with the United States. Terrorist groups like ISIS-K add to the threat, as do the many splits within the Afghan government and political structure. The Taliban has not encouraged further ceasefires, or shown any clear willingness to accept a lasting peace on any terms but its own. It continues to reject any direct negotiations with a government that it regards as illegitimate, and may well see peace negotiations as a means of negotiating a withdrawal of U.S. and other allied forces and a prelude to a peace that it could exploit to win control of Afghanistan.

At the same time, major uncertainties exist regarding continuing U.S. support for the war. Some press reports indicate the Administration is seeking a 50% reduction in active U.S. military manpower in country by the end of 2019 or some point in mid-2020 — regardless of whether a peace settlement is reached. Some members of Congress have called for major U.S. force cuts or an end to U.S. support for the war, and others shown only a limited willingness to keep up U.S. support of the Afghan government and forces if peace negotiations do not succeed.

The very survival of the Afghan government is uncertain after a legislative election that has left the Afghan parliament just as weak and ineffective as it has been since its creation. Eighteen relative weak candidates are running for a Presidential election in late September 2019 that may or may not be held successfully. If the election is held, it may well be as divisive as past elections. Moreover, politics are only part of the problem. Governance is poor at every level, corrupt, incapable of providing effective security and a rule of law and often divisive as well.

Afghanistan is still a “failed state” at both the security and civil levels. The Afghan Security forces have only survived because outside aid provides 70% of all their funding, extensive train and assist efforts now extend down to the combat unit level, direct combat support is quietly provided by cadres of elite U.S. combat troops, and a massive increase has taken place in U.S. air strikes that provide direct combat support. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are an unknown number of years away from being able to stand on their own.

Hundreds of billions of dollars in civil aid have failed to keep poverty levels from increasing, to provide adequate civil employment, to create major licit exports as distinguished from narcotics exports, and to develop adequate levels of economic growth and reform.

UNAMA has failed to emerge as capable of planning and coordinating the aid effort. Donor countries have failed to pursue consistent policies, manage the follow of aid effectively, or help develop effective plans. The Afghan government has wasted massive amounts of aid money or seen lost through corruption, and shown little ability to plan or manage aid efforts on a national basis. The legal system is weak, corrupt, and sometimes under the local control of the Taliban, the banking system has been the scene of major scandals, and the impact of war has blocked or disrupted both trade and investment. In short, the civil sector is even weaker than the security sector.

## **The Survey of Afghanistan in Mid-2019**

This mix of problems must be kept in perspective. The Taliban and other threats are relatively weak, and have divisions and problems of their own. Accordingly, much depends on the current trends in the fighting, and the extent to which the Afghan Government or the Taliban are winning control and influence over the country. Much also depends on the degree to which the Afghan government forces can stand on their own if peace negotiations lead to the withdrawal of U.S. and Resolute Support forces, or if the U.S. makes major further force and aid cuts without a peace settlement.

This is why the Burke Chair at CSIS is issuing a revised survey of the key indicators now shaping the course of the war. This survey uses official statements and graphics to examine the problems and successes in creating Afghan security forces, effective governance, and an economy that can support a peace or the effort to win some real form of victory. The survey presents a wide range of open source material drawn from U.S. government sources, NATO reporting, institutions like the UN and World Bank, work by other analysts and think tanks, and media sources as diverse as the *Long War Journal* and *the New York Times*.

The survey is often critical of Afghan efforts, but it also warns that – even after eighteen years of conflict — the United States has not developed an approach to the war that can defeat the Taliban, ISIS, and the other threats in Afghanistan. It shows that the war may be officially reported as being be a close to stalemate, but is actually one that at least marginally favors the Taliban – and does so in spite of massive ongoing U.S. air, financial, and advisory support. The survey also warns that the U.S. has failed to help the Afghan government overcome its many critical military and civil limitations, and is still unable to choose and implement some form of consistent U.S. strategy.

The Survey's data and metrics indicate that:

- The Afghan government has made its own attempts to define a peace settlement, but so far has been unable to deal with the Taliban, which continues to reject its legitimacy.
- The Afghan government remains corrupt, ineffective, weak and deeply divided. If Afghanistan does hold a Presidential election in September 2019, there are doubts that its results will win broad Afghan support and/or improve Afghanistan's future.

- The military situation remains grim. Afghan forces may be making progress — and innovations like the Security Forces Assistance Brigades are having a positive impact — but serious questions emerge as to whether Afghan forces will be able to stand on their own without outside support for something like the next half-decade.
- Open source reporting on the course of the fighting is highly controversial – to the point where the U.S-led command has canceled reporting on Afghan government vs. Taliban control and influence, and no longer reports on many aspects of ANSF operational capabilities. Excerpts from SIGAR, Lead IG, and *Long War Journal* reporting are particularly revealing.
- These problems in the war effort exist in spite of continued Afghan dependence on massive U.S military aid, major increases in the use of U.S. airpower, continued U.S. support of key Afghan ground forces, and forward U.S. train and assist support of other Afghan combat forces at the Kandak level.
- There still is a critical lack of progress in key aspects of Afghan government forces, governance, and economic development, and little reason to believe the situation will improve strikingly in the foreseeable future.
- The Afghan government will not be able to survive without billions of dollars in annual financial aid from outside powers like the U.S. for years to come. It is also clear that Afghan forces would now suffer unacceptable military losses if the U.S. did not continue to provide massive amounts of air support, if the U.S. and its allies did not provide substantial train and assist help to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and if U.S. ground forces did not provide direct support to Afghan Special Security Forces and other elite units.
- Other metrics and data highlight long list of equally critical uncertainties, many of which raise further questions about U.S. capability to create a stable Afghanistan.

These are challenges that should have a major impact on U.S. strategy at a time when the U.S. has to make hard choices about staying, seeking a peace, or finding ways to withdraw even if a peace is not reached. At present, however, the U.S. has not openly addressed these issues or announced a clear strategy for the future. It instead seems to be pursuing a peace settlement largely as a first step in withdrawing from Afghanistan without openly stating its intentions to do, and in ways that sharply limit participation by the Afghan government for whom the U.S is in Afghanistan to aid.

Reporting by SIGAR, the Lead IG, and media reporting also raise growing questions as to whether the U.S. is classifying or altering some aspects of its open source reporting to disguise its lack of progress, and ease its ability to withdraw, even at the cost of a peace settlement that will not offer the Afghan government real security.

This survey of Afghanistan in mid 2019 does not examine the politics of Afghanistan or the current peace efforts in detail. These issues are too topical and volatile. It does, however, present data and metrics that show that while Afghanistan continues to pursue reform in many civil areas, its success is questionable at best.

Excerpts and graphics from sources like the World Bank, the United Nations, and the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction show just how badly governed and corrupt the country still is. They show how serious the challenges it faces in terms of poverty and development still are, and they document a growing dependence on a narco-economy.

Finally, the survey shows that Afghanistan has a deeply divided population that is growing at a rate that its domestic economy cannot properly support, and that it will face critical challenges in employing its youth even if it can achieve some meaningful form of peace, unity, and development. These civil problems are so critical that they raise serious questions as to whether the country can create a peace that brings it true stability and security, and can emerge out of its coming election with a successful enough government to either continue the fight or manage a peace. Afghanistan's civil threats are as serious as its security threats.

## **The Challenges Posed by Strategy, Key Issues, the Cost of War, and Changes in the Size and Role of U.S. Forces**

The Survey is organized as follows:

### **U.S. Strategy: Hold, Fold, or Run (pp. 21-28)**

- The initial section of this survey touches briefly on the official strategy described in U.S. official statements, much of which is being overtaken by events like the peace negotiations, war fatigue in the U.S. and allied states, and the course of the fighting. At present, it is unclear what aspect of official U.S. strategy will shape the future level of U.S. engagement. As for the Afghan government, it has no real strategy — although President Ghani has proposed import reforms for government and the economy, it is equally unclear how many will ever take on a real-world form as a meaningful national effort.

### **Key Challenges (pp. 29-34)**

- The next section summarizes the full range of issues shaping the course and outcome of the fighting and/or the potential success of any peace effort. It shows the complexity of the problems involved and lists the challenges to follow-on efforts to create a functioning and independent civil government, security forces, and economy. It provides a framework for judging and assessing the various policies, efforts, and problems that are raised in the sections that follow.

### **Unstable and Turbulent Funding and Radical Shifts in the Estimates of the Cost of War (pp. 35-47)**

- The third section begins to present the key data shaping the nature and course of the war. It warns that there is no reliable way to cost the future U.S. role in Afghanistan in either peace or war. This will not be possible until and unless, the U.S. actually provides better cost data, transparency as to the details of its peace plan, and some agreement is reached upon such a plan with the Taliban—or the U.S. decided whether to stay or withdraw if peace efforts fail.

- The data show that the U.S. has never published a credible cost of the estimate of the war that shows what expenses are actually included, and how they are allocated. Three Administrations, and some 18 years worth of Congresses, have all failed to provide such data. SIGAR's July 31, 2019 report did, however, report the figures provided in the DOD, *Cost of War Monthly Report*, for Total War-related Obligations by Year Incurred, data as of March 31, 2019. The total was \$755.7 billion for the war, and \$120.7 billion for reconstruction, for a total of \$876.4 billion. (pp. 41-45)
- This is an immense amount of money for the entire period from FY2002 through FY2019, but such totals need to be kept in careful perspective. A sunk cost is a sunk cost, and the cost per year has dropped from a peak of \$111 billion in FY2012 to \$19 billion in FY2019.
- Some reporting on the war has focused on the total cost of the war from FY2002 onwards. Other reporting has sharply exaggerated probable future casualties. It should be recognized that future costs for securing a peace *could* be relatively limited by any past standard, and that sustaining the Afghan war effort might also be affordable if it could be made more effective in civil and military terms.
- The cost of providing security guarantees for a peace settlement could be much lower, and it seems uncertain that the cost of continuing the war would be much higher. The bulk of the \$19 billion in the FY2019 budget goes to paying for U.S. forces and presence. SIGAR indicated in its July 20, 2019 report to Congress that the total budget request for civil and military aid to Afghanistan in FY2019 was \$4.68 billion or 25% of this total.. (p. 43).
- The same SIGAR report also shows, however, that U.S. spending on the war from FY2001-FY2018 – which dominated the actions of both U.S. and the Afghan government and of allied nations, NATO, the UN, IMF, and World Bank – was extremely erratic. The spending histograms for each aid program look like diagrams of mountain ranges, and such graphs alone make it clear the U.S. never developed an adequate set of tools to cost, plan, and program the war. No competent effort could possibly produce total costs over time that are be so turbulent and inconsistent.
- This situation was made far worse by the fact major allied states pursued their own individual approaches to the role played by their military forces, and pursued their own separate patterns in actually funding aid efforts. Almost all aid programs lacked adequate efforts to manage major program, block corruption and waste, and provide honest measures of success and effectiveness. The failure of UNAMA to plan, coordinate, and manage such aid efforts was compounded by a lack of adequate effort to ensure honest spending and effective results by every donor government by the inability of the Afghan government to govern effectively and control corruption. (These governance and corruption issues are addressed in more detail later in the survey.)

- Both civil and military efforts suffered from the fact that U.S. and other foreign personnel were consistently rotated after annual or shorter tours. Many were assigned with little or no practical country background or experience in what were specialized assignments. This created a cycle of annual change in given efforts at the macro and micro-levels that tended to make “every year the first year in Afghanistan.” Rapid turnover and promotion and assignment through patronage or bribery had the same impact on many Afghan officials and officers – compounded by massive corruption at every level, and by interference by power brokers warlords, and narco-traffickers at the local and provincial levels.
- The graphs showing the histograms of U.S. aid spending by major program also help illustrate the devastating impact of delaying the creation of effective Afghan security efforts and civil aid programs – driven in part by U.S. involvement in Iraq. The U.S. first created a one-time surge in spending on both civil and military efforts. It then suddenly shifted to an effort to withdraw that did not consider the realities on the ground and the real world of either the progress in creating effective Afghan force or civil programs. The U.S. then partially reversing the decision to withdraw, but only half-implemented a more conditional approach. It is these erratic efforts under three different U.S. administration which have now culminated in the present uncertain search for peace.

### **The Changing U.S. Role in Warfighting and Shifts in Balance of U.S. Ground and Air Forces (pp. 48-62)**

- The next section of the survey shows the degree to which the level of U.S. military involvement has changed since 2001. It shows the slow rise in U.S. forces, the sudden surge, the partial withdrawal, and the present official levels of U.S. military personnel – as well as the real world level of fully assigned military and contractor personnel – where many, if not most contractors shown play roles that were played by uniformed military in past wars.
- The U.S. has never provided a clear picture of the forces it has deployed, or their mission, since 2013. Some of this classification may be justified for security reasons, but much of it seems to be political and designed to minimize the problems that still remain in making Afghan Forces effective and their impact on the lack of progress in defeating the Taliban.
- U.S. official reporting also presents major problems in estimating the size of forces on temporary duty (TDY) versus “permanent change of station” (PCS) within Afghanistan. It fails to provide a clear description of the role of given U.S. forces inside the country that support the ANSF, and it fails to report the size and role of the entire mix of military, civilian, and contractor personnel. It also makes it impossible to understand the extent to which the role of naval carrier and air forces outside Afghanistan, and of support and administrative forces outside the country, are actually included (and properly costed) in official totals for OCO spending and the cost of war.
- For example, SIGAR only gave the following data on the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan in its July 30, 2019 report: (pp. 71-72)

According to DOD, as of June 2019, approximately 14,000 U.S. military personnel were serving as part of the U.S. Operation Freedom's Sentinel mission in Afghanistan, the same number reported for over a year. An additional 10,648 U.S. citizens who serve as contractors are also in Afghanistan as of July 2019. Of the 14,000 U.S. military personnel, 8,475 are assigned to the NATO RS mission to train, advise, and assist Afghan security forces, unchanged since last quarter. The remaining U.S. military personnel serve in support roles, train the Afghan special forces, or conduct air and counterterror operations.

As of June 2019, the RS mission included 8,673 military personnel from NATO allies and non-NATO partner nations, bringing the current total of RS military personnel to 17,148 (a 114-person increase since last quarter). The United States continues to contribute the most troops to the RS mission, followed by Germany (1,300 personnel) and the United Kingdom (1,100).

- The turbulence in the U.S. military manning data in this section also match the turbulence in the spending data in many ways. The sharp rise and fall over time again reflect the inability of three very different U.S. Administrations to plan, program, and implement any U.S. strategy early and long enough to make it effective.
- These graphs also help illustrate the role that the U.S. and NATO played in failing to react to the recovery of the Taliban, and create efforts to develop effective Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Partly because of U.S involvement in Iraq, and partly because so many national pledges of trainers were delayed, never kept, or met with untrained personnel, effective training programs could not be resourced until CY2012, and then were almost immediately cutback because of U.S. and allied withdrawals.
- At the same time, the data in this section show that the U.S. has compensated in part for its cuts in combat land forces by vastly increasing the level of combat air support sorties that actually fire weapons – and the number of remotely piloted IS&R sorties used to target them although the data involved are not shown and are classified. The U.S. has also long provided direct U.S. land combat force to support elite Afghan Army and Police units, and has shifted from a train and assist mission in the rear to one that is forward and aids Afghan Army units at the Kandak level that are in actual combat.
- *Combined with the earlier data on the sharp drops in the cost of the U.S. effort, the end result is a major increase in the effectiveness of U.S. support of the Afghan forces.* This indicates that the cost of continuing the support of Afghan forces may be much lower than past U.S. spending on the war would indicate. The data on military casualties later in this survey, also show that these changes allow the U.S. to provide such support with far lower losses in Americans killed or wounded in combat.
- The SIGAR report for July 30, 2019 notes that, (p.72)

DOD reported in June that General Austin Scott Miller, Commander of RS and USFOR-A, rolled out a new operational design for the U.S. and NATO mission in Afghanistan over the last six months. The new design reportedly streamlines U.S. operations in the country by synchronizing U.S. counterterrorism capabilities with increased ANDSF operations and focused RS Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) efforts to the “point of need.”

DOD said this model has “restored the Coalition’s tactical initiative and put heavy pressure on the Taliban . . . to generate strong incentives for them to engage in meaningful negotiations with the U.S. and Afghan governments.” DOD also said the new operational design and current U.S. military footprint are the “most efficient use of small numbers and resources to generate combat power and battlefield effects since the opening year of the war in Afghanistan.” DOD reiterated that the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan is conditions-based, with commanders on the ground continually evaluating conditions and making recommendations on appropriate force levels.

- Unfortunately, there is no way to estimate the future U.S. role in Afghanistan in either peace or war. This will not be possible until and unless, the U.S. actually provides some transparency as to its peace plan and some agreement is reached upon such a plan with the Taliban—or if the U.S. has decided whether to stay or withdraw if a peace plan fails.

### **Allies Remain Critical: NATO-Resolute Support —Troop Contributions and International Aid (pp. 63-68):**

- This section serves as a reminder of the fact that allied forces and aid may have had their weaknesses, but have had — and still play — a critical role in supporting U.S. and Afghan forces. The U.S. failure to both properly acknowledge this support, and include allies in the past decisions to make major shifts in U.S. force levels and strategy may present problems in both securing a peace and obtaining future support.

### **Afghan Forces Remain Dependent on U.S. and Resolute Support Aid and Assistance**

The following two sections of the survey show that Afghanistan is making some progress in creating more effective military forces, but that such progress is fragile at best. It also largely affects the Afghan National Army (ANA)—which is taking high casualties and has recently begun to lose personnel by desertion.

The Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan Local Police (ALP) – which are critical to securing the countryside and the population – receive only very limited outside support, are again in a side of turbulence because of ongoing problems and attempts at reform, lack the paramilitary capabilities they need, fail to properly support governance at the District and local levels and the rule of law, and present more serious problems in terms of corruption and extortion, and divided loyalties to powerbrokers, warlords, narcotraffickers as well as willingness to reach some accommodation with the Taliban.

### **Still Faltering Afghan Force Development (pp. 69-101):**

This section can only cover the major trends in some aspect of Afghan force development, and its value is sharply restricted by the gross over-classification of much of the data on Afghan forces provided to SIGAR and the LIG, and presented in the OSD 1225 report. It does show, however, that:

- There are virtually no open source data that provide a clear picture of the progress being made in improving any aspect of the the Afghan Army order of battle or the actual combat effectiveness of anything other than elite units. The seemingly endless new efforts to reform the major problems in managing Afghan personnel and security spending, and in improving the efficiency of the Ministry of Defense in managing ANA and ANAF forces, and the Ministry of the Interior in managing ANP and ANLP forces are described largely in terms of intentions and not the result.

- More broadly, OSD, LIG, and SIGAR reports persistently warn that the Army’s offensive and counteroffensive capability is heavily dependent on a small number of elite, over-stressed units which are, in turn, dependent on support from U.S. elite ground troops, Security Force Assistance Brigade or their equivalent, and on U.S. combat air support and IS&R capabilities. None of the reports, however, attempt to describe or assess this dependence in any detail.
- SIGAR’s July 30, 2019 report to Congress warns that serious cuts are taking place in total ANA and ANP manning. A close reading of recent reports raises serious questions as to how much of this drop is caused by poor leadership and rising casualties, or is the result of new pay systems that make it harder to add and maintain false names or “ghost soldiers” to the personnel lists. Moreover, it seems that these personnel shortfalls are restricting advanced training at all levels, and increasing the burden placed on the limited number of more effective combat units.
- The Afghan Air Force cannot come close to providing the kind of air support provided by AFCENT, and current plans will not provide such capabilities at any point in the future. Aside from one Special Mission unit, they lack anything like the precision strike and advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities of U.S. manned and remotely piloted aircraft. These are critical shortfalls, given the ANA’s current dependence on combat air support.
- So are reports of shortfalls in the training of the ground force specialists that are supposed to coordinate air strikes and the tactical side of close air support.
- It is unclear that the U.S. (and the Afghan government) have a good understanding of the effectiveness of many ANP and ALP forces, their actual personnel levels, their treatment of civilians, and the problems they raise in terms of corruption, failure to enforce the rule of law, and ties to narco-traffickers and power brokers.
- The Afghan Police have only one brigade-equivalent of effective, elite paramilitary forces. Most police and local security forces lack the ability to fight effectively as a paramilitary force. The overall mix of such Ministry of the Interior forces is poorly structured and corrupt, casualties are high, and these weaknesses are compounded by widespread corruption in the courts and legal system, and districts where there are no effective courts or actual governance.
- There are no clear indications that yet another set of anti-corruption programs are effective, or that “conditionality” is being enforced in supporting given elements of the ANSF in ways that will reduce corruption and improve leadership and force management.
- In broad terms, these data indicate that Afghan forces are years away from being able to stand on their own, and is now critically dependent on U.S. and allied support in terms of military aid funds, train and assist personnel, direct combat support, and U.S. air power.

## **Military Casualties: Afghan Data are Classified, but U.S. and Resolute Support Force Cuts have reduced US and Allied Casualties to a Minimum (pp. 102-107)**

The data in this section do show that U.S. and Resolute Support casualties have been cut sharply since the time when their land forces dominated combat in the war. They hint at the fact the ANA and ANP may well be suffering unacceptable casualties in spite of U.S. and allied Resolute Support aid, but the data are classified and the full reasons behind the drops in ANA and ANP personnel are not apparent from the unclassified versions of the reports.

- The level of U.S. and other Resolute Support casualties is now very low. The LIG report for the first quarter of 2019 noted that,  
“Four U.S. military personnel died because of combat injuries during the quarter. The DoD announced that a Soldier died of wounds sustained on January 13 in Badghis province; a Soldier died on January 22 as a result of small arms fire in Uruzgan province; and two Soldiers died as a result of wounds sustained in Kunduz province on March 22...Resolute Support did not report any casualties among its non-U.S. partner forces during the quarter.” (p.31)
- The level of ANSF casualties is a different story. The actual numbers are classified, as are the details of the reasons for the shrinking manpower totals in the ANA – evidently to disguise the level of the problems that now occurring., However, virtually all independent reporting talks about steadily higher levels, particularly in the Afghan National Police (ANP), but in the Army (ANA) as well.
- The LIG report for the first quarter of 2019 notes that,  
USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that the number of ANDSF casualties during the period December 2018 to February 2019 was approximately 31 percent higher than the same period one year ago. The number of casualties during defensive operations increased by 45 percent while the number of casualties during offensive operations increased by 21 percent. Almost half of the ANDSF casualties during this 3-month period were inflicted during checkpoint security operations.  
...USFOR-A classified ANDSF casualty and attrition rates at the request of the Afghan government. However, Afghan political leaders occasionally release some information about ANDSF casualties to the media. In January 2019, President Ghani stated that 45,000 ANDSF members had been killed since he took office in 2014.
- A report by Rod Norland and David Zucchino in the *New York Times* on August 13, 2019 – entitled “As U.S. Nears a Pullout Deal, Afghan Army Is on the Defensive,” states that,  
Afghanistan’s minister of defense, Asadullah Khalid, said that since taking command in December he had worked to shift regular forces out of their defensive posture...“Their mind-set has changed from defensive to offensive,” Mr. Khalid said in an interview at the defense ministry in Kabul.... “Let’s be clear: These bases are not for us to just stay there and sleep there. They are going out on the offense.”  
But Mr. Khalid also said that some regular forces had sustained high casualty rates this year during Taliban attacks on checkpoints and bases, in areas where the militants were not threatened by government offensives. “We are trying to reverse that situation,” he said.

Only about three percent of the 2,300 deaths in the casualty reports compiled by the Times this year occurred during offensive combat operations carried out by regular forces. Among those were troops killed in Taliban ambushes after being sent to reinforce besieged bases or checkpoints.

Roughly 10 percent of the deaths occurred in other actions, away from bases and checkpoints. They were attributed to roadside bombs; attacks on convoys; snipers; insider attacks; friendly fire; and ambushes of soldiers or police who were on food runs, driving to work, in their homes, in bazaars, at weddings, in mosques.

## **Afghan Forces and the Trends in the Fighting**

The next parts of the survey focus on the course of the fighting and its implications for future U.S. support of Afghanistan and peacemaking efforts. The following sections examine the trends in the fighting in detail. Like the rest of the survey, they draw on recent official reporting by the Resolute Support Command, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (1225 Report), the Lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations (LIG-OCO), the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR), the United Nations, and a variety of outside sources.

Each section compares the key data and conclusion in each recent official report in a key area in ways that to show their assessments of the threat, and of the problems in estimating Government vs. Taliban influence and control. Each examines key problems in the reporting on the levels of violence and civilian casualties, and in the estimates of the terrorist threat. The analysis is divided into the following six sections – each of which has an introductory summary of its content and impact:

### **Estimates of Military Balance and Size of the Threat Show Little or No Progress in Defeating the Taliban (pp 108-120)**

- All of the sources shown indicate that the Taliban continues to be a major threat, and that the level of violence inflicted by other movements and by terrorist organizations continues to be serious. The OSD reporting seems to understate the levels of Taliban activity, but the LIG and SIGAR reports – as well as a CIA report – indicate that the Taliban may be gaining.
- Broadly speaking, all of the reports describe a near stalemate. The differences are largely over whether this stalemate currently favors the Taliban. None of the reports address the degree to which the Afghan Government and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are dependent on support from U.S. airpower, elite ground troops, and the forward deployment of security force train and assist personnel at the combat unit or Kandak level to prevent major Taliban gains in Afghan population centers, or what would happen if U.S. and other major Resolute Support forces were severely cut or withdrawn.

### **Estimates of Levels of Government and Threat Control and Influence Get Steadily Worse and Then Are Cancelled or Classified (pp. 121-140)**

- The official reporting on the war by OSD and Resolute Support has steadily cut the level of reporting on which side is winning influence and control, and on the successes and problems in building up effective Afghan forces. This reporting is coming closer and closer to mirroring the Vietnam “Five O’ Clock Follies” in providing only favorable reporting on the war in ways that characterized far too much of the reporting on Vietnam.

- This politicization has resulted in the cancellation of official reporting on which side – the Afghan government or the Taliban controls, influences, or contests given districts.
- Reporting by SIGAR and the LIG, however, strongly indicates that the Taliban continues to make gains, as does reporting by the *Long War Journal* – which has consistently provided the best outside assessments of progress on each side. None of these reports indicate that the Taliban is strong enough to seize control of the country or most of its major population centers, but they are a warning that the Taliban may be making serious progress even while the U.S. and Resolute Support forces are still present and actively supporting the Government in the fighting, and that a political decision has been made within OSD and Resolute Support to avoid publicly reporting the level of Taliban progress.

#### **Estimates of Combat Activity as Largely Useless Indicators of the Trends in the War (pp. 141-156)**

- These warnings are sharply reinforced by the fact the OSD Report and Resolute Support have substituted virtually meaningless indicators of the trends in Effective Enemy Attacks (EEAs) and Enemy Initiated Attacks (EIAs) for reports on Government versus Taliban influence and control – the key measures of progress and success in insurgency and counterinsurgency.
- As the report shows in detail, these EEA and EIA indicators are defined and presented in ways that make them virtually useless indicators even of the level of violence in the fighting, and seem to be designed to provide a more favorable picture of ANSF success without any regard to the importance of given battles and role played by outside combat support.
- Other official metrics like the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) are not as positive, and both the EEA and EIA metrics ignore the fact that the struggle for influence and control over the population does not require the Taliban to directly attack prepared and well-organized Afghan government forces and is the very nature of counterinsurgency warfare.
- The most that can be said about current official unclassified assessments of combat activity is that they once again have the same character as the reporting that one expected at the Vietnam “Five O’clock Follies” something that becomes all too clear from independent observers and media reports, and from informal discussions with members of the security train and assistance and combat teams.
- For example, the report by Rod Norland and David Zucchini in the *New York Times* on August 13, 2019 – entitled “As U.S. Nears a Pullout Deal, Afghan Army Is on the Defensive,” – examined more than 2,300 combat deaths of government forces. These were compiled in daily casualty reports by *The New York Times* from January through July 2019. The *Times*, found that,
  - “...more than 87 percent occurred during Taliban attacks on bases, checkpoints or command centers. These numbers indicate that the Taliban could attack many such bases almost at will. During that seven-month period, the Taliban mounted more than 280 such attacks — an average of more than one a day...Police and soldiers are stuck in their bases,” said Abdul Aziz Beg, head of the district council in Badghis Province in western Afghanistan. “The Taliban are killing security forces easily, but no one pays attention.”

Local government officials in several provinces said the only ground operations against the Taliban were being carried out by the American-backed Afghan Special Forces...“They come here, kill some people and arrest some, and that’s it. When they leave, the Taliban come back” and kill regular troops in their bases, said Rahmatullah Qaisari, a district governor in Faryab Province in northern Afghanistan... “To make people happy, security officials announce operations,” said Tor Khan Zarifi, a tribal elder in Herat Province in the north. “These operations are kind of show-off — they don’t have any impact.”

A senior American military official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations, acknowledged that the Afghans were increasingly relying on elite units such as commandos and special police units to attack the Taliban. He said regular Afghan units still sustained most of their casualties while trying to hold on to territory anchored by bases and checkpoints.”

### **Civilian Casualty Trends Show Limited Growth in Total Deaths, but Growing Differences in Resolute Support and UNAMA Assessments of the Impact of ANSF and Coalition Attacks on Civilians (pp. 157-177)**

- Civilian casualties do provide some crude indications of the impact of the war on the civilian population and the intensity of the fighting in given areas. They do not, however, reflect the efforts of the Taliban, warlords, and narco-traffickers to intimidate the population – classic aspects of counterinsurgency warfare. The data are often highly uncertain, and reflect a natural bias towards counting military battles and air strikes and not the overall pattern in the country side.
- As for military casualties, the level of U.S. and other Resolute Support casualties is now very low. The LIG report for the first quarter of 2019 noted that,

“Four U.S. military personnel died because of combat injuries during the quarter. The DoD announced that a Soldier died of wounds sustained on January 13 in Badghis province; a Soldier died on January 22 as a result of small arms fire in Uruzgan province; and two Soldiers died as a result of wounds sustained in Kunduz province on March 22...Resolute Support did not report any casualties among its non–U.S. partner forces during the quarter.” (p.31)
- The SIGAR report for July 30, 2019 also notes that U.S. and allied casualty levels are now very low: (p. 73)

According to DOD, five U.S. military personnel were killed and 35 were wounded in action (WIA) in Afghanistan this reporting period (April 17 to July 15, 2019). As of July 15, 2019, a total of 72 U.S. military personnel have died in Afghanistan (53 from hostilities and 19 in non-hostile circumstances) and 427 military personnel were WIA since the start of Operation Freedom’s Sentinel on January 1, 2015. Since the beginning of U.S. operations in Afghanistan in October 2001, 2,419 U.S. military personnel have died (1,898 from hostilities and 521 in non-hostile circumstances) and 20,530 have been WIA.
- The level of ANSF casualties is a different story. The actual numbers are classified, as are the details of the reasons for the shrinking manpower totals in the ANA – evidently to disguise the level of the problems that now occurring. However, virtually all independent reporting talks about steadily higher levels, particularly in the Afghan National Police (ANP), but in the Army (ANA) as well.
- The data also reveal a major difference between the Resolute Support and the UN estimates of the civilian casualties inflicted by Afghan Government forces and by airpower – which largely consists of U.S. strikes.

- In this case, quotes explaining the UN methodology indicate that it probably exaggerates the civilian casualties inflicted by pro-Government forces although the data on the Resolute Support estimates indicate that it may undercount to a lesser degree. The UN assessment also seems somewhat unrealistic in assessing what any military force can actually do in a war where the Taliban routinely uses human shields, where accurate air strikes often produce far fewer casualties than land fighting through and in populated areas, and prolonging the fighting by carrying out fewer strikes would probably produce higher civilian dead and injured.
- In broad terms, however, both sets of estimates indicate that the total levels of civilian casualties are far lower than in Iraq and Syria, and are not steadily rising.

### **Estimates of Terrorism in Afghanistan Are Uncertain but Seem to Reflect Steady Increases (pp. 178-193)**

- All of the sources reflect warnings that ISIS-K and other terrorist movements are now playing a role in the fighting, although this role so far remains limited. This is a warning that Afghanistan *might* become a potential center for international terrorism if the Afghan government was defeated, although it is not clear that the Taliban has such intentions or would tolerate such rivals. The data are also uncertain, poorly defined and categorized, and cannot be meaningfully updated now that the State Department has cancelled the START database effort.

In summary, these sections show that official reporting on the course of the fighting data are mixed, uncertain, and increasingly politicized. They do, however, make it clear that the Taliban remains a major force, and they do raise a critical question about whether the Afghan Government can survive any major cuts in U.S. military aid, train and assist efforts, and combat support if there is no peace settlement.

They then show that:

- The Army's offensive and counteroffensive capability is heavily dependent on a small number of elite, over-stressed ANA units which are, in turn, dependent on support from U.S. elite ground troops, from Security Force Assistance Brigades or their train and assist equivalent, and from U.S. combat air t and IS&R forces.
- The Afghan Air Force cannot come close to providing the kind of air support provided by AFCENT, and current plans will not provide such capabilities at any point in the future. Aside from one Special Mission unit, they lack anything the precision strike and advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities of U.S. manned and remotely piloted aircraft. These are critical shortfalls, given the ANA's current dependence on combat air support.
- The Afghan Police have only one brigade-equivalent worth of effective, elite paramilitary forces. Most, police and local security forces lack the ability to fight effectively as paramilitary forces. The overall mix of Ministry of the Interior forces is poorly trained and led and casualties are high. These weaknesses are compounded by widespread corruption in the courts and legal system, and Districts where there are no effective courts or actual governance.

In broad terms, Afghan forces are years away from being able to stand on their own, and are now critically dependent on U.S. and allied support in terms of military aid funds, train and assist personnel, direct combat support, and U.S. air power.

At the same time, they raise serious questions about the ability to implement any peace settlement without some form of continuing U.S. military presence, aid guarantees, and security guarantees that will keep the Taliban from taking over. There are far too many similarities to a similar period in the Vietnam War when the ARVN at least appeared to be far stronger before a peace settlement—and a U.S. withdrawal—than the ANSF appears to be today.

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# **U.S. Strategy: Hold, Fold, or Run**

## U.S. Strategy: Hold, Fold, or Run?

At this writing, it is impossible to state what U.S. strategy really is, and how it will change over the next few months and then years. Open source material does not provide reliable data on the course of the fighting, or on the relative level of Afghan government versus Taliban control over the population and countryside. It is unclear how the current U.S. Administration perceives its options for supporting the Afghan government in fighting the war, the future scale of that support, and how long the U.S. will be willing to provide it.

The Administration seems to be divided over whether to stay (“hold”), slowly phase down U.S. support (“fold”), or find some reason to leave more quickly (“run”). The Congress seems equally divided, although it so far has done more to distance itself from playing a visible role than to choose sides in staying or leaving. As for the American people, it is clear that “war fatigue” has set in and there is limited popular attention to the war, but it is not clear how the population really feels about the current war effort, and leaving or staying. So far, both politics and popular attention are focused more on other issues.

The official strategy is still the conditional strategy outlined in the excerpts that follow, and the U.S. has made some progress in finding a cost effective tactical approach to the war that combined the added use of air strikes with forward train and assist efforts and less public U.S. land force support for elite Afghan units in key direct battles. There no longer, however, is any major matching civil effort, and this aspect of U.S. aid has been cut back to minimal levels.

U.S. strategy officially continues to support the Afghan Government at both the civil and military level, but the U.S. is deeply involved in peace negotiations with the Taliban, and the Taliban refuses to negotiate with the Afghan government or recognize any aspect of its legitimacy. The Afghan government is headed towards a Presidential election with 18 candidates – none of whom seem to inspire broad national support, and where the security and legitimacy of the election seem just as uncertain as in past elections.

Moreover, the Administration has not provided any clear data on the terms of the peace settlement it is proposing, what it would do to secure it in terms of guarantees and civil-military aid, and what it will do if the peace effort fails. Media reporting of the peace effort is so far limited and conflicting. There are no indications of what U.S. strategy will be to create a stable Afghanistan if a meaningful settlement is reached, or what it will do at the civil and military levels if the Taliban will not accept a peace that the U.S. finds acceptable.

It seems clear that there is no “win” option that would involve the Taliban accepting some form of full conversion to a civil element in a democratic Afghanistan. It is also questionable that the Administration would – or could – choose the “run” option and precipitously leave given the coming U.S. election and the impact on U.S. international standing and other security partners.

However, the willingness of the U.S. Administration to either “hold” by continuing to support the Afghan government in a continued war – or “fold” by finding some excuse to leave or phase down its support to the point where the Afghan government cannot survive – is so unclear that the U.S. seems to have no real strategy beyond playing out its current cards and waiting on events.

## OSD Reporting on Peace Negotiations: July, 2019

The South Asia Strategy prioritizes reconciliation and directs appropriate U.S. agencies to set conditions for a political settlement to end the war. In 2018, the combination of military pressure on the Taliban, grassroots peace initiatives in Afghanistan, the unprecedented nationwide Eid al-Fitr ceasefire, and Islamic community support for peace threatened the legitimacy of the Taliban cause and provided strong incentives for the Taliban to come to the negotiating table.

The SRAR's duty is to negotiate a peace agreement to end the war and ensure terrorists cannot threaten the United States from Afghanistan. In January 2019, SRAR Khalilzad identified four core elements required for a potential peace settlement with the Taliban:

- (1) The Taliban will break with all terrorists and prevent the use of Afghan soil under its control against the United States, its Allies, or any other country;
- (2) Withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan;
- (3) Formation of a power-sharing government through intra-Afghan dialogue;
- (4) A comprehensive and permanent ceasefire.

SRAR Khalilzad is currently negotiating the first two areas (counterterrorism guarantees and withdrawal of foreign forces) with the Taliban. He assesses that concluding those elements of the agreement will open the door to intra-Afghan negotiations and violence reduction.

As a complement to SRAR Khalilzad's negotiations, DoD supports peace efforts by applying military pressure on the Taliban to encourage its leaders to negotiate. DoD also continues to support efforts to facilitate local peace initiatives in Afghanistan in order to reduce violence. Local peace initiatives, or "bottom-up" reconciliation efforts, require the participation of many military, civilian, and non-governmental actors in Afghanistan. DoD is uniquely positioned to provide the security, transportation, and logistical support to help facilitate local peace initiatives. At the provincial level, Afghan Government officials continue to work with USFOR-A to identify opportunities to broker local peace deals with Taliban and other fighters who agree to lay down their arms. Leaders at the local level are exploring opportunities that may offer a path to peace on a small scale.

## DoD Updated Summary of U.S. Strategy: June, 2019

The vital national interest driving the South Asia Strategy is to protect the U.S. homeland and U.S. citizens and interests overseas from threats originating from South Asia. The principal goal is a durable and inclusive political settlement that ends the war in Afghanistan and mitigates the terrorist threat in the region. The U.S. conditions-based strategy, punctuated by an increase in military pressure on Taliban commanders, has helped set the conditions for Taliban leadership to initiate peace negotiations with the United States. At the time of the writing of this report, the United States is actively engaged in negotiations with a delegation from the Taliban and, separately, with representatives of the Afghan Government. These talks, led by Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation (SRAR) Zalmay Khalilzad, are an important step towards ending the war in Afghanistan.

Reinforcing Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (OFS) remains a priority for U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) since release of the South Asia Strategy. This prioritization has allowed the Department of Defense (DoD) to shift much-needed resources and enablers from Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq and Syria to OFS and the NATO Resolute Support Mission (RSM) to Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). The United States currently maintains approximately 14,000 military personnel in Afghanistan under OFS, approximately 8,500 of whom participate in the RS mission. These personnel maintain a presence primarily at bases in Kabul and Bagram with regional hubs in Laghman and Nangarhar Province in the east, Kandahar Province in the south, Herat Province in the west, Helmand in the southwest, Paktiya in the southeast, and Balkh Province in the north. Our strategy in Afghanistan is conditions-based; our commanders on the ground continually evaluate the current conditions and make recommendations on appropriate force levels.<sup>1</sup>

The presence of U.S. forces makes possible the execution of two well-defined and complementary mission-sets: the NATO-led TAA mission in support of ANDSF development, and the additional authorities and enablers provided by OFS to partner with the ANDSF to defeat Taliban insurgents, al-Qa'ida (AQ), and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Khorasan Province (ISIS-K). The RS and OSF mission sets work together to protect U.S. interests in Afghanistan and its region.

The DoD approach to implementation of the South Asia Strategy can be described by the R4+S concept—Reinforce, Realign, Regionalize, Reconcile, and Sustain.

**Reinforce:** The reinforce section of the strategy calls for U.S. and international funding commitments to sustain ongoing ANDSF combat operations and implementation of President Ghani's ANDSF roadmap. U.S. and Coalition partners remain committed to sourcing the vast majority of the RS TAA personnel and funding requirements. The continued international support reinforces a strong message of Coalition unity to the Taliban and other regional spoilers.

**Realign:** The South Asia Strategy calls for the realignment of U.S. military and civilian assistance and political outreach to target key areas under Afghan Government control. The strategy cites the proper alignment of U.S. and Afghan forces as a key to improved security. The push to realign authorities, resources, and the ANDSF continued to progress on schedule during this reporting period. During the first year of the South Asia Strategy, this realignment consisted chiefly of a U.S. shift in resources (lethal and non-lethal) from outside of Afghanistan into theater. Beginning in the fall of 2018, however, this realignment increasingly took the form of force and materiel optimization.

**Regionalize:** Regional efforts aim to expand burden sharing, neutralize potential spoilers to U.S. and Coalition efforts, limit threats to the United States and our allies and partners, and develop and support a durable political settlement in Afghanistan. The South Asia strategy prioritizes regional engagement to limit hedging against the Afghan Government and create an international consensus for peace. Pakistan, in particular, must play a key role in a peaceful resolution to the war in Afghanistan.

**Reconcile:** The primary goal of the South Asia Strategy is a durable and inclusive political settlement to the war in Afghanistan. The current military campaign increases military pressure on the Taliban and complements ongoing diplomatic efforts by the United States, Afghanistan, and our international partners. During this reporting period, U.S. representatives met with a Taliban delegation in Doha and with a group of Minister and Deputy Minister-level Afghan Government officials in Kabul to discuss elements of a peace deal. The next step in the process must be an intra-Afghan dialogue in which Taliban and Afghan delegations meet together directly.

**Sustain:** The South Asia Strategy replaced a rigid timeline with a focus on achieving specific U.S. objectives at sustainable costs. The strategy seeks to maximize fiscal, military, and political return on investment, and to decrease levels of U.S. and international investment over time. Efforts to achieve a sustainable political outcome in Afghanistan must be feasible. The United States and NATO will work to promote Afghan self-sufficiency across the security, political, and economic spheres; over the long run, such advances will make possible a steady reduction in the Afghan Government's reliance on international support.

# DoD Summary of U.S. Objectives: July, 2019

The United States has a single vital national interest in Afghanistan: to prevent it from becoming a safe-haven from which terrorist groups can plan and execute attacks against the U.S. homeland, U.S. citizens, and our interests and allies abroad. Our ultimate goal in Afghanistan is a negotiated political settlement between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. During this reporting period, the Afghan government continued to make progress toward meeting shared security objectives.<sup>2</sup>

U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) currently conducts two well-defined and complementary missions. First, through OFS, U.S. forces continue the counterterrorism (CT) mission against al-Qa'ida, ISIS-K, and their associates in Afghanistan to prevent their resurgence and ability to conduct external attacks. OFS authorities also allow USFOR-A to work by, with and through the ANDSF on the CT mission and on operations targeting the Taliban. Second, in partnership with NATO allies and operational partner nations in the RS mission, U.S. forces train, advise, and assist (TAA) the ANDSF. The United States supports the institutionalization of ANDSF gains by conducting functionally based security force assistance (SFA) as part of the NATO-led RS mission. U.S. and Coalition forces conduct TAA efforts at the ANA corps-level, the Afghan National Police (ANP) provincial-level, and with the MoD and MoI to develop institutional capacity, integrate capabilities (e.g., intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and aerial fires), and improve tactical proficiency. U.S. and Coalition forces also conduct TAA missions with the Afghan Air Force (AAF) and Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) at the tactical level, underscoring the importance of those two critical capabilities.

An array of operational authorities govern the conduct of U.S. military personnel engaged in the U.S. CT and RS TAA missions in Afghanistan. These authorities address U.S. CT operations and SFA in support of the ANDSF in their continued fight against the Taliban and other insurgent groups. Operational authorities also address circumstances in which U.S. forces may use force in support of the CT and TAA missions, including U.S. accompaniment and combat enabler support to the ANDSF fight against the Taliban and other insurgent groups.

## 1.3 U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM MISSION

The U.S. CT mission complements the NATO TAA mission. U.S. application of OFS authorities coupled with a stronger and increasingly capable ANDSF helped preserve security gains and contributed to a maturing U.S.-Afghan CT partnership. The Combined Special Operations Joint Task Force – Afghanistan (CSOJTF-A) supports U.S. CT efforts through TAA with the ASSF and accompanying the ASSF on certain operations. During this reporting period, the ASSF used its growing capabilities to conduct operations synchronized with USFOR-A to address insurgent and transnational threats. The CSOJTF-A TAA efforts remain focused on building the ASSF's capacity in logistics, command and control, fire support, intelligence analysis and sharing, aviation, and ASSF/conventional force interoperability. The new RS Operational Design further synchronized CT and TAA efforts. Placing ASSF in the lead for offensive operations with conventional ANDSF in a supporting role, along with better integration of operations with USFOR-A allowed for increased effects on Taliban and ISIS-K leaders and networks.

During this reporting period, the United States increasingly apportioned CT assets to operations designed to set conditions for negotiations between the Afghan Government and the Taliban. ASSF forces completed independent operations primarily focused on expanding security around population centers and clearing terrain. U.S. and Afghan forces conducted partnered and enabled operations throughout the country to increase military pressure on Taliban and ISIS-K leaders and networks. U.S. forces conducted the largest number of operations during this reporting period in the South and Southeast followed by the North and East. Roughly ten percent of operations focused on the Kabul region and preventing high-profile attacks.

U.S. efforts against ISIS-K in Afghanistan are part of the U.S. global effort to defeat ISIS. In addition to U.S. unilateral efforts, USFOR-A enables the ANDSF to conduct independent operations against ISIS-K. The United States is encouraging more robust intelligence and operational cooperation among Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other regional partners in the effort to defeat ISIS. Despite renewed efforts to target Taliban leaders and networks, ISIS-K remained disrupted throughout Afghanistan and ISIS-K's ability to conduct HPAs in Kabul was limited.

U.S. and Afghan forces have continued to maintain pressure on al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan. During the last two years, U.S.-led CT operations have killed numerous AQIS leaders and key members, disrupting and degrading the group.

## DoD on Operational Design: June, 2019

The current Resolute Support operational design focuses the efforts of U.S., Coalition, and Afghan forces in a manner that bolsters ANDSF security of population centers and key terrain, and concentrates effects on Taliban and ISIS-K leaders and networks. Commander RS executes the operational design by synchronizing the authorities granted to him by NATO's Resolute Support Mission (RSM) and by the U.S. Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS).

The operational design aligns these authorities to the following priorities: Interdict High-Profile Attacks (HPAs) in Kabul; conduct operations against the Taliban to disrupt their command and control nodes, support zones, and HPA networks; defeat ISIS-K; posture the ANA-Territorial Force (ANA-TF); and sustain TAA efforts. The design's success relies upon all ANDSF components enabled by NATO TAA and augmented by precision targeting under OFS authorities. In addition to the physical domain, the operational design encourages the Afghan Government to compete increasingly with the Taliban and ISIS-K to gain advantage in the information domain. The most significant change in the operational design from previous reporting periods is that U.S. CT and ANDSF combat capabilities are better integrated and employed in a more expeditionary, focused, and agile manner.

The operational design places the ASSF in the lead role as the primary offensive force with conventional ANA conducts supporting offensive operations, holds terrain, and consolidates gains to create an environment where the Taliban are unable to establish or expand their influence. Rather than focus on conducting simultaneous brigade and corps level operations to dominate large geographic areas of responsibility, the ANDSF narrowed its focus under the new design on commonly agreed upon strategic areas and key terrain.

The operational design has several supporting missions to ensure the overall success of the ANDSF. Some of the key supporting missions include empowering leaders, reducing vulnerable checkpoints, enforcing supply accountability and responsiveness, eliminating ASSF misuse in static defense missions, and ensuring soldiers paid on time. To ensure efforts are coordinated with the Afghan interagency and ANDSF, RS has organized a series of collaborative staff planning events that help synchronize overall TAA and enabler support to the ANDSF. The key planning event for the RS staff is the Operational Design Meeting (ODM), which reviews intelligence, sets objective priorities, allocates assets, and synchronizes operations. Additionally, RS conducts a weekly security meeting with MOD and MOI senior leaders and planners after the ODM to nest all operations and assess progress.

# President Trump's July 17, 2019 Statement on U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan - I

...In Afghanistan and Pakistan, America's interests are clear: We must stop the resurgence of safe havens that enable terrorists to threaten America, and we must prevent nuclear weapons and materials from coming into the hands of terrorists and being used against us, or anywhere in the world for that matter.

But to prosecute this war, we will learn from history. As a result of our comprehensive review, American strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia will change dramatically in the following ways:

A core pillar of our new strategy is a shift from a time-based approach to one based on conditions. I've said it many times how counterproductive it is for the United States to announce in advance the dates we intend to begin, or end, military options. We will not talk about numbers of troops or our plans for further military activities....Conditions on the ground — not arbitrary timetables — will guide our strategy from now on. America's enemies must never know our plans or believe they can wait us out. I will not say when we are going to attack, but attack we will.

Another fundamental pillar of our new strategy is the integration of all instruments of American power — diplomatic, economic, and military — toward a successful outcome.

Someday, after an effective military effort, perhaps it will be possible to have a political settlement that includes elements of the Taliban in Afghanistan, but nobody knows if or when that will ever happen. America will continue its support for the Afghan government and the Afghan military as they confront the Taliban in the field...Ultimately, it is up to the people of Afghanistan to take ownership of their future, to govern their society, and to achieve an everlasting peace. We are a partner and a friend, but we will not dictate to the Afghan people how to live, or how to govern their own complex society. We are not nation-building again. We are killing terrorists.

The next pillar of our new strategy is to change the approach and how to deal with Pakistan. We can no longer be silent about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organizations, the Taliban, and other groups that pose a threat to the region and beyond. Pakistan has much to gain from partnering with our effort in Afghanistan. It has much to lose by continuing to harbor criminals and terrorists.

In the past, Pakistan has been a valued partner. Our militaries have worked together against common enemies. The Pakistani people have suffered greatly from terrorism and extremism. We recognize those contributions and those sacrifices....But Pakistan has also sheltered the same organizations that try every single day to kill our people. We have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars at the same time they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting. But that will have to change, and that will change immediately. No partnership can survive a country's harboring of militants and terrorists who target U.S. servicemembers and officials. It is time for Pakistan to demonstrate its commitment to civilization, order, and to peace.

...my administration will ensure that you, the brave defenders of the American people, will have the necessary tools and rules of

## President Trump's July 17, 2019 Statement on U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan - II

engagement to make this strategy work, and work effectively and work quickly....I have already lifted restrictions the previous administration placed on our warfighters that prevented the Secretary of Defense and our commanders in the field from fully and swiftly waging battle against the enemy. Micromanagement from Washington, D.C. does not win battles. They are won in the field drawing upon the judgment and expertise of wartime commanders and frontline soldiers acting in real time, with real authority, and with a clear mission to defeat the enemy.

That's why we will also expand authority for American armed forces to target the terrorist and criminal networks that sow violence and chaos throughout Afghanistan. These killers need to know they have nowhere to hide; that no place is beyond the reach of American might and Americans arms. Retribution will be fast and powerful.

...We will also maximize sanctions and other financial and law enforcement actions against these networks to eliminate their ability to export terror. When America commits its warriors to battle, we must ensure they have every weapon to apply swift, decisive, and overwhelming force.

...We will ask our NATO allies and global partners to support our new strategy with additional troop and funding increases in line with our own. We are confident they will. Since taking office, I have made clear that our allies and partners must contribute much more money to our collective defense, and they have done so.

In this struggle, the heaviest burden will continue to be borne by the good people of Afghanistan and their courageous armed forces. As the prime minister of Afghanistan has promised, we are going to participate in economic development to help defray the cost of this war to us...Afghanistan is fighting to defend and secure their country against the same enemies who threaten us. The stronger the Afghan security forces become, the less we will have to do. Afghans will secure and build their own nation and define their own future. We want them to succeed.

But we will no longer use American military might to construct democracies in faraway lands, or try to rebuild other countries in our own image. Those days are now over. Instead, we will work with allies and partners to protect our shared interests. We are not asking others to change their way of life, but to pursue common goals that allow our children to live better and safer lives. This principled realism will guide our decisions moving forward.

Military power alone will not bring peace to Afghanistan or stop the terrorist threat arising in that country. But strategically applied force aims to create the conditions for a political process to achieve a lasting peace.

America will work with the Afghan government as long as we see determination and progress. However, our commitment is not unlimited, and our support is not a blank check. The government of Afghanistan must carry their share of the military, political, and economic burden. The American people expect to see real reforms, real progress, and real results. Our patience is not unlimited. We will keep our eyes wide open

# Key Challenges

# Key Challenges

After eighteen years of war, the United States has still failed to come to grips with at least two of its three major threats in Afghanistan. The first is the importance of the civil side of the war. The U.S. has not faced the fact that the weaknesses of the Afghan government, the divisions within the Afghanistan population, and Afghanistan's structural problems in governance, economics, and demographics are as serious a threat to any lasting form of stability and victory as the Taliban.

It also has not faced the fact that America's constant changes in strategy, its erratic civil and military aid programs and funding, its lack of any coherent approach to nation building, and its fluctuating military posture pose an equal threat to success.

The U.S. now faces a long list of major uncertainties, none of which it has properly addressed:

- Peace Process vs. War By Other Means
- Taliban Intentions: Victory/Exhaustion/Peace
- U.S. and Allied Intentions: Stay/Leave/Conditional/Equivocate/Cut
- Afghan Intentions: Power/Fight/Negotiate/Divide
- Tactical Situation – Control, Influence, Stalemate
- ANSF and Other Afghan Security Forces
- Afghan Political Stability, Election, Fragmentation and “Kabulstan”
- Civil Stability: Governance, Economic, Population
- Neighbors: Pakistan, Iran China, Russia, Iran, Central Asia
- Impact of War of Attrition, Chance of Implosion
- Impact of NATO-ISAF/US Withdrawal
- Strategic Value of Afghanistan and War: Cost-Benefits of Treating as a “Sunk Cost”

To the extent the U.S. has succeeded in the war, it has been largely in making major reductions in the size of the in-country U.S. land force effort, and in the annual cost of the war in casualties and dollars. It has done so largely by increasing its use of airpower, and developing a new mix of manned and unmanned targeting and precision strike capabilities, while providing training, equipment, and sustainment support to Afghan forces, and a limited number of specialized combat forces to support Afghan elite National Security forces. This has so far given the Afghan government the capability to hold heavily populated areas. At the same time, the U.S. has largely abandoned serious efforts at nation building, and to shape the future of Afghan politics, governance, economics and civil society even though a divided Afghan government has been in a series of crises that seem to have no predictable end.

The metrics in this study suggest that the war has become a faltering stalemate where the Taliban and other threat forces now seem to have a marginal advantage. They also seem to indicate that the the U.S. is replacing a “conditions-based aid” strategy that it implemented a little over a year ago, but never fully implemented, with a “peace” strategy that borders on becoming a “conditions-based withdrawal.”

Current U.S. military and civil aid programs, America’s current military and diplomatic posture, and the President’s FY2020 budget request still call for continued levels of US financial commitment and civil-military presence in Afghanistan. However, some senior U.S. policymakers no longer seem to support an “open-ended” war, and many members of Congress have begun to question U.S. strategy as there have been growing demands for peace negotiations and finding some end to the war.

This lack of policy-level, political, and public support may explain why later sections of this study show the U.S. has become unwilling to provide official open source assessments of the relative success of the Afghan government and the Taliban in controlling and influencing the Afghan population and given Districts in the country. It may also explain why the U.S. seems to be seeking a peace with the Taliban that would lead to full U.S. withdrawal in one and one-half years.

So far, U.S. policymakers have not publicly addressed the probable consequences of a peace settlement and/or U.S. withdrawal for the country, the region, or broader U.S. strategic interests. It is clear, however, that the risks are serious. Where Clausewitz described war as an “extension of politics by other means,” the U.S. may be seeking “peace as an extension” of war by other means, and as a way of declaring some kind of victory and leaving. Beyond that, it is unclear that the U.S. has any longer-term strategy for either Afghanistan — or the region — than one of fighting an indefinite war of attrition.

# Counterinsurgency: The Real Nature of the Threat

## *The Three Primary Threats that Always Dominate the War*

- The overt enemy: The insurgents, extremists, terrorists
- The host country government or “partner” whose divisions, corruption, and failures create and sustain the threat
- **U.S. ignorance of the host country and its neighbors, efforts to transform in its own image, erratic programs and strategies, rapid rotations, and unwillingness to face the challenges and complexity of creating lasting *civil-military* outcomes.**

## *Optional Elements*

- Outside powers and sanctuaries.
- Governance, economics, corruption, demographics, ethnic and sectarian problems within the host country.
- Failure to control costs, casualties, and duration.

# **Six Options: Afghan Peace or Afghanistan in Pieces?**

- 1. Peace agreement: Rapid U.S. and allied withdrawal, aid cuts.**
- 2. Peace agreement: U.S. provides military support, sustained aid.**
- 3. U.S. withdrawal: Rapid U.S. and allied withdrawal, aid cuts.**
- 4. U.S. withdrawal: U.S. provides military support, sustained aid.**
- 5. U.S. stays: Open ended war of attrition.**
- 6. U.S. Stays: Afghanistan election creates successful governance. Afghan forces take over over time and win war of attrition. Aid is conditional and Afghan economic development succeeds in Afghan terms.**

# Key Uncertainties

- **Peace Process vs. War By Other Means**
- **Taliban Intentions: Victory/Exhaustion/Peace**
- **U.S. and Allied Intentions: Stay/Leave/Conditional/Equivocate/Cut**
- **Afghan Intentions: Power/Fight/Negotiate/Divide**
- **Tactical Situation – Control, Influence, Stalemate**
- **ANSF and Other Afghan Security Forces**
- **Afghan Political Stability, Election, Fragmentation and “Kabulstan”**
- **Civil Stability: Governance, Economic, Population**
- **Neighbors: Pakistan, Iran China, Russia, Iran, Central Asia**
- **Impact of War of Attrition, Chance of Implosion**
- **Impact of NATO-ISAF/US Withdrawal**
- **Strategic Value of Afghanistan and War: Cost-Benefits of Treating as a “Sunk Cost”**

# **Unstable and Turbulent Funding and Radical Shifts in the Estimates of the Cost of War**

# The Cost of War

The data in this section do reflect some recent improvements in the official estimates of the cost of the Afghan War, as well as in the wars in Iraq and Syria. As of FY2019, they do not include the same major amounts of baseline spending on unrelated defense activities as in past reporting in an effort to avoid the budget caps set by the Budget Control Act. They also do reflect valid downward trends as the U.S. has eliminated U.S. land combat forces and reduced manned air sorties and replaced manned aircraft sorties with remotely piloted vehicles or RPVs. As a result, some broad conclusions can be drawn from these data.

Nevertheless, it is striking that eighteen years into the war in Afghanistan, and sixteen years into the war in Iraq/Syria, these cost data have only limited detail, provide almost no meaningful transparency into how the cost estimates are derived and defined, and cannot easily be tied to given military and civil activities and any measures of their effectiveness. It is unclear that this lack of meaningful cost data has any clear political or other intent. It seems to be more a product of the fact that no one was clearly in charge, and no effort was made at either the Departmental or White House level to provide consistent planning, programming, and budgeting – or to ensure that the money was honestly and effectively spent as distinguished from used to constantly rush constantly changing programs and efforts into the field.

The unstable and inconsistent surges of money shown in the following charts and graphs reflect a level of program turbulence that border on the absurd. It is also important to note that the only real documentation of these patterns by function is in the work of SIGAR and this only covers aid to Afghanistan, not the cost of the war to the U.S. or other major aid spending on countries like Pakistan. In fairness to GAO, various Inspector Generals, and SIGAR, real efforts have been made to track down the immense amount of waste and corruption involved in given programs, but such efforts generally only come after the fact and there are acute limits to the extent that such efforts can address the massive waste caused by constantly change strategy, a lack of any effective coordination of the civil and military programs, a lack of effective management in the field, and a lack of effective conditionality in dealing with the host country.

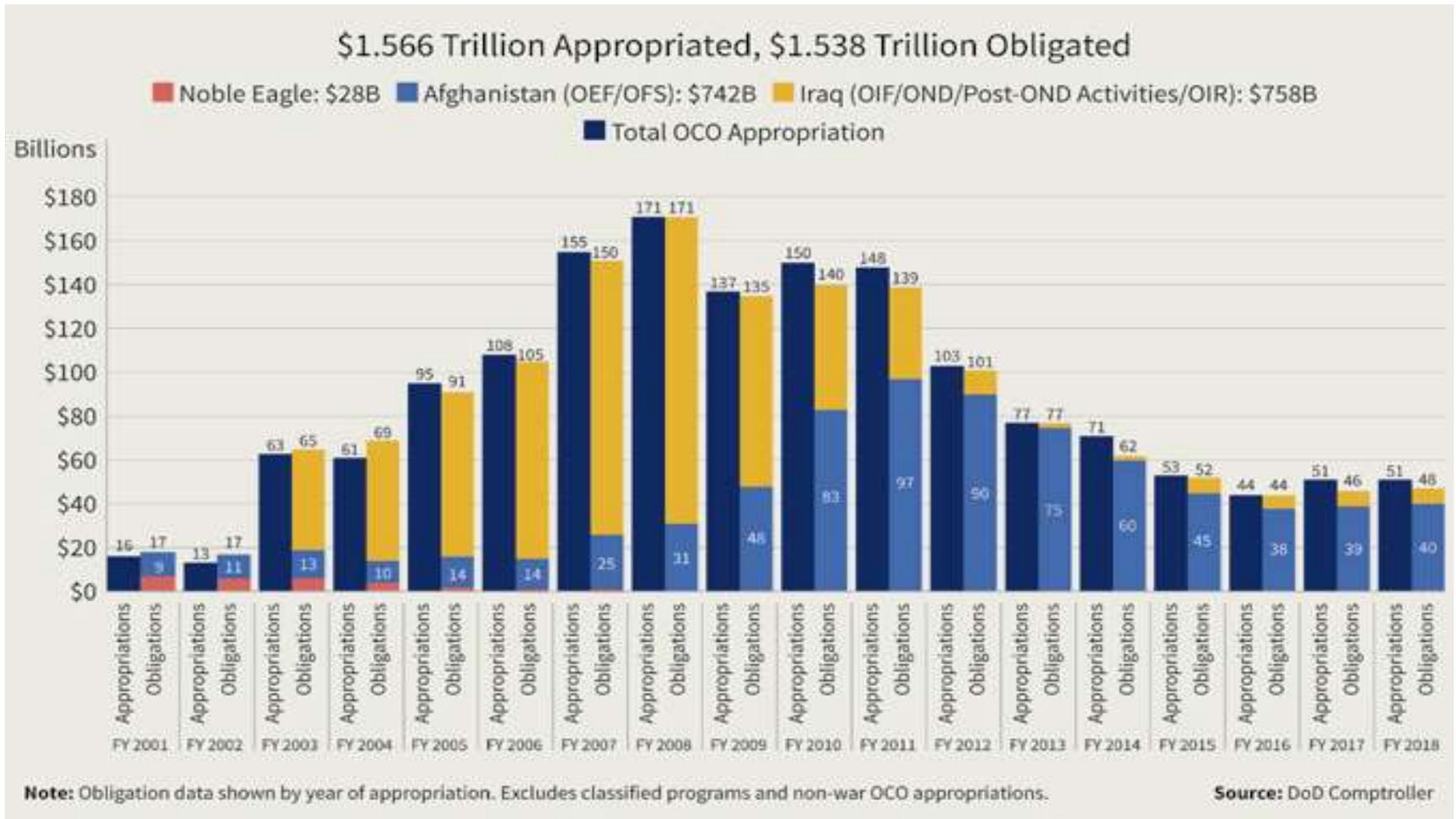
The main sources of failure occurred through a lack of any effective effort by the top leadership of the Department of Defense, Department of State, NSC/White House, and key committees in both House of Congress. To quote an axiom from a past era in OSD Systems Analysis, “a fish rots from the head down.”

The key problem that these failures now presents is that this lack of effective planning and management has helped discredit efforts to adopt a real “whole of government” approach, provide effective continuity of military and host country force building efforts, and show that the key civil programs or “nation building” activities necessary to defeat ideologically-driven insurgencies could work.

Worse, it may hide the fact that carefully managed mixes of train and assist programs, direct combat support of elite host country units, and U.S. airpower can be cost-effective in allowing a host country or faction to “win” at the military level, and/or enforce a peace settlement. Here, however, it is necessary to sound a warning about the figures that follow. It is unclear that they include the real world cost of air and IS&R activity outside the host country, the full cost of land force support – particularly “TDY” personnel, the longer-term medical costs to wounded personnel, and a large number of smaller expenditures.

(For a more detailed analysis of the issues involved, see America’s Military Spending and the Uncertain Costs of its Wars: The Need for Transparent Reporting, CSIS, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/americas-military-spending-and-uncertain-costs-its-wars-need-transparent-reporting>, January 23, 2019.)

# Costing the Wars: OSD Comptroller Estimate for FY2001-FY2018



In December, the DoD Comptroller released the DoD's congressionally-mandated quarterly *Cost of War* report, which details the DoD's spending on overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria through September 30. According to this report, the DoD has spent \$1.5 trillion in support of contingency operations since September 11, 2001. The total cost of operations in Afghanistan over that time was \$737.6 billion, of which \$157.9 billion has been obligated in support of OFS since that operation began in 2015.

The Comptroller reported that the DoD obligated \$41.2 billion for OFS during FY 2018, which was \$1.3 billion less than the amount spent on OFS in FY 2017. Average monthly spending on all OCO in FY 2018 was reported at \$3.7 billion, of which \$3 billion was in support of operations in Afghanistan. According to the DoD Comptroller, these obligations cover all expenses related to the conflicts, including war-related operational costs, support for deployed troops, and transportation of personnel and equipment.

USFOR-A's implementation of the South Asia strategy called for an increase in personnel in Afghanistan in FY 2019 above the estimate included in the President's FY 2018 Budget. The DoD Comptroller submitted an amendment to this budget, which included an additional \$1.2 billion to support an increase in U.S. forces. Of this funding, \$836.8 million was designated for Army operating forces. Other major costs included Navy weapons maintenance, Navy weapons support, Army logistics, and pay and benefits for U.S. military personnel

# Costing the Wars: DoD Cost of War Report as of March 31, 2018

## TOTAL COST

Since September 11, 2001, the Department of Defense (DoD) has obligated **\$1,500.8 billion** for war-related costs:

## BREAKDOWN BY OPERATION since September 11, 2001

The **\$1,500.8 billion** breakdown by operation is:

	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Current Contingencies (\$185.5 billion):</b>	
• Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (OFS):	<b>\$134.3 billion (9%)</b>
• Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR):	<b>\$23.5 billion (2%)</b>
• Operation NOBLE EAGLE (ONE):	<b>\$27.7 billion (1%)</b>
<b>Prior Year Contingencies (\$1,315.2 billion):</b>	
• Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF)/NEW DAWN (OND):	<b>\$730.9 billion (49%)</b>
• Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF):	<b>\$584.3 billion (39%)</b>

## AVERAGE MONTHLY SPENDING

• The average monthly spending for all Operations:	<b>\$3.4 billion (during FY 2018)</b>
• The average monthly spending for <b>OFS</b> :	<b>\$2.9 billion (85%)</b>
• The average monthly spending for <b>OIR</b> :	<b>\$0.6 billion (18%)</b>
• The average monthly spending for <b>OIF/OND</b> :	<b>\$&lt;0.1 billion (&lt;1%)</b>
• The average monthly spending for <b>OEF</b> :	<b>*\$-0.1 billion (-4%)</b>
• The average monthly spending for <b>ONE</b> :	<b>\$&lt;0.1 billion (&lt;1%)</b>

\* The negative average monthly spending amounts result from normal deobligations and adjustments made within the fiscal year to properly align costs to the appropriate contingency operation.

## TALKING POINTS

- The international combat mission, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), formally ended on December 31, 2014. Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (OFS) began on January 1, 2015. OFS continues the train, advise, and assist mission of the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) at the corps and Ministry of Defense level, as well as with the Ministry of the Interior.
  - The focus is on those processes associated with financial management, human resource management, force sustainment (logistics), and command and control. This includes a significant effort to further integrate and enhance aviation capabilities and intelligence support into the operations of the ANDSF.
- Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR) began in August 2014, as a military air power intervention in Iraq and Syria in response to the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).
  - The OIR campaign seeks to deny and degrade ISIS through precision airstrikes and intelligence collection, disrupt the flow of foreign forces, and build partner capacity.
  - Efforts include working with and through the Government of Iraq's (GoI) Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in Iraq and Vetted Syrian Opposition (VSO) forces in Syria to build key security force capabilities, help professionalize their security forces, and promote stability in the region.

## WHAT IS THE MONEY BEING SPENT ON?

- War-related operational costs, such as operating tempo, training, overseas facilities and base support, equipment maintenance, and communications, and replacement of combat losses and enhancements.
- Support for deployed troops, which includes food, clothing, and health/medical services, special pay and benefits for troops in the field.
- Transportation of personnel and equipment, including airlift and sealift into and out of the theater of operations and support payments for the ANDSF and coalition partners.

Source: Federation of American Scientists, <https://fas.org/man/eprint/cow/fy2018q2.pdf>

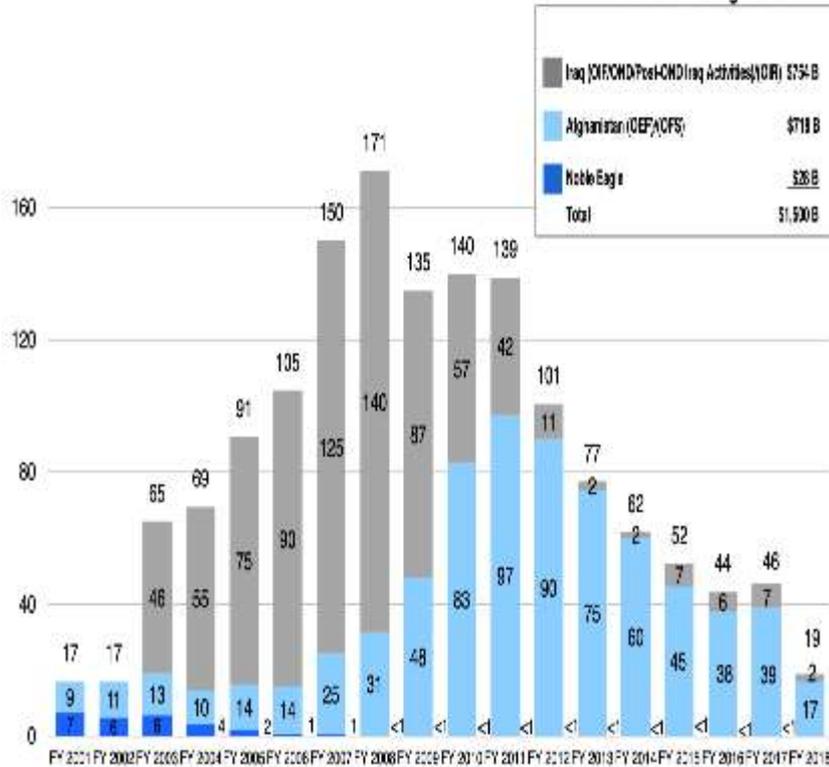
# Costing the Wars: DoD Cost of War Report, March 31, 2018

## Department of Defense Cost of War Total War-related Obligations by Year Appropriated

(Dollars in Billions)

War-related Obligations

Iraq (OIF/OND/Post-OND Iraq Activities)(OIF)	\$75 B
Afghanistan (OEF/OFS)	\$71 B
Kobele Eagle	\$26 B
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,500 B</b>

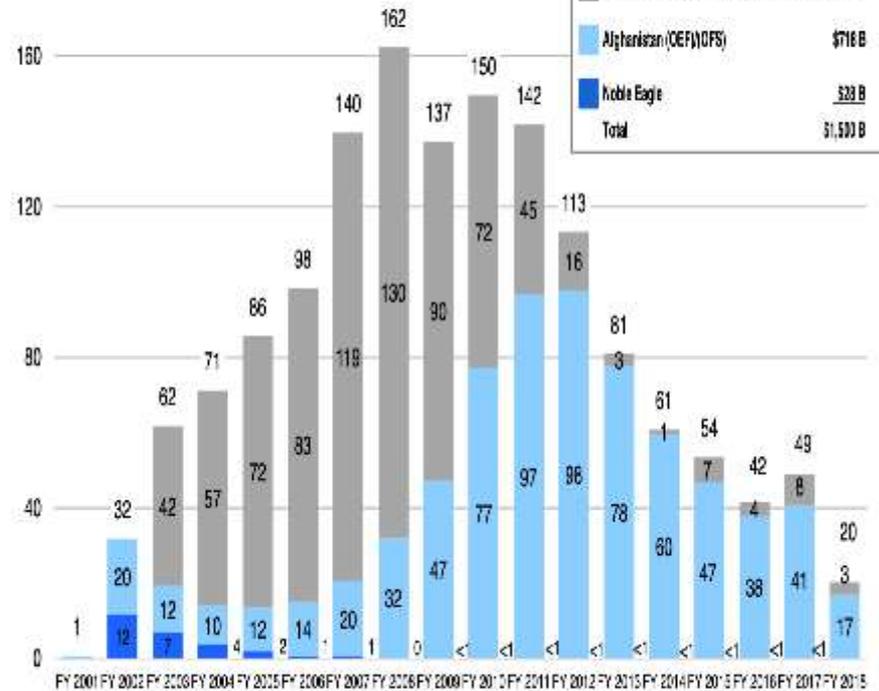


Note: Obligation data shown against year funds obligated. Does not include non-DoD classified programs.  
 Source: Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Cost of War Monthly Report  
 Data as of March 31, 2018. Totals may not add due to rounding.

## Department of Defense Cost of War Total War-related Obligations by Year Incurred

War-related Obligations

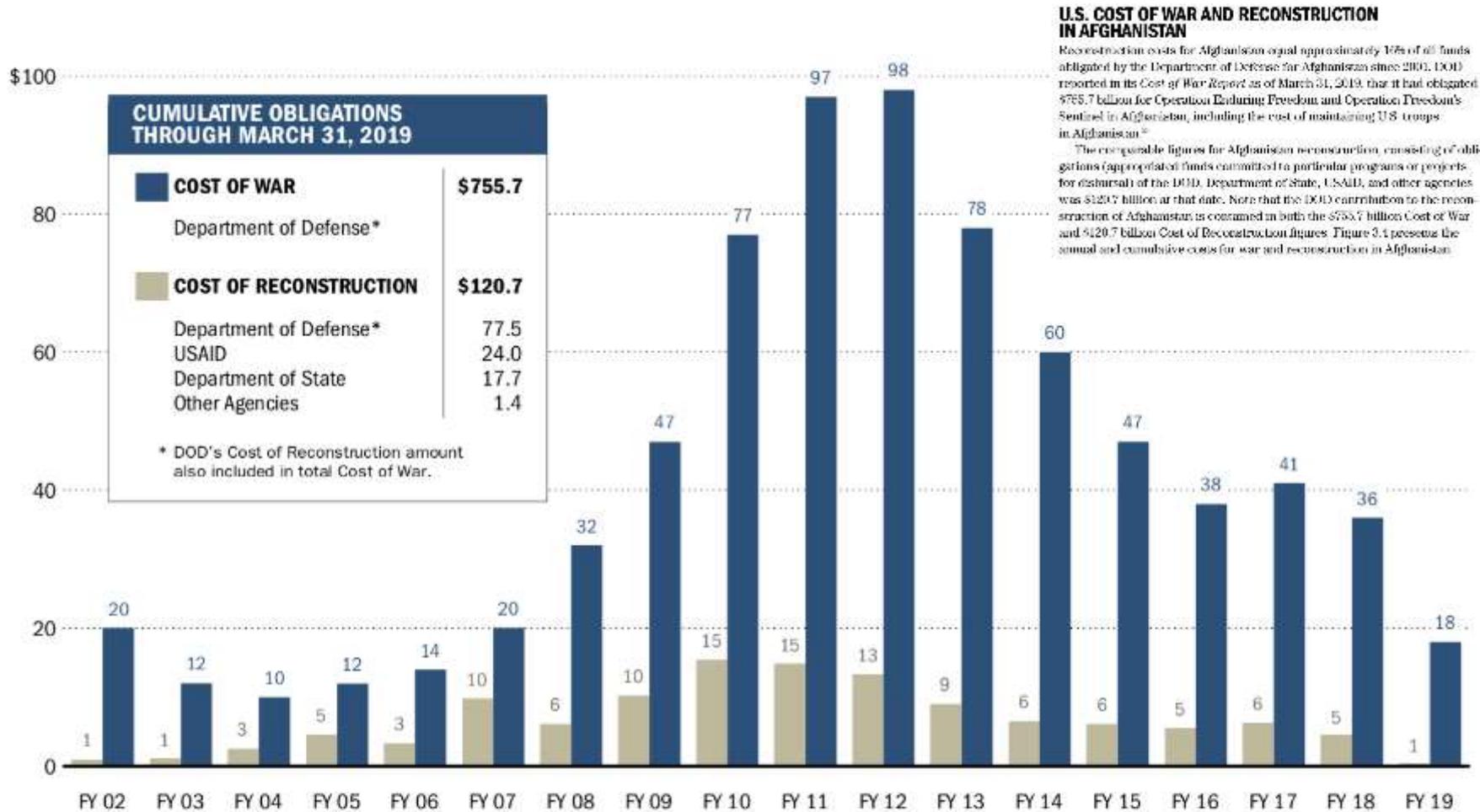
Iraq (OIF/OND/Post-OND Iraq Activities)(OIF)	\$75 B
Afghanistan (OEF/OFS)	\$71 B
Kobele Eagle	\$26 B
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,500 B</b>



Note: Obligation data shown against year funds obligated. Does not include non-DoD classified programs.  
 Source: Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Cost of War Monthly Report  
 Data as of March 31, 2018. Totals may not add due to rounding.

# Costing the War: Afghanistan FY2002-FY2019: SIGAR

AFGHANISTAN COST OF WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION, ANNUAL AND CUMULATIVE OBLIGATIONS FY 2002 TO FY 2019 Q2 (\$ BILLIONS)



## U.S. COST OF WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION IN AFGHANISTAN

Reconstruction costs for Afghanistan equal approximately 17% of all funds obligated by the Department of Defense for Afghanistan since 2001. DOD reported in its *Cost of War Report* as of March 31, 2019, that it had obligated \$755.7 billion for Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan, including the cost of maintaining U.S. troops in Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup>

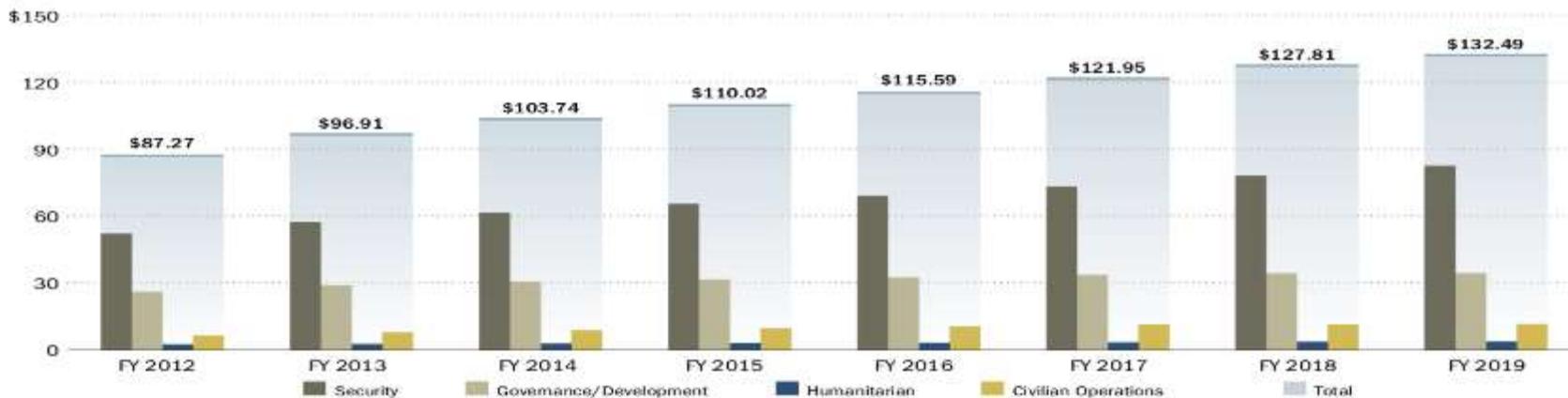
The comparable figures for Afghanistan reconstruction, consisting of obligations (appropriated funds committed to particular programs or projects for disbursement) of the DOD, Department of State, USAID, and other agencies was \$120.7 billion at that date. Note that the DOD contribution to the reconstruction of Afghanistan is contained in both the \$755.7 billion Cost of War and \$120.7 billion Cost of Reconstruction figures. Figure 3.4 presents the annual and cumulative costs for war and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Note: Numbers have been rounded. Cumulative obligations through March 31, 2019, differ markedly from cumulative appropriations through June 30, 2019, because the former figures do not include unobligated appropriations and DOD reporting lags one quarter.

Source: DOD, *Cost of War Monthly Report, Total War-related Obligations by Year Incurred*, data as of March 31, 2019. Obligation data shown against year funds obligated. SIGAR analysis of annual obligation of reconstruction accounts as presented in SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, 4/30/2019. Obligation data shown against year funds appropriated.

# US Aid Spending: 2012-2019

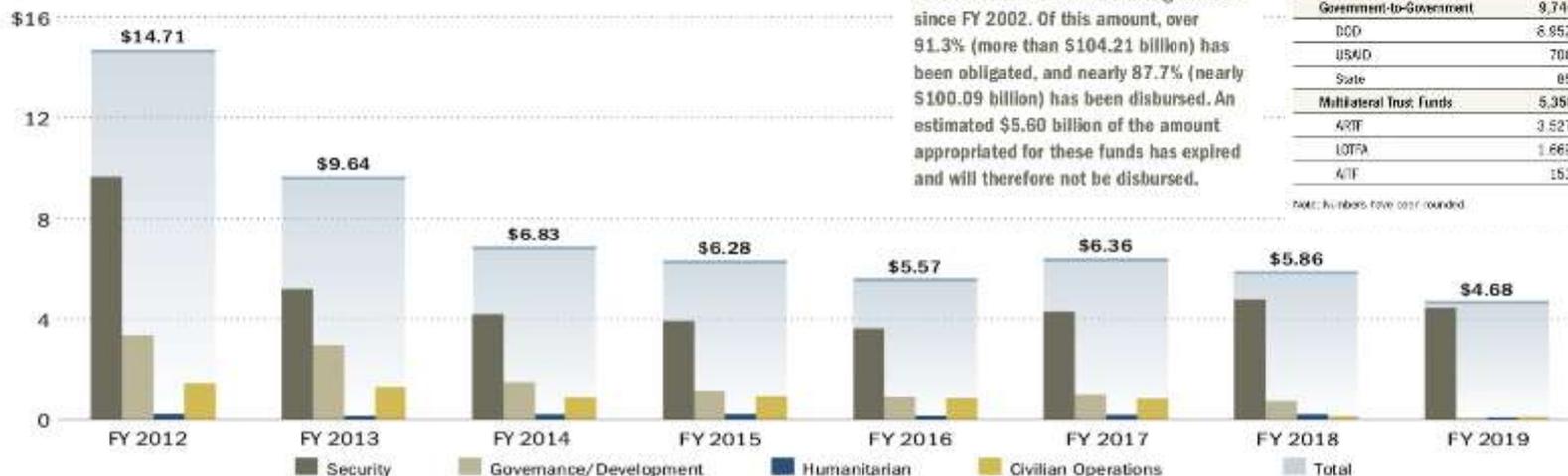
CUMULATIVE APPROPRIATIONS BY FUNDING CATEGORY AS OF JUNE 30, 2019 (\$ BILLIONS)



Note: Numbers have been rounded.

Source: Details of accounts, including sources of data, are provided in Appendix B to this report.

ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS BY FUNDING CATEGORY (\$ BILLIONS)



The amount provided to the nine largest active U.S. funds represents more than 86.1% (over \$114.13 billion) of total reconstruction assistance in Afghanistan since FY 2002. Of this amount, over 91.3% (more than \$104.21 billion) has been obligated, and nearly 87.7% (nearly \$100.09 billion) has been disbursed. An estimated \$5.60 billion of the amount appropriated for these funds has expired and will therefore not be disbursed.

U.S. ON-BUDGET ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN, SINCE 2002 (\$ MILLIONS)

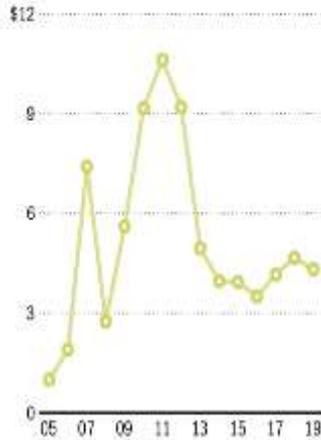
Total On-Budget Assistance:	\$15,095.01
Government-to-Government:	9,744.57
DCD:	6,852.85
USAID:	706.32
State:	85.19
Multilateral Trust Funds:	5,350.44
ARTF:	3,527.88
LOIPA:	1,669.09
ATF:	153.87

All numbers have been rounded.

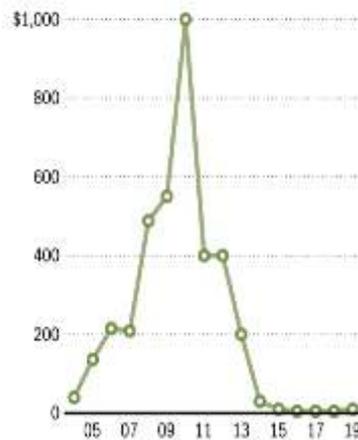
# Erratic US Aid Spending by Major Category: 2012-2019

- ASFF:** Afghanistan Security Forces Fund
- CERP:** Commander's Emergency Response Program
- DICDA:** Drug Interdiction and Counter-Drug Activities
- ESF:** Economic Support Fund
- TITLE II:** Public Law No. 480 Title II
- IDA:** International Disaster Assistance
- INCLE:** International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement
- MRA:** Migration and Refugee Assistance
- NADR:** Non-Proliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs

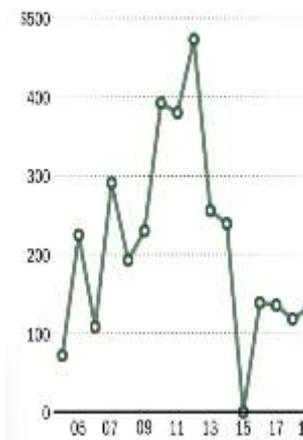
**ASFF APPROPRIATED FUNDS BY FISCAL YEAR**  
(\$ BILLIONS)



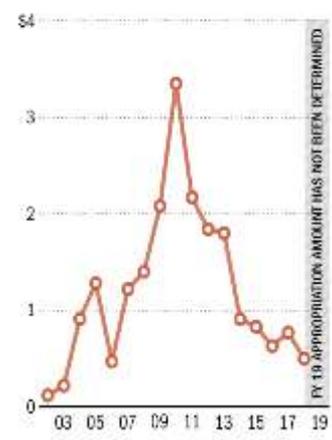
**CERP APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR**  
(\$ MILLIONS)



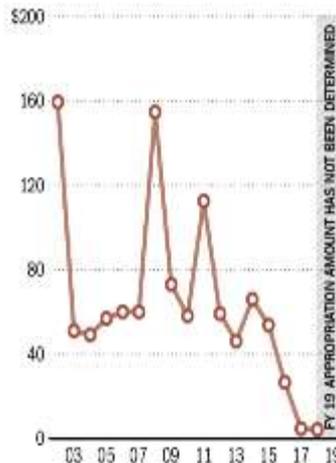
**DICDA APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR**  
(\$ MILLIONS)



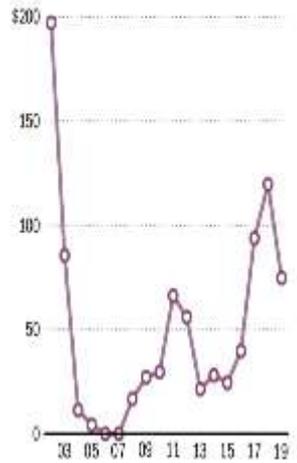
**ESF APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR**  
(\$ BILLIONS)



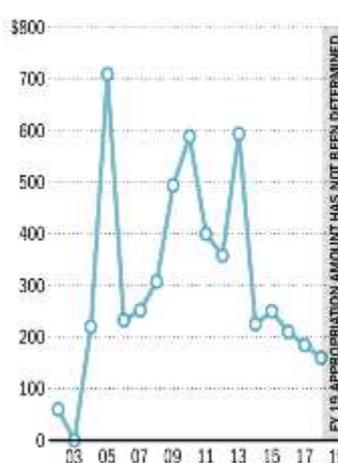
**TITLE II APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR**  
(\$ MILLIONS)



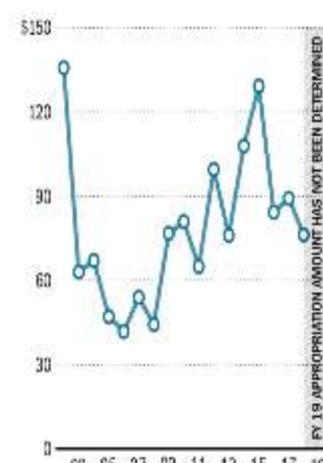
**IDA APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR**  
(\$ MILLIONS)



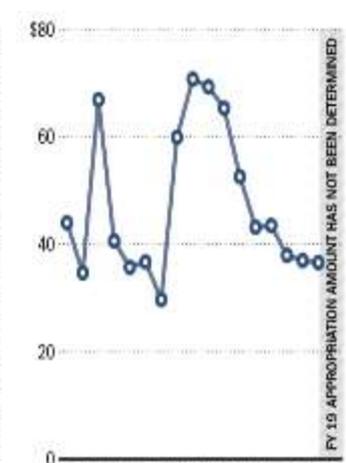
**INCLE APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR**  
(\$ MILLIONS)



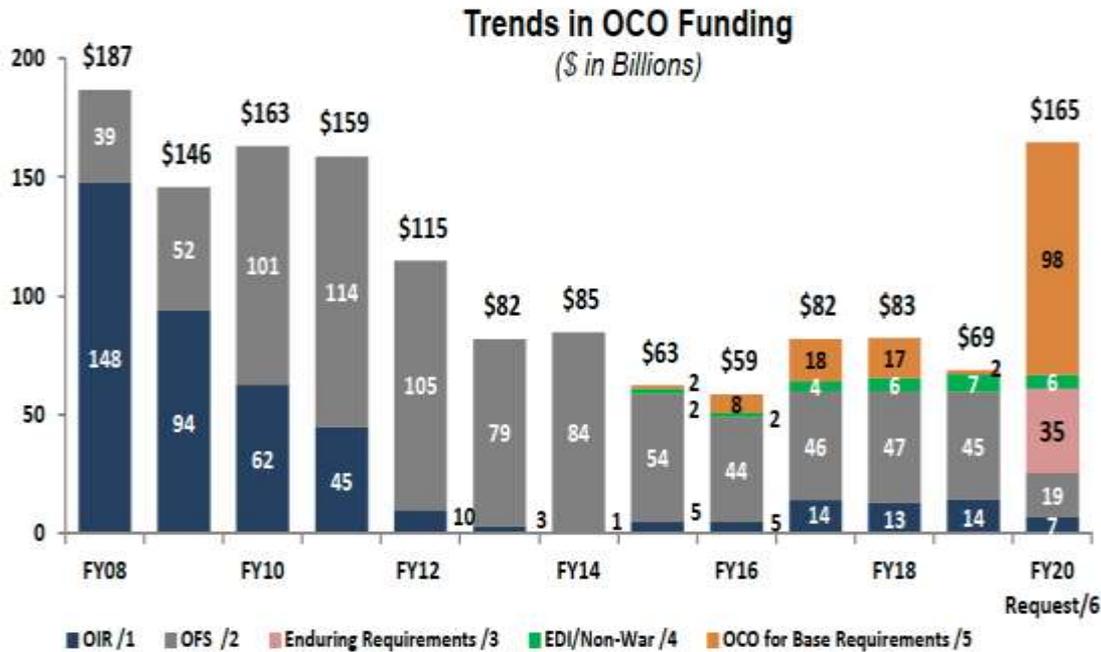
**MRA APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR**  
(\$ MILLIONS)



**NADR APPROPRIATIONS BY FISCAL YEAR**  
(\$ MILLIONS)



# OCO Cost Reporting Shifts and Funding Level Trends



## OCO CATEGORIES

The FY 2020 OCO request is divided into three requirement categories – direct war, enduring, and OCO for base.

**Direct War Requirements (\$25.4 billion)** – Reflects combat or combat support costs that are not expected to continue once combat operations end at major contingency locations. **Includes in-country war support for Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (OFS) in Afghanistan and Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR) in Iraq and Syria. Funds partnership programs such as the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF), the Coalition Support Fund (CSF), and Middle East border security.**

**OCO for Enduring Requirements (\$41.3 billion)** – Reflects enduring in-theater and CONUS costs that will remain after combat operations end. These costs, historically funded in OCO, include overseas basing, depot maintenance, ship operations, and weapons system sustainment. It also includes the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI), and Security Cooperation. Combined, enduring requirements and direct war requirements comprise "traditional" OCO.

**OCO for Base Requirements (\$97.9 billion)** – Reflects funding for base budget requirements, which support the National Defense Strategy, such as defense readiness, readiness enablers, and munitions, financed in the OCO budget to comply with the base budget defense caps included in current law.

Operation/Activity	FY 2019 Enacted	FY 2020 Request <sup>2</sup>	Delta FY 2019 – FY 2020
Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (OFS) Direct War Costs	18.5	18.6	+0.1
Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR) Direct War Costs	8.9	6.9	-2.0
Enduring Theater Requirements and Related Missions	33.7	35.3	+1.6
European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) and the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI)	6.5	5.9	-0.6
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>-0.9</b>
Prior-Year Rescissions	-1.3	-	+1.3
OCO for Base Requirements <sup>1</sup>	2.5	97.9	+95.4
Emergency Requirements	-	9.2	+9.2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>68.8</b>	<b>173.8</b>	<b>+105.0</b>

*Numbers may not add due to rounding*

1/ The FY 2019 Enacted "OCO for Base Requirements" reflects congressional adds, including the ISR Transfer Fund (\$500 million). The FY 2020 "OCO for Base Requirements" reflects the DoD base budget requirements requested in the OCO budget in order to comply with the base defense caps in current law. Congress does not appropriate by operation, therefore the FY 2019 Enacted column is a DoD estimate by operation.

2/ The "Direct War" and "Enduring Requirements" were developed for FY 2020 and have been applied as an estimate to the FY 2019 appropriation.

# OCO FY2020 Request by Functional/Mission Category

(\$US Current Billions)

OCO and Emergency Budget	FY 2019 Enacted	FY 2020 Request	Delta FY 2019 to FY 2020
Operations/Force Protection	14.5	14.2	-0.3
In-Theater Support	19.5	20.0	+0.5
Defense Threat Reduction Agency / Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat	0.5	0.5	-
Equipment Reset and Readiness	8.6	8.1	-0.5
Classified Programs	9.9	10.5	+0.6
Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF)	4.9	4.8	-0.1
Support for Coalition Forces	1.0	0.6	-0.4
Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF)	1.4	1.0	-0.4
Security Cooperation	0.8	1.1	+0.3
European Deterrence Initiative (EDI)	6.5	5.9	-0.6
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>-0.9</b>
ISR Transfer Fund	0.5	-	-0.5
OCO for Base Requirements	2.0	97.9	+95.9
Emergency Requirements	-	9.2	+9.2
Prior-Year Rescissions	-1.3	-	+1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.8</b>	<b>173.8</b>	<b>+105.0</b>

Numbers may not add due to rounding

The request supports the following activities:

- Executing DoD's counterterrorism and train, advise, assist missions in Afghanistan to support the President's South Asia strategy as leaders work to negotiate a settlement that safeguards national interests
- Sustaining personnel forward deployed to the Middle East to continue operations to ensure an enduring defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and allow flexibility for a deliberate, coordinated, disciplined withdrawal from Syria
- Building the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces and Syrian opposition forces to counter ISIS in support of the United States' comprehensive regional strategy
- Conducting U.S. Central Command in-country and in-theater support activities, including intelligence support to military operations
- Enhancing U.S. deterrence activities in Eastern Europe to assure North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and partners and deter aggressive actors

**Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) (\$4.8 billion):** This request funds the sustainment, infrastructure, equipment, and training requirements for up to 352,000 members of the Afghan National Army and National Police as well as up to 30,000 Afghan Local Police. The request supports further development of the ANDSF as an effective and sustainable force to combat a resilient insurgency and as a reliable counterterrorism partner with the United States. A key element of the request is funding for the final year of the President of Afghanistan's four-year ANDSF Roadmap to increase the capacity and combat effectiveness of the AAF and the ASSF and seize the initiative in the fight against insurgent and terrorist forces, strengthen and restructure Afghan Security Institutions, and facilitate a political settlement to the war.

**Support for Coalition Forces (\$0.6 billion):** Amounts requested to finance coalition, friendly forces, and a variety of support requirements for key foreign partners who wish to participate in U.S. military operations but lack financial means. Such support reduces the burden on U.S. forces and is critical to overall mission success. The FY 2020 budget request for support for coalition forces includes \$450 million for the Coalition Support Fund (CSF) and \$150 million for the Lift and Sustain program. The FY 2020 CSF request of \$450 million reflects a \$450 million (50 percent) decrease from the FY 2019 enacted level of \$900 million due to the continuing suspension of U.S. security assistance to Pakistan based on the President's January 4, 2018, guidance.

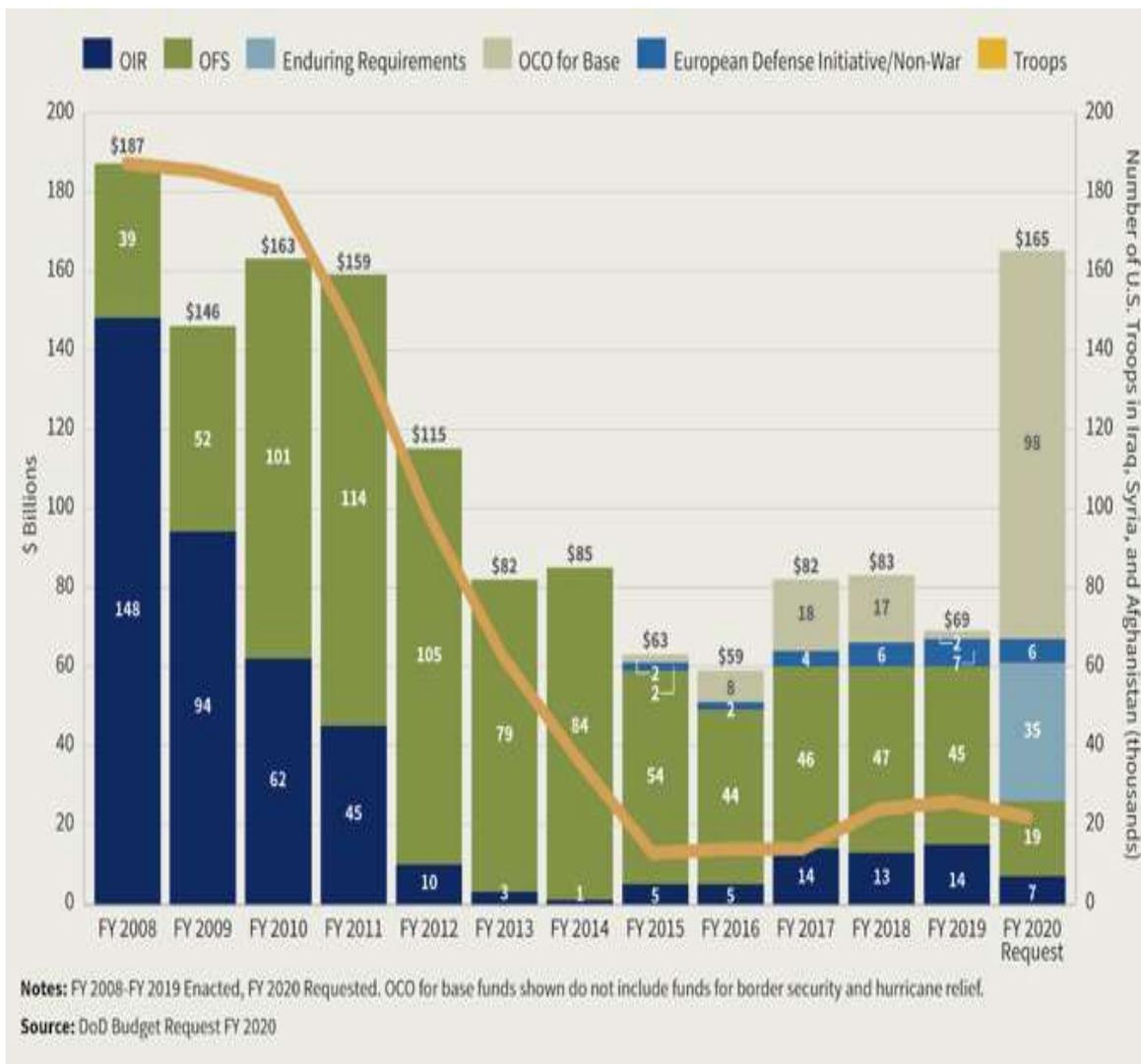
**Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund (CTEF) (\$1.0 billion):** The United States Government's strategy to counter ISIS directed DoD to conduct a campaign to degrade, dismantle, and ultimately defeat ISIS. The focus of DoD's efforts is to work by, with, and through the Government of Iraq's Security Forces and Vetted Syrian Opposition (VSO) forces to build key security force capabilities and promote longer term regional stability.

The FY 2020 CTEF budget request strengthens the security capabilities of DOD partners countering ISIS to secure territory liberated from ISIS and counter future ISIS threats by training and equipping partner security forces. The training, equipment, and operational support in this request will facilitate the consolidation of gains achieved against ISIS and prevent its reemergence. The \$1,045 million request includes \$745 million to assist the Iraqi Security Forces and \$300 million to assist the Vetted Syrian Opposition. The FY 2020 budget also realigns \$250 million from the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund to Operation and Maintenance, Defense-wide, for implementation by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency in order to align DoD authorities and funding to support border security requirements for partner nations fighting ISIS.

**Security Cooperation (\$1.1 billion):** The FY 2020 budget request maintains the existing security cooperation account at \$811 million, which funds counterterrorism, crisis response, and other security cooperation support to partner nations. The FY 2020 budget also realigns \$250 million from the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund to the Operation and Maintenance, Defense-wide appropriation for implementation by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency in order to align DoD authorities and funding to support border security requirements for partner nations fighting ISIS.

Security Cooperation funds support programs to enable partner nations to deter and defeat existing and evolving terrorist and other transnational threats. Training and equipping partner nations allows U.S. forces to be more readily available for other contingency operations, build better relationships with partners, and promote global security in a more cost-effective manner.

# Lead IG Revised Estimate of Trends in OCO Funding by War and Total U.S. Troop Levels, FY 2008-FY 2020



The OFS request of \$18.6 billion represents a slight increase from the \$18.5 billion enacted in FY 2019. This includes \$4.8 billion for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), the primary funding stream that supports the ANDSF. This is a slight decrease from the \$4.9 billion enacted for the ASFF in FY 2019.

This funding covers the full range of ANDSF requirements, including salaries, equipment, weapons, ammunition, vehicles, training, facilities, food, and fuel. The budget assumes that the ANDSF will receive additional support of \$273 million from the UN Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, \$332 million from the NATO ANA Trust Fund, and \$498 million from the Afghan government.

The FY 2020 budget request reflects an important change in how the DoD accounts for OFS appropriations and expenditures. In previous years, the DoD Comptroller reported OFS requests and appropriations that exceeded \$45 billion annually. However, this figure included activities that support the OFS mission but are not executed in Afghanistan and may be shared across the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility (such as logistics, transportation, intelligence, and equipment reset). The OFS accounting category also included funding for smaller OCO missions, including the Operation Pacific Eagle— Philippines and classified missions.

In this year’s budget request, the DoD Comptroller adjusted the FY 2019 and FY 2020 OFS account to include only funds for combat operations in Afghanistan that will not be necessary after the cessation of hostilities. All enduring requirements that will continue following the end of combat operations, such as overseas basing, depot maintenance, and ship operations, are reported separately. Operation Pacific Eagle—Philippines and classified operations are included in the new “enduring requirements” category.

# Lead IG Estimate of Problems in the DoD Cost of War Report and Other Estimates of War Costs

In April, the DoD Comptroller released the DoD's congressionally-mandated quarterly *Cost of War* report, which details the DoD's spending on overseas contingency operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria through December 31, 2018. According to this report, the DoD has spent \$1.5 trillion in support of contingency operations since September 11, 2001. *The total cost of operations in Afghanistan over that time was \$744.9 billion, of which \$165.6 billion has been obligated in support of OFS since that operation began in 2015. Total obligations in support of OFS for the first quarter of FY 2019 were \$7.7 billion.* According to the DoD Comptroller, these obligations cover all expenses related to the conflicts, including war-related operational costs, support for deployed troops, and transportation of personnel and equipment.

The DoD Comptroller told the DoD OIG that execution reporting in the *Cost of War* does not reflect the change in accounting use for appropriation reporting, described above, which separates direct war and enduring costs. As a result, the OFS account in the *Cost of War* report includes smaller OCO operations and expenditures outside of Afghanistan.

In March 2019, the DoD OIG released a summary of six audits on the *Cost of War* released between 2016 and 2018. The audits identified several systemic problems that led to inaccurate and untimely outdated cost reporting for OFS and Operation Inherent Resolve.

The DoD OIG conducted this audit to determine whether the DoD had systemic weaknesses in the accounting for costs associated with ongoing overseas contingency operations identified in six *Cost of War* (CoW) audit reports from 2016 to 2018. The DoD OIG also sought to determine the status of the 26 recommendations from the 6 CoW audit reports, and the actions that the DoD Components took in response to those recommendations.

The DoD OIG determined that personnel in the office of the Deputy Comptroller for Program/ Budget issued unreliable and outdated CoW reports from FY 2015 and 2016 to Congress, DoD decision makers, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). *Specifically, the DoD OIG and service audit agencies identified the following systemic problems with inaccurate and untimely cost reporting for OIR and OFS: Army, Navy and Air Force personnel under-reported and over-reported costs for OIR and OFS; Navy and Marine Corps personnel could not provide transaction-level detail to support their OFS obligations and disbursements; and Deputy Comptroller for Program/Budget and Army personnel did not submit CoW data by the required milestones.*

The DoD OIG and service audit agencies closed 19 of the previous 26 open recommendations. The seven remaining recommendations were resolved, but remain open until the recommendations are implemented and verified by the DoD OIG. If the DoD Components do not implement corrective actions, Congress, DoD decision makers, the GAO and OMB may not be able to make informed budgetary decisions, maintain accountability of war-related overseas contingency operations funds, or determine precise spending trends for war-related overseas contingency operations appropriations.

In this summary report, the DoD OIG made four additional recommendations to address systemic internal control weaknesses. *The DoD OIG recommended that the DoD develop and implement review processes to verify that military services develop, update, and implement standard procedures, tools and systems for accurate war-related overseas contingency operations costs reporting; and that the Navy and Marine Corps develop and implement procedures to capture the required level of detail of war-related overseas contingency operations costs in the respective accounting systems. Additionally, the DoD OIG recommended that the DoD and military services enforce the deadline to report the CoW data or coordinate with Congress to request an adjustment, and that the Army, Navy and Air Force auditors general include follow-up audits in their FY 2020 audit plans to verify the accuracy of the CoW data.*

DoD Components agreed with most of the recommendations. However, the DoD Deputy Comptroller for Program/Budget disagreed with the recommendation to develop and implement review processes to verify that the DoD Components develop, update, and implement standard procedures, tools and systems for accurate war-related overseas contingency operations costs

# Lead IG Estimate of FY2020 Cost of U.S. Role in Afghan War

## OCO Funds Increase but Level OFS Funding in FY 2020 Request

In March, the DoD Comptroller released the President’s DoD FY 2020 budget request, which requests a total of \$718.3 billion for the DoD, including \$544.5 billion in base funding and \$173.8 billion in Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) funding.

While the overall Defense budget request increased by \$33.3 billion compared to the appropriation enacted in FY 2019, the OCO budget nearly tripled. The budget request stated that the large increase in the OCO budget is because DoD base funding, which is capped by the Budget Control Act of 2011, is “insufficient to execute the National Defense Strategy.” Therefore, all requirements in excess of this statutory cap were shifted to the OCO budget, which is exempt from the caps set by the Budget Control Act. The FY 2020 OCO request also includes \$9.2 billion unrelated to ongoing operations “for unspecified military construction to build border barriers, backfill funding reallocated [from military construction] in FY 2019 to build border barriers, and rebuild facilities damaged by Hurricanes Florence and Michael.

The OFS request of \$18.6 billion represents a slight increase from the \$18.5 billion enacted in FY 2019. This includes \$4.8 billion for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), the primary funding stream that supports the ANDSF. This is a slight decrease from the \$4.9 billion enacted for the ASFF in FY 2019. This funding covers the full range of ANDSF requirements, including salaries, equipment, weapons, ammunition, vehicles, training, facilities, food, and fuel. The budget assumes that the ANDSF will receive additional support of \$273 million from the UN Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, \$332 million from the NATO ANA Trust Fund, and \$498 million from the Afghan government.

USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and Food for Peace (FFP), and the DoS Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) are the primary U.S. Government offices responsible for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. OFDA had 23 active awards during the quarter that focused on water, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition, health, logistics support and relief commodities, agriculture and food security, humanitarian coordination and management, and shelter and settlement support, including emergency response efforts for areas impacted by the drought. FFP had two active awards during the quarter that addressed food and nutrition assistance, including emergency response efforts for drought-affected people.

In March 2019, the United States announced more than \$61 million in additional humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, including \$46 million from FFP, \$9.3 million from PRM, and \$5.7 million from OFDA. This assistance will provide emergency food assistance, nutrition services, hygiene kits, safe drinking water, and sanitation for people, including refugees, in the most affected regions of Afghanistan.

## Changes in FY 2020 ASFF Request (in billions/rounded)

	FY 2019 Appropriated	FY 2020 Request
ANA	\$1.764	\$1.590
ANP	\$0.726	\$0.660
AAF	\$1.727	\$1.825
ASSF	\$0.702	\$0.728
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4.920</b>	<b>\$4.804</b>

Source: DoD Comptroller

## Status of Cumulative FY 2019 DoS and USAID Humanitarian Assistance Funds for Afghanistan as of March 31, 2019 (in millions rounded)

Office	Obligated	Disbursed
USAID OFDA	\$3.0	\$14.7
USAID FFP	\$0.6	\$22.2
DoS PRM	\$10.6	\$8.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$14.2</b>	<b>\$45.3</b>

Sources: DoS and USAID

## Status of Cumulative FY 2019 USAID Funds for Afghanistan as of March 31, 2019 (in millions rounded)

Fund	Obligated	Disbursed
Community Credit Corporation (Title II and III)	\$0.0	\$0.5
Economic Support Fund	\$0.0	\$23.5
Economic Support Fund-Overseas Contingency Operation	\$0.0	\$499.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0.0</b>	<b>\$499.4</b>

Note: USAID reported disbursements may exceed obligations because disbursements may have been made against obligations from a prior fiscal year.

Source: USAID

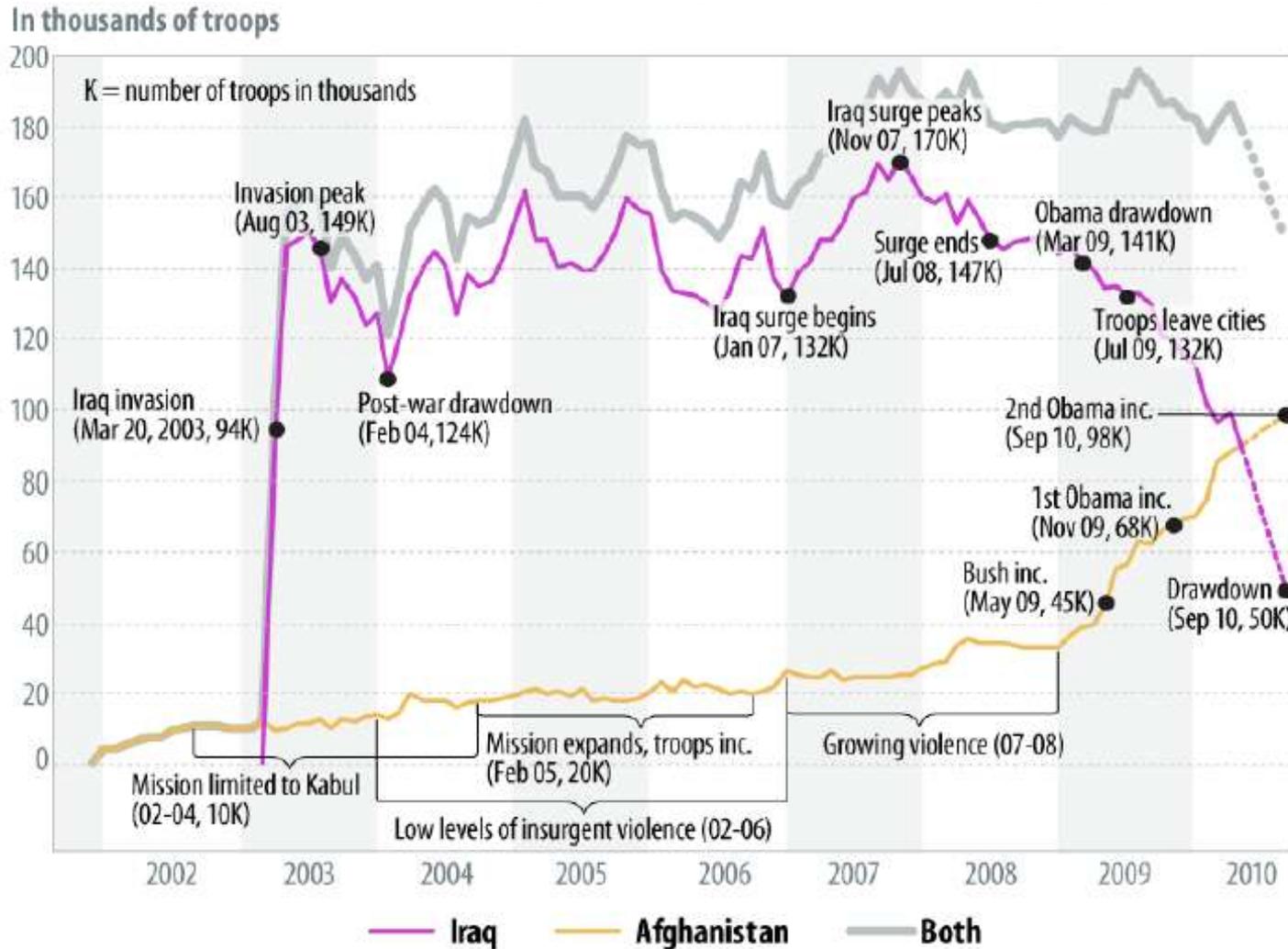
# **The Changing U.S. Role in Warfighting and Shifts in Balance of U.S. Ground and Air Forces**

# The Changing U.S. Role

The metrics in this section describe an awkward mix of success and failure – one documented in far more narrative detail in the reports of the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) and the Lead Inspector General for Oversea Contingency Operations (LIG):

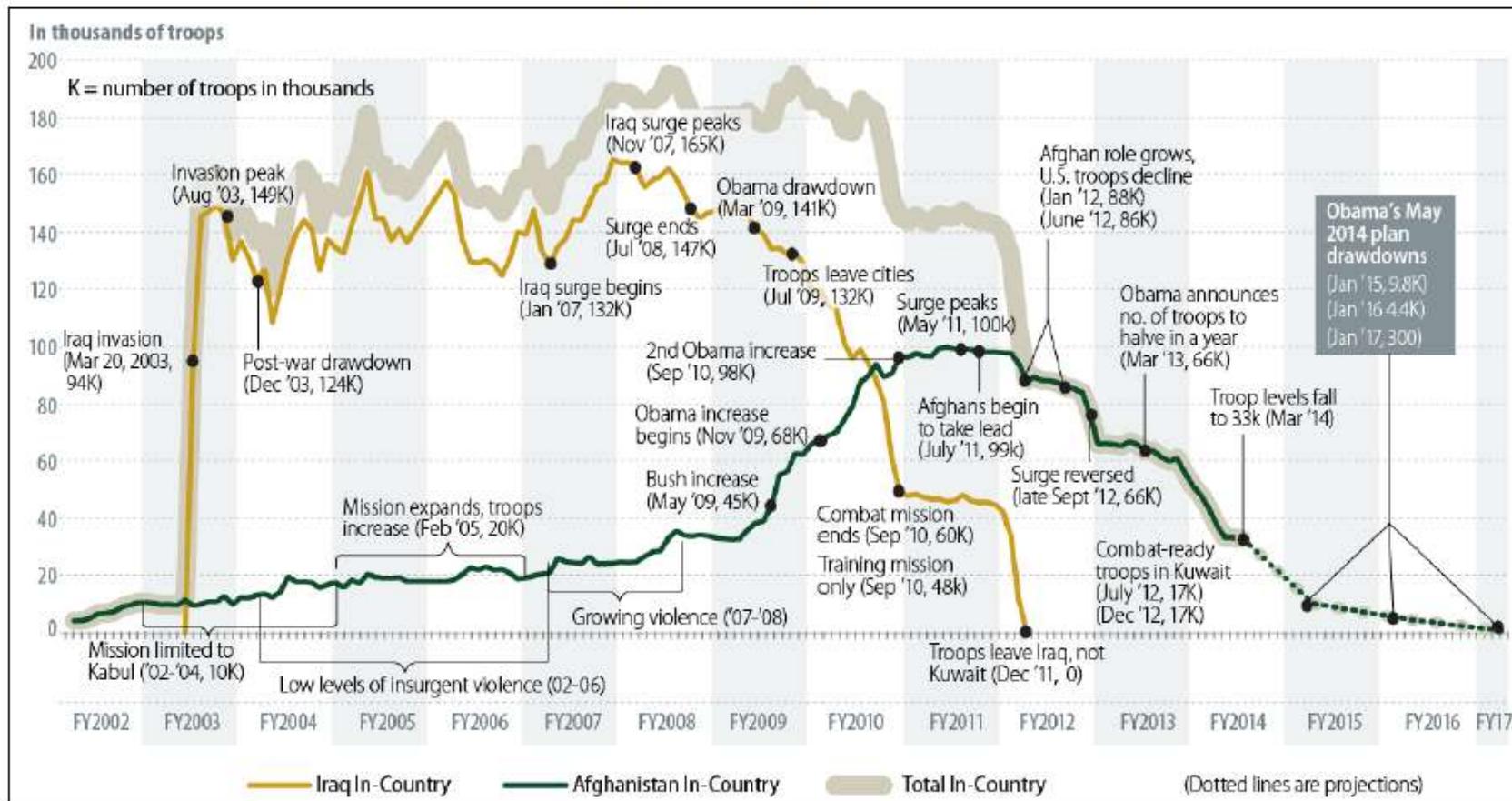
- The United States has reduced its military casualties to minimal levels – trends matched by its outside allies. The situation is reverse, however, in the case of Afghan forces. Although Resolute Support does not publish casualty statistics for U.S. or Non-US NATO and other outside forces, the level of Afghan military and police casualties has risen so sharply that it is classified by the Afghan government. President Ghani mentioned an unsupported figure of 28,000 dead since he became President in 2014 in early 2018, and then 47,000 dead on January 25, 2019. No one has issued an official open source estimate of the number of wounded and injured.
- The U.S. has still not provided real transparency as to the the cost of the Afghan War, but recent metrics indicate that the total cost of warfighting and development/reconstruction has dropped from an annual peak of \$112 billion – which may have included substantial money actually spent on Baseline and other programs — to a planned total of \$7 billion in FY2019. (The FY2019 total may not include the cost of air operations based outside Afghanistan and the full cost of supporting Afghan counterterrorism forces.)
- The US spent \$133 billion on military and civil aid to Afghanistan between FY2002 and FY2019 – 63% of which was military aid. The cost of that aid dropped from \$14.7 billion in FY2015 to \$5.2 billion in FY2019.
- The annual funding and force level profiles of U.S. military and civil aid from FY2002 to the present have been incredibly erratic. They rose far too slowly from 2002 to 2008 to react to a reemerging threat, then received a virtual flood of aid that peaked sharply in FY2011, and the fell precipitously in the years than followed. Funding levels were so turbulent, and tied to so many changes in program content, that vast amounts of money had to be wasted – problems compounded by what both General H.R. McMaster and SIGAR found to be a gross lack of effective contract and execution management and massive corruption.
- The proposed FY2020 program is little more than an extension of the FY2019 program, once the changes in cost definition are examined. It does not track with either Presidential policy statements or the ongoing U.S. peace initiative.
- Official reporting on U.S. military and civil personnel levels is suspect, and seems to omit substantial numbers of temporary duty and other personnel. The military total has dropped from a peak over over 100,000 in 2011, however, to some 12,000 military in FY2019 – with a goal of 15,000 in FY2020. This does not include some 29,400 contractors in 2019, 11,600 of which were U.S. citizens and many of which were performing roles played by uniformed U.S. military in past wars.
- Press reports indicate that the US Embassy in Kabul – an embassy that became one of the largest the world — is now going to be reshaped by plans to cut personnel by some 50% in April 2019.
- The U.S. military role shifted sharply from reliance on U.S. land combat forces to using airpower to support Afghan land forces after 2014. AFCENT data show that the U.S. flew 1,408 strike sorties in 2013 vs. 966 in 2018 – a drop of 48% in manned sorties releasing munitions. However, once unmanned aircraft are included, the U.S. dropped 7,362 munitions in 2018, versus 2,758 munitions in 2013 (+166% in 2018), only 947 in 2015 (+667% in 2018), and 4,361 in 2017 (+59% in 2018).

# Giving U.S. Priority to Iraq: 2003-2008



# U.S. Shift to Lower Personnel Levels: FY2002-FY2017

In thousands of U.S. troops

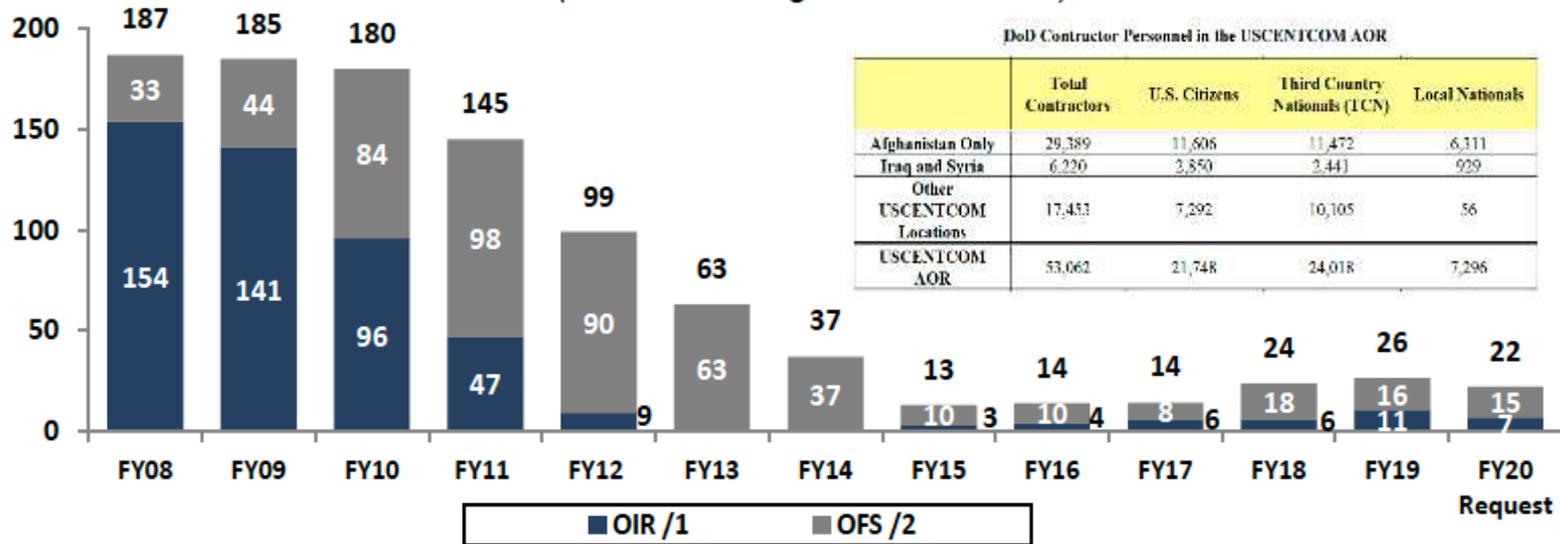


**Sources:** DOD, Monthly Boots-on-the Ground reports provided to CRS and congressional defense committees, 2001-June 2014. For month-by-month troop levels, both in-country and in-theater, see **Table A-1**.

**Notes:** Reflects U.S. troops in-country; excludes troops providing in-theater support or conducting counter-terror operations outside the region.

# Total OCO Manning Drops by 91% in FY2008-FY2020

## Trends in OCO Troop Levels in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan (Annual Average in Thousands)



	FY 2019 PB Request	FY 2020 PB Request <sup>3</sup>
Afghanistan (OFS)	11,958	15,000
Iraq/Syria (OIR)	5,765	7,200
In-Theater Support <sup>1</sup>	59,463	46,473
In-CONUS <sup>2</sup> /Other Mobilization	16,610	19,149
<b>Total Force Levels</b>	<b>93,796</b>	<b>87,822</b>

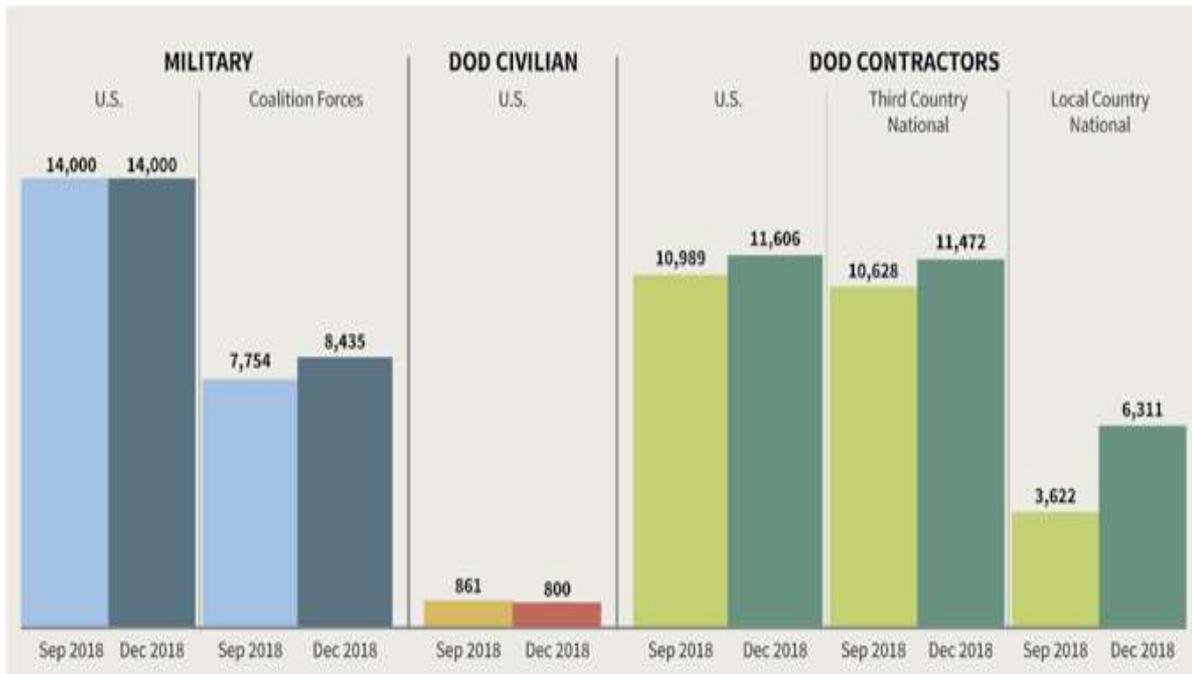
<sup>1</sup> In-Theater support includes support for Afghanistan/Iraq/Syria, Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) HOA / NW Africa CT, and EDI (including approximately 10,500 afloat forces).

<sup>2</sup> In-CONUS = In the Continental United States

<sup>3</sup> FY 2020 includes Temporary Enabling Force (TEF) support for Afghanistan/Iraq/Syria. This is a change from FY 2019 in which the TEF support was counted as part of In-Theater Support.

# Contractors More than Double the Real Total of U.S. Personnel Afghanistan in 2018-2019

## Total Personnel

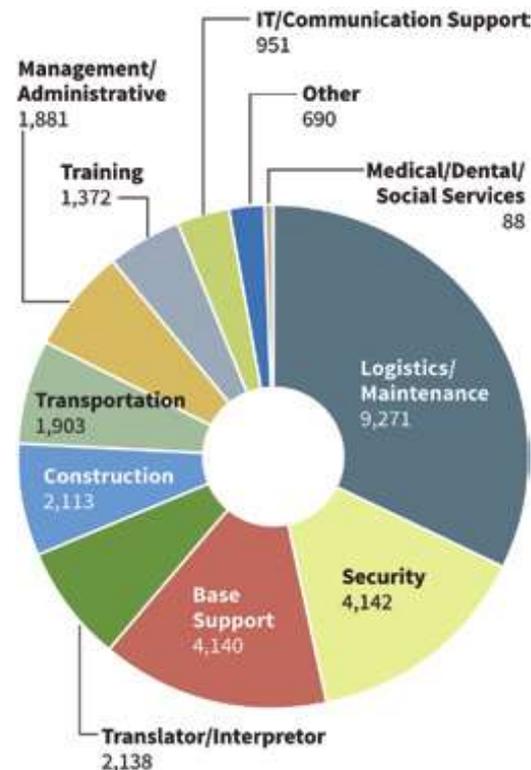


According to DOD, as of December 2018, approximately 14,000 U.S. military personnel were serving as part of the United States' Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) mission in Afghanistan, the same number reported for the last year. An additional 861 DOD civilian personnel and 10,698 U.S. citizens who serve as contractors are also in Afghanistan.<sup>128</sup> Of the 14,000 U.S. military personnel, 8,475 U.S. personnel are assigned to the NATO RS mission to train, advise, and assist Afghan security forces, unchanged since last quarter.<sup>129</sup> The remaining U.S. military personnel serve the OFS mission in support roles or in conducting air operations, training the Afghan special forces, and conducting counterterrorism operations.<sup>130</sup>

As of December 2018, the RS mission included roughly 8,444 military personnel from NATO allies and non-NATO partner nations, bringing the current total of RS military personnel to 16,919 (a 690-person increase since last quarter). The United States contributes the most troops to the RS mission, followed by Germany (1,300 personnel) and the United Kingdom (1,100).<sup>131</sup>

Source: SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update, January 30, 2019, p. 34-35, 77.

## Contractors by Function

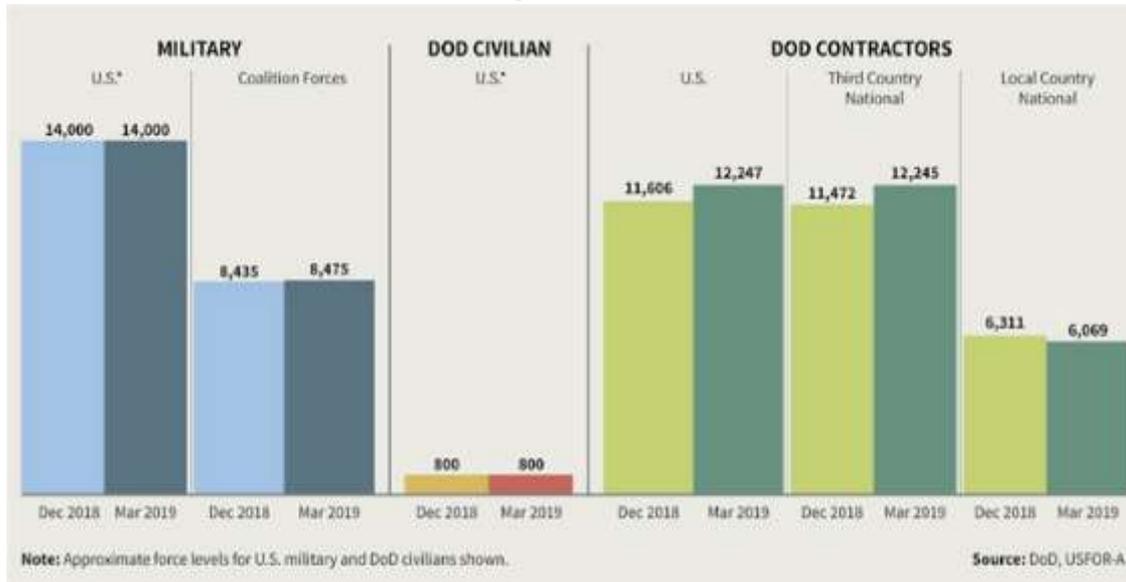


Source: DoD

While the number of U.S. military and civilian personnel remained constant, the number of contractors increased by nearly 14 percent during the quarter, reaching the highest level since the 1st quarter of FY 2016. The greatest growth during the quarter was among contractors who perform logistics/maintenance, management/administrative, and training tasks

# Lead IG Estimate of Total of 45,361 Military, DoD, and Contractor Personnel Involved in Afghan War in March 2019

**Military and DoD Personnel in Afghanistan, December 2018 and March 2019**



**Personnel Supporting U.S. Embassy Kabul Operations, as of February 23, 2019**

Agency	U.S. Direct Hires	Third Country Nationals (TCNs)	Locally Employed Staff	U.S. Non-Personal Staff	TCN Non-Personal Staff	Afghan Non-Personal Staff
State	443	36	649	1,518	1,097	2,369
USAID	74	27	175	—	—	—
DoD	20	—	1	—	—	—
Justice	24	—	11	6	—	—
Treasury	1	—	—	—	—	—
SIGAR	22	—	5	—	—	—
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>1,097</b>	<b>2,369</b>

Note: U.S. direct hire staff includes U.S. citizen Personal Services Contractors and employed Eligible Family Members. Non-Personal Service Contractors does not include USAID implementing partners DoD includes the Defense Attache Office and Military Deployment Distribution Command. Justice includes DEA and FBI personnel. Source: DoS

The DoD reported that as of the end of the quarter, the authorized force level for U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan remained at approximately 14,000, including troops assigned to U.S. counterterrorism operations and 8,475 personnel supporting the Resolute Support mission. (The DoD does not release precise OFS personnel numbers to the public.) Some troops assigned to the OFS mission have already been transferred to locations outside of Afghanistan, such as Qatar, as part of General Miller’s effort to “streamline” OFS operations.

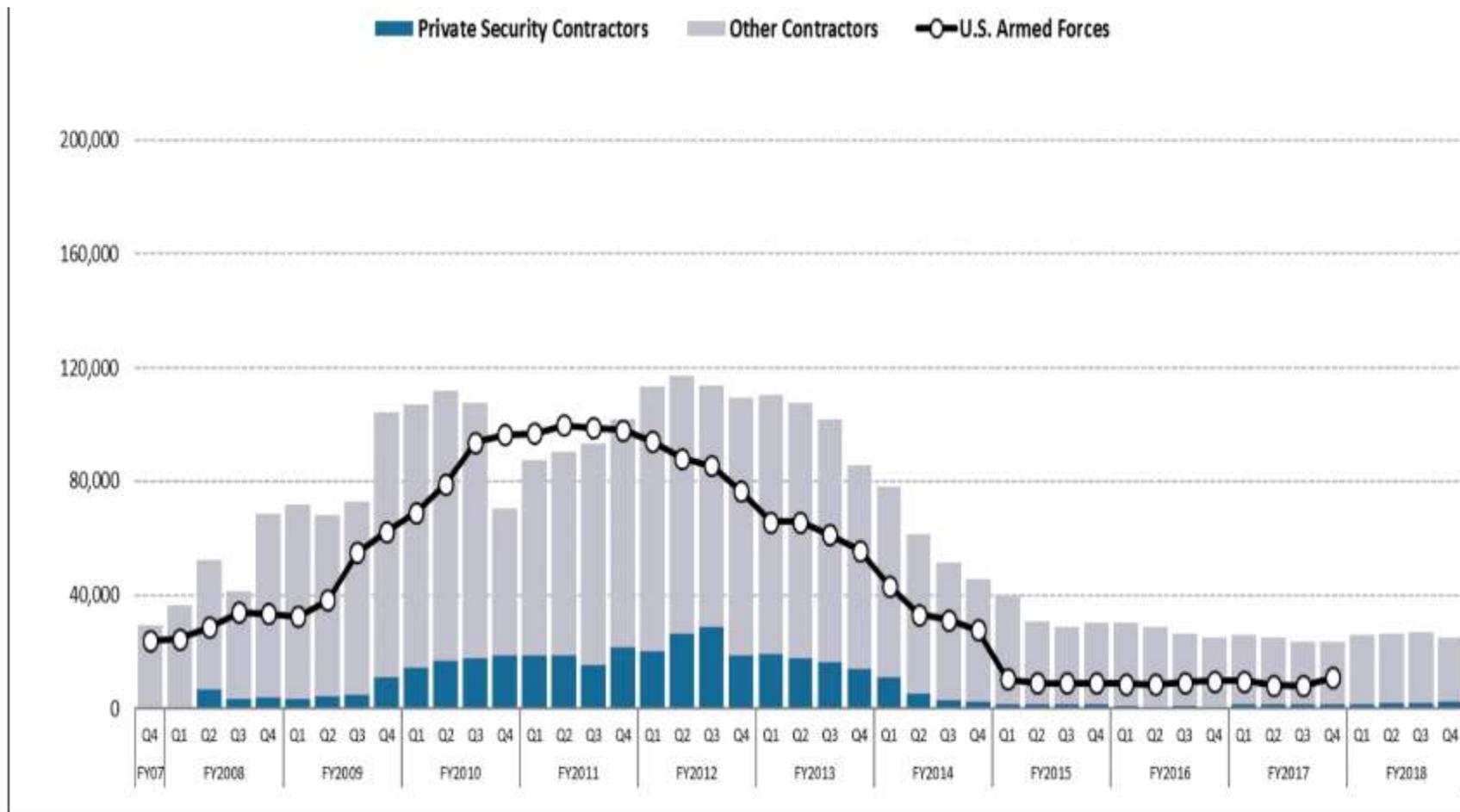
Resolute Support reported that as of March 2019, 39 nations are participating in the Resolute Support mission, contributing more than 17,034 troops, 8,475 of which were American (50%). This total force has changed little since December 2018, when Resolute Support reported that its mission consisted of 16,919 personnel.

The number of DoD contractor personnel continued to grow during the quarter. The DoD reported that there were more than 30,000 DoD contractors in Afghanistan during the quarter, including 12,247 U.S. contractors. This is one of the highest quarterly totals of DoD contractors since OFS began in 2015.261 USFOR-A noted that the areas with the greatest contractor increase since 2018 were base life support, security, and interpreters. The DoD reported that the authorized number of U.S. DoD civilian personnel in Afghanistan remained at approximately 800.

The DoD said that it has not received any order to reduce the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, despite news reports in December that the President was considering such a In February, Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan told NATO allies in Brussels that any change in force level would be done in coordination with its Resolute Support partners, not unilaterally.

The DoS reported that to the DoS OIG that as of February 23, there were more than 6,400 people supporting embassy operations, including 584 U.S. Government employees.

# CRS Estimate of Military and Contractor Personnel Involved in Afghan War in Q4 2007- Q4 2018 - I



**Source:** Contractor levels drawn from CENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports; U.S. Armed Forces levels through Q4 FY2017 drawn from “Boots on the Ground” monthly reports to Congress

**Notes:** DOD did not begin releasing data on contractors in CENTCOM until Q4 FY2007. U.S. Armed Forces levels include all active and reserve component personnel.

# CRS Estimate of Military and Contractor Personnel Involved in Afghan War in Q4 2007- Q4 2018 - II

	U.S. Armed Forces	Total Contractors	U.S. Nationals Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Contractors
Q4 FY2007	24,056	29,473	3,387	26,086
Q1 FY2008	24,780	36,520	5,153	31,367
Q2 FY2008	28,650	52,336	4,220	48,116
Q3 FY2008	33,902	41,232	4,724	36,508
Q4 FY2008	33,450	68,252	5,405	62,847
Q1 FY2009	32,500	71,755	5,960	65,795
Q2 FY2009	38,350	68,197	9,378	58,819
Q3 FY2009	55,100	73,968	10,036	62,932
Q4 FY2009	62,300	104,101	9,322	94,779
Q1 FY2010	69,000	107,292	10,016	97,276
Q2 FY2010	79,100	112,092	16,081	96,011
Q3 FY2010	93,800	107,479	19,103	88,376
Q4 FY2010	96,600	70,599	20,874	49,725
Q1 FY2011	96,900	87,483	19,381	68,102
Q2 FY2011	99,800	90,339	20,413	69,926
Q3 FY2011	98,900	93,118	23,294	69,824
Q4 FY2011	98,200	101,789	23,190	78,599
Q1 FY2012	94,100	113,491	25,287	88,204
Q2 FY2012	88,200	117,227	34,765	82,462
Q3 FY2012	85,600	113,736	30,568	83,168
Q4 FY2012	76,500	109,564	31,814	77,750
Q1 FY2013	65,800	110,404	33,444	76,960
Q2 FY2013	65,700	107,796	33,107	74,689
Q3 FY2013	61,300	101,855	32,442	69,413
Q4 FY2013	55,800	85,528	27,188	58,340
Q1 FY2014	43,300	78,136	23,763	54,373
Q2 FY2014	33,200	61,452	20,865	40,587
Q3 FY2014	31,400	51,489	17,404	34,085
Q4 FY2014	27,800	45,349	17,477	27,872
Q1 FY2015	10,600	39,609	14,222	25,387
Q2 FY2015	9,100	30,820	12,033	18,787
Q3 FY2015	9,060	28,931	10,019	18,912
Q4 FY2015	9,100	30,211	10,347	19,864
Q1 FY2016	8,930	30,455	10,151	20,304

	U.S. Armed Forces	Total Contractors	U.S. Nationals Contractors	Foreign and Host Country National Contractors
Q2 FY2016	8,730	28,626	9,640	18,986
Q3 FY2016	9,365	26,435	8,837	17,598
Q4 FY2016	9,800	25,197	9,142	16,055
Q1 FY2017	9,200	26,022	9,474	16,548
Q2 FY2017	8,400	24,900	9,522	15,378
Q3 FY2017	8,300	23,525	9,436	14,089
Q4 FY2017	11,100 <sup>a</sup>	23,659	9,418	14,241
Q1 FY2018	Not Available	26,043	10,189	15,854
Q2 FY2018	Not Available	26,647	10,891	15,756
Q3 FY2018	Not Available	26,922	10,128	16,794
Q4 FY2018	Not Available	25,239	10,989	14,250

**Sources:** Contractor levels drawn from CENTCOM Quarterly Contractor Census Reports; U.S. Armed Forces levels through Q4 FY2017 drawn from "Boots on the Ground" monthly reports to Congress.

**Notes:** DOD did not begin releasing data on contractors in CENTCOM until Q4 FY2007. U.S. Armed Forces levels include all active and reserve component personnel.

<sup>a</sup> In August 2017, DOD revised its force management level accounting and reporting practices for Afghanistan to include U.S. Armed Forces personnel in-country for short-duration missions, personnel in a temporary duty status, personnel assigned to combat support agencies, and forces assigned to the essential recovery element and the Resolute Support sustainment brigade in reported totals. See U.S. Department of Defense, Press Operations, "Department of Defense Afghanistan Force Management Level Accounting and Reporting Practices Briefing by Pentagon Chief Spokesperson White and Joint Staff Director Lieutenant General McKenzie in the Pentagon Briefing Room," transcript, August 30, 2017.

# Radical Shifts in Role of US and Coalition Airpower: 2015-7/2019

(CAOC) Public Affairs – afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil as of July 31, 2019)

- Flew 1,408 strike sorties in 2013 vs. 947 in 2018 – drop of 48% in Manned sorties.
- *But*, dropped 7,362 munitions in 2018, versus 2,758 in 2013 (+166%) and 4,361 in 2017 (+59%)

## OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL/RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION

### Strike Aircraft (manned)

Sorties	
2013	21,900
2014	12,978
2015	5,774
2016	5,162
2017	4,603
2018	8,196
2019	4,869

### Sorties with at least one weapon release

2013	1,408
2014	1,136
2015	411
2016	615
2017	1,248
2018	500
2019	1,302

### Number of Weapons Released (Manned & RPA strike assets)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2013	193	297	250	284	368	337	256	158	232	189	118	76	2,758
2014	92	114	95	115	164	272	205	437	441	217	87	126	2,365
2015	40	30	47	31	41	109	79	156	111	203	69	31	947
2016	127	115	58	62	89	94	160	108	162	205	92	65	1,337
2017	54	200	203	460	328	389	350	503	414	653	352	455	4,361
2018	378	469	339	562	591	572	746	715	841	769	841	539	7,362
2019	463	327	673	548	635	441	613						3,700

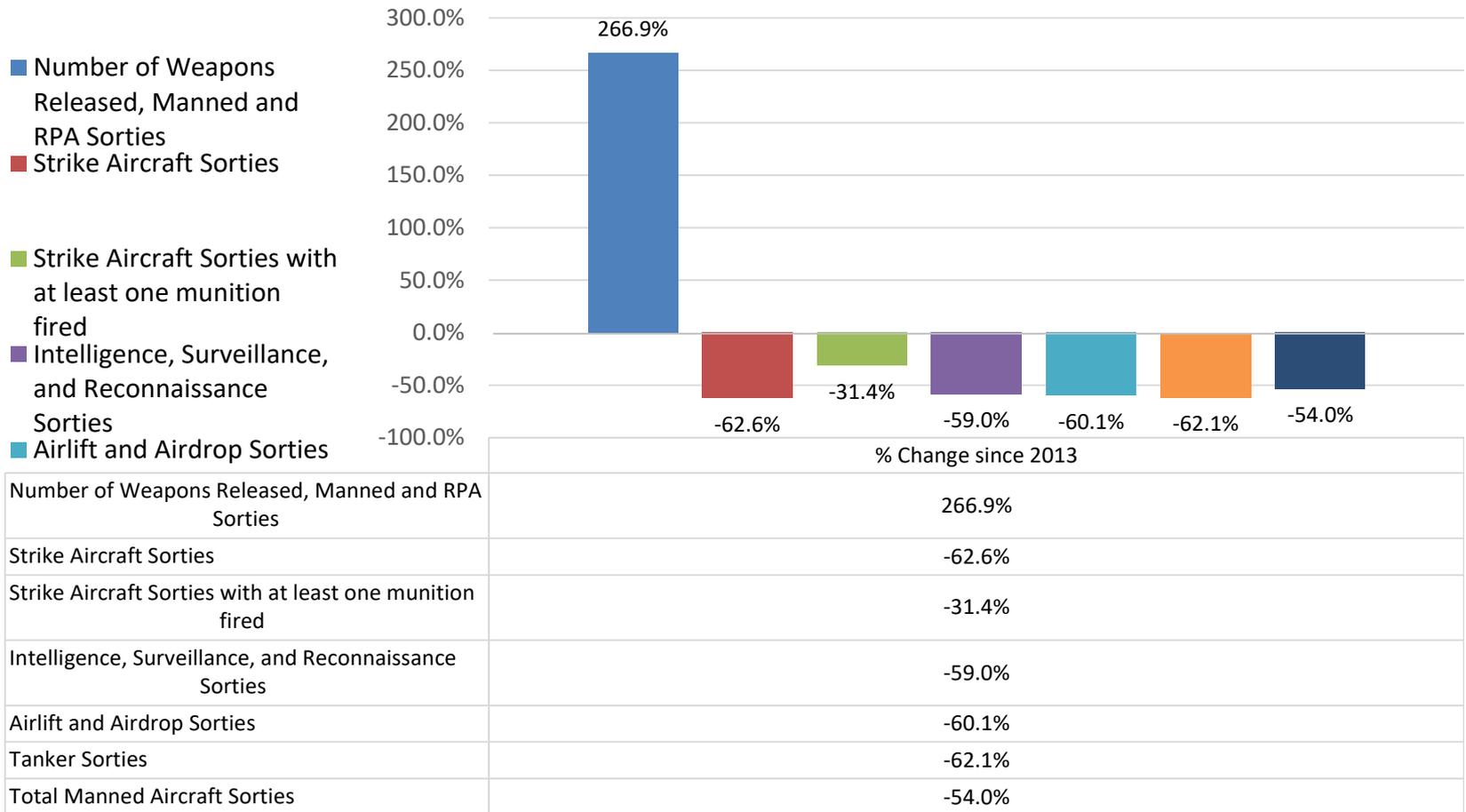
Statistics provided includes numbers of sorties (not strikes) and munitions expended by aircraft under CFACC control

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Intel, Surveillance and Recon Sorties	31,049	32,999	21,634	19,681	15,404	12,716	10,180
Airlift and Airdrop Sorties	32,000	17,040	6,900	10,300	11,166	12,783	6,491
Airlift Cargo (Short Tons)	201,000	158,400	50,000	69,200	84,208	89,584	41,440
Airlift Passengers	506,000	202,700	78,000	111,100	120,554	150,330	81,918
Supplies Airdropped (Pounds)	10,883,000	28,000	0	0	33,423	667,880	91,160
Tanker Sorties	12,319	9,085	5,323	4,910	5,714	4,673	2,150
Fuel Offloaded (Millions of Pounds)	723	636	201	150	170	189	81
Aircraft Refuelings	53,266	46,793	26,162	18,137	17,989	19,214	10,544

- Some figures may have changed due to data re-calculation and re-verification
- Assets under CFACC control include a compilation of aircraft from all U.S. military branches of service, as well as Coalition aircraft; however, not all aircraft flying in the AOR fall under CFACC control.

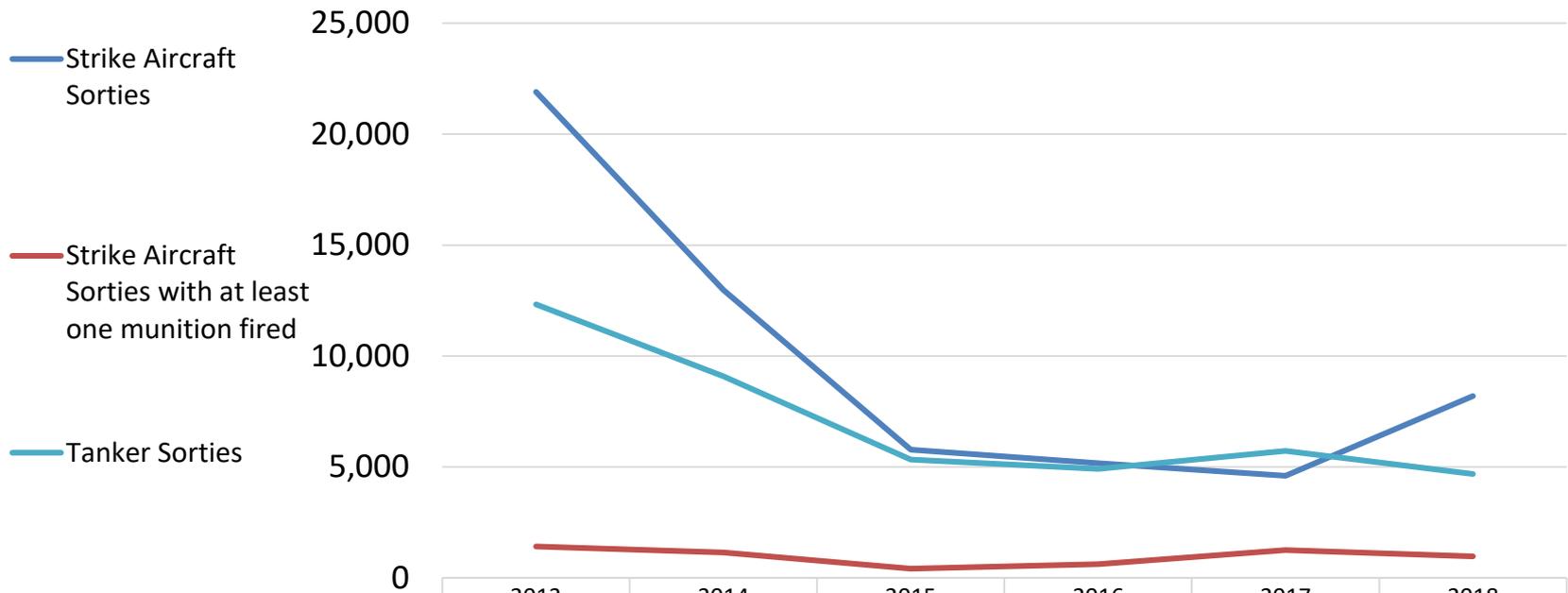
POC: AFCENT (CAOC) Public Affairs – afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil

# % Change in Airpower Statistics in Afghanistan from 2013-2018



Source: Adapted by Max Molot from AFCENT (CAOC) Public Affairs, as of April 30, 2019, [afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil](mailto:afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil)

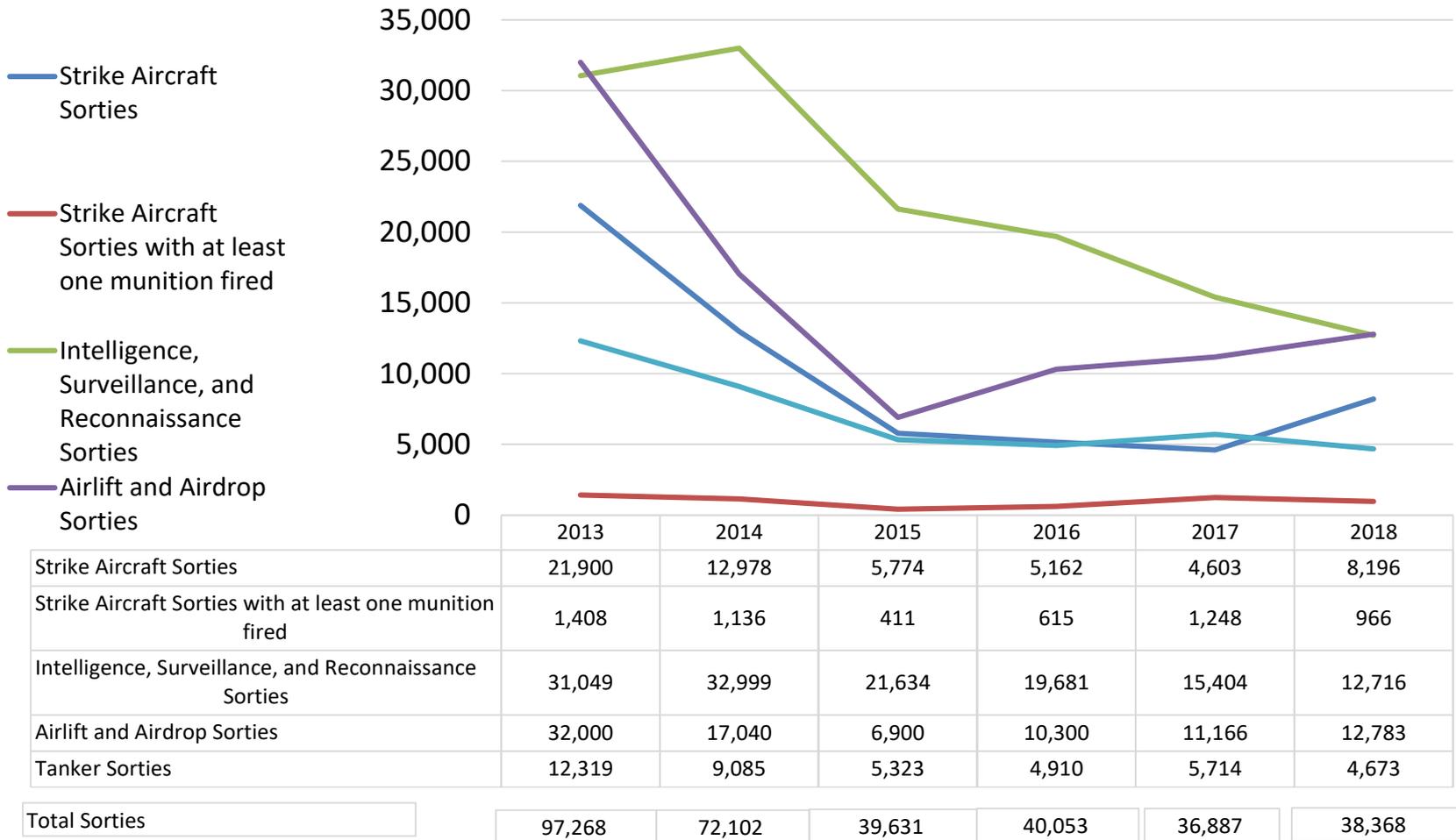
# Combined Force Air Component Commander Strike Airpower Statistics from 2013-2019



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Strike Aircraft Sorties	21,900	12,978	5,774	5,162	4,603	8,196
Strike Aircraft Sorties with at least one munition fired	1,408	1,136	411	615	1,248	966
Tanker Sorties	12,319	9,085	5,323	4,910	5,714	4,673
Total Sorties	97,268	72,102	39,631	40,053	36,887	38,368

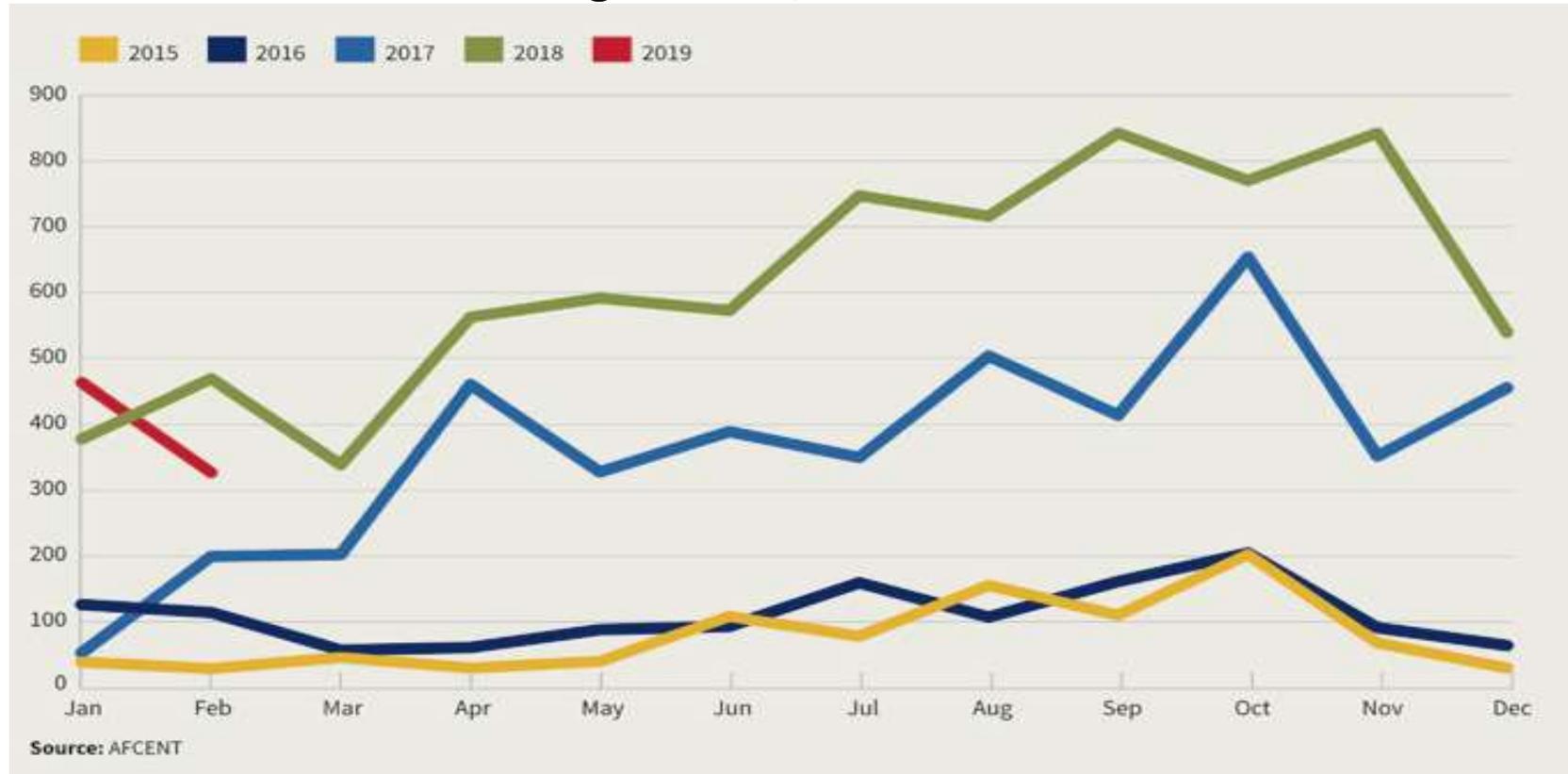
Source: Source: Adapted by Max Molot from AFCENT (CAOC) Public Affairs, as of April 30, 2019, [afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil](mailto:afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil)

# Combined Force Air Component Commander Manned Airpower Statistics from 2013-2019



Source: AFCENT (CAOC) Public Affairs, as of April 30, 2019, [afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil](mailto:afcent.pa@afcent.af.mil)

# Airpower Replaces Ground Power: Weapons Released by U.S. Aircraft in Afghanistan, 2015-2019



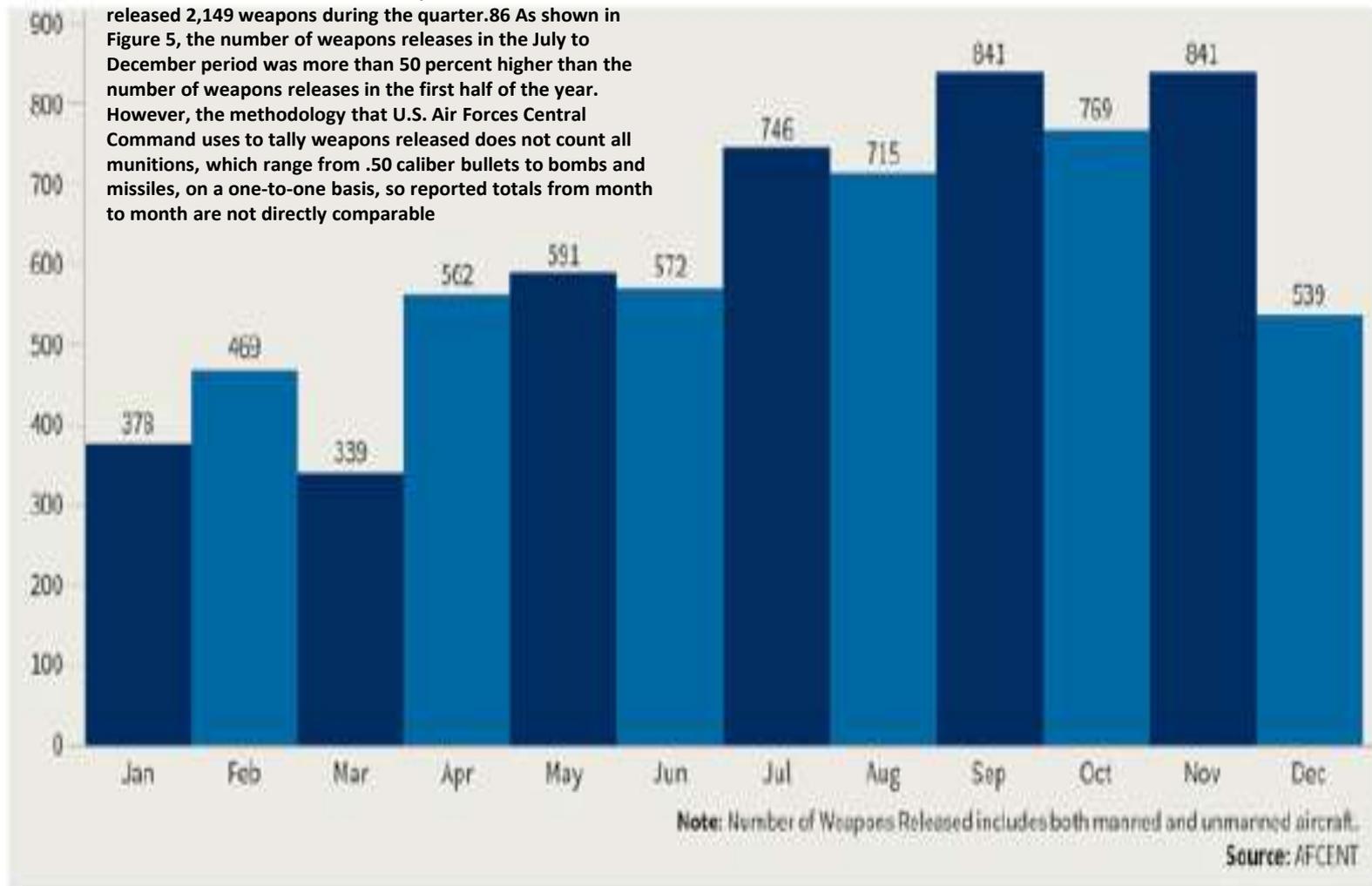
U.S. and Afghan airstrikes continue to be a critical component of unilateral and joint operations against the Taliban and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria–Khorasan (ISIS-K). As noted in the previous Lead IG quarterly report, General Miller ended his predecessor’s air campaign targeting sources of Taliban revenue, particularly narcotics processing facilities.<sup>64</sup> USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that General Miller directed this change “to maximize impact on the Taliban in an attempt to force them to the negotiation table.” USFOR-A added that while there are no current operations targeting Taliban financing, coalition and ANDSF forces may have destroyed some narcotics processing facilities while targeting Taliban leadership.

According to data released by U.S. Air Forces Central Command, U.S. manned and unmanned aircraft released 790 weapons in January and February 2019 targeting both the Taliban and terrorist groups, such as ISIS-K, as shown in Figure 2. This number of weapons releases is similar to the same period last year but much higher than before the announcement of the South Asia strategy. However, as explained in the Lead IG report for the second quarter of FY 2018, the methodology that U.S. Air Forces Central Command uses to tally weapons released does not count all munitions, which range from .50 caliber bullets to bombs and missiles, on a one-to-one basis, so reported totals from month to month are not directly comparable.

# Coping with a Token Afghan Air Force: Rising Number of U.S. Air Strikes in 2018

## U.S. Forces Weapons Released in 2018 by Month

U.S. Air Forces Central Command reported that U.S. aircraft released 2,149 weapons during the quarter.<sup>86</sup> As shown in Figure 5, the number of weapons releases in the July to December period was more than 50 percent higher than the number of weapons releases in the first half of the year. However, the methodology that U.S. Air Forces Central Command uses to tally weapons released does not count all munitions, which range from .50 caliber bullets to bombs and missiles, on a one-to-one basis, so reported totals from month to month are not directly comparable



Source: Lead Inspector General, OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL, LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS OCTOBER 1, 2018–DECEMBER 31, 2018, p. 21.

**Allies Remain Critical:  
NATO-Resolute Support —  
Troop Contributions  
and International Aid**

# The Role of Allied Countries

The metrics in this section summarize the level of Allied military forces officially assigned to the NATO mission in Afghanistan in the spring of 2019, and major allied aid contributions from 2002 to that date. They understate the full allied contribution because they do not include substantial additional national aid to civil and military personnel and programs.

- Official NATO casualty data are not available on the sacrifices allied forces made in terms of killed and wounded, but allied forces did suffer substantial casualties.
- The personnel data show that allied military personnel peaked in early 2011 at a nominal level of 41,982 or 32% of the total. The reported U.S. total was 90,000, but there were well over 10,000 U.S. military personnel not assigned to ISAF.
- By April 2019, there were 17,034 U.S. and allied military personnel in the NATO force. U.S. assigned personnel had dropped to only 8,475 – roughly 60-70% of the actual U.S. total of permanently assigned personnel in country. Allied personnel, however, had risen to 50% of the NATO total.
- A metric drawn from a SIGAR report shows that allies donated some \$14.4 billion in aid to international aid efforts. Additional purely national allied aid that was spent in allied areas of responsibility in Afghanistan or in purely national or NGO programs may have approached this total.

The lack of proper official U.S. recognition of these allied and strategic partner efforts, and adequate consultation on changes in strategy and force levels in Afghanistan, remains a serious problem in U.S. strategic communications.

# NATO Resolute Support Forces: June, 2019

	Albania	135		Germany	1,300		Poland	330
	Armenia	121		Greece	12		Portugal	214
	Australia	300		Hungary	93		Romania	763
	Austria	18		Iceland	3		Slovakia	33
	Azerbaijan	120		Italy	895		Slovenia	8
	Belgium	83		Latvia	40		Spain	67
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	63		Lithuania	50		Sweden	29
	Bulgaria	159		Luxembourg	2		Turkey	583
	Croatia	106		Mongolia	233		Ukraine	21
	Czech Republic	343		Montenegro	31		United Kingdom	1,100
	Denmark	155		Netherlands	160		United States	8,475
	Estonia	42		New Zealand	13			
	Finland	67		North Macedonia	47			
	Georgia	870		Norway	54		Total	17,148

## 39 Contributing Nations RSM Total Strength: 17,148

**Mission:** The Resolute Support mission (RSM) is a NATO-led mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions. The mission was launched on 1 January 2015, immediately following the stand-down of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

The legal framework for the Resolute Support mission is provided by a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), signed in Kabul on 30 September 2014 and ratified by the Afghan Parliament on 27 November 2014. The SOFA defines the terms and conditions under which NATO forces are deployed, as well as the activities they are authorised to carry out. The mission is also supported by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2189, unanimously adopted on 12 December 2014.

The Resolute Support Mission currently consists of around 17,000 troops from 39 NATO Allies and partners. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have attended the meeting on Afghanistan at the level of Heads of State and Government on 12 July 2019 and have been invited to attend the meetings on Afghanistan at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on 5 December 2018 and of Defence Ministers on 27 June 2019. Both are finalizing the details of their respective offers to the Resolute Support Mission.

The mission operates with one 'hub' (Kabul/Bagram) and four 'spokes' (Mazar-e-Sharif in the north, Herat in the west, Kandahar in the south, and Lagman in the east). It carries out training, advice and assistance activities in support of the Afghan government's four-year security roadmap (launched in 2017), which aims to increase the effectiveness and accountability of the Afghan national security forces and institutions. The roadmap focuses on leadership development, fighting capabilities (with an emphasis on the Afghan special operations forces and the air force), unity of command and fighting corruption. The mission also performs supporting functions in several areas. These include: operational planning; budgetary development; force generation process; management and development of personnel; logistical sustainment; and civilian oversight in order to ensure the Afghan security forces and institutions act in accordance with the rule of law and good governance.

Those countries not contributing troops to the Resolute Support Mission are supporting this mission in different ways, as well as the broad effort to strengthen the sustainment of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) in the long term.

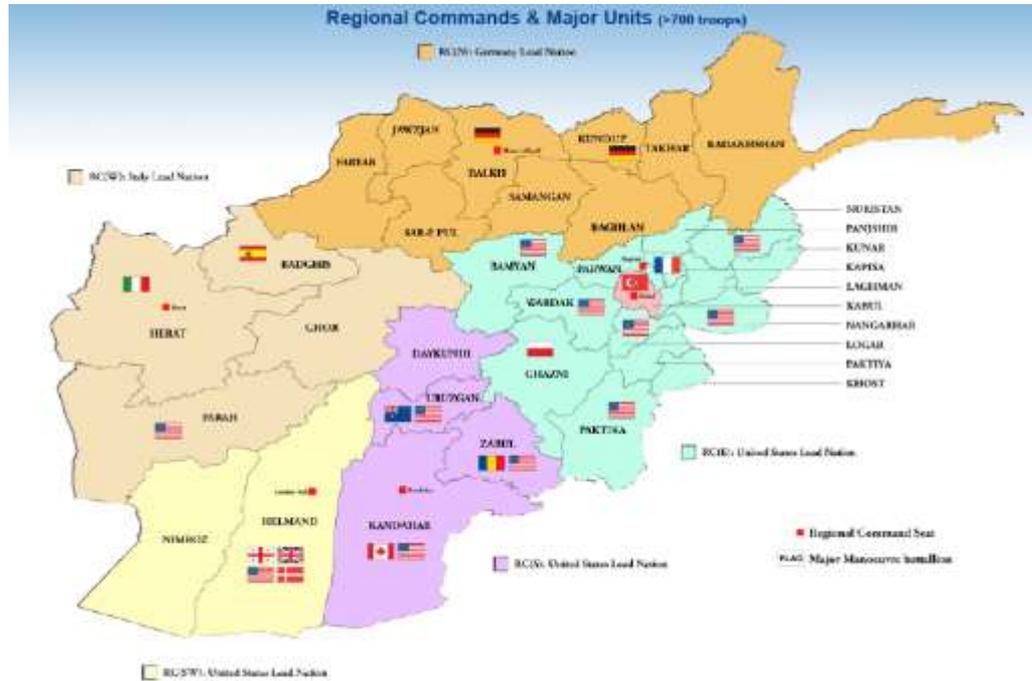
Beyond this training, advice and assistance mission, Allies and partner countries will also contribute to the financing of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, and will enhance the Enduring Partnership with Afghanistan, by strengthening political consultations with the country and by strengthening practical cooperation in areas of specific interest for Afghanistan.

These efforts are part of the broader engagement of the international community in Afghanistan to ensure that Afghanistan is never again a safe haven for terrorism.

Department of Defense, Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2019, Report to Congress In Accordance With Section 1225 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (P.L. 113-291), as amended, June 2019, pp. 7-8; See links to media backgrounder on "NATO-Afghanistan relations (June 2019)" and to media backgrounder on the ANA Trust Fund.



# NATO Peak International Security Assistance Force in January 2011

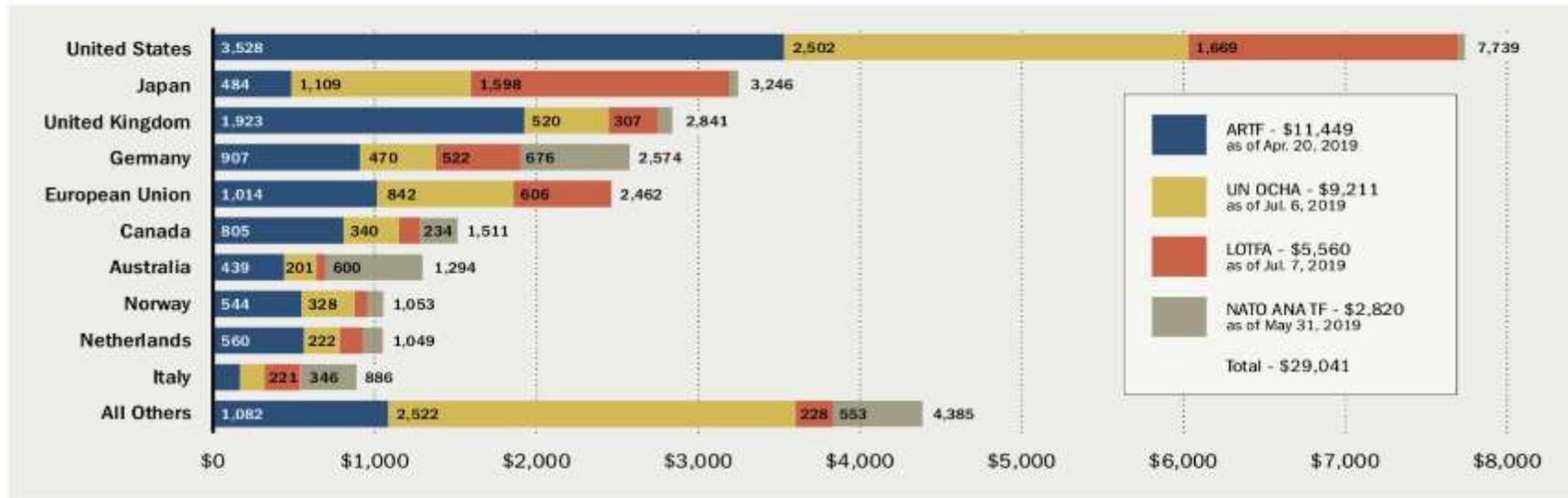


Source: NATO,  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_113694.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_113694.htm),  
 accessed 23.4.2019.

	Albania	290		Greece	136		Portugal	116
	Armenia	40		Hungary	522		Romania	1693
	Australia	1550		Iceland	4		Singapore	48
	Austria	3		Ireland	7		Slovakia	301
	Azerbaijan	94		Italy	3772		Slovenia	80
	Belgium	530		Jordan	0		Spain	1472
	Bosnia & Herzegovina	45		Republic of Korea	246		Sweden	500
	Bulgaria	611		Latvia	136		The FYROM*	163
	Canada	2903		Lithuania	179		Tonga	55
	Croatia	288		Luxembourg	9		Turkey	1823
	Czech Republic	471		Malaysia	30		Ukraine	20
	Denmark	730		Mongolia	62		United Arab Emirates	35
	Estonia	159		Montenegro	35		United Kingdom	9500
	Finland	165		Netherlands	196		United States	90000
	France	4000		New Zealand	234			
	Georgia	924		Norway	413			
	Germany	4922		Poland	2490			
							<b>Total</b>	<b>131982</b>

# Major International Aid: 2002 to April 20, 2019

CUMULATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARTF, UN OCHA-COORDINATED PROGRAMS, LOTFA, AND NATO ANA TRUST FUND BY 10 LARGEST DONORS (\$ MILLIONS)



Note: Does not include the Asian Development Bank's Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund (AITF), whose partners, the NATO ANA Trust Fund, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, had committed \$841 million as of June 2018. Amounts under \$170 million not labeled.

Source: World Bank, ARTF: Administrator's Report on Financial Status as of April 20, 2019 (end of 4th month of FY 1398) at [www.artf.af](http://www.artf.af), accessed 7/15/2019; UN OCHA, Financial Tracking Service at <https://fts.unocha.org>, accessed 7/6/2019; UNDP, LOTFA Receipts 2002-2019, Updated July 7, 2019, in response to SIGAR data call 7/15/2019; NATO, Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund, Media Background, Status of Contributions Made as of May 31, 2019 at [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int), accessed 7/15/2019; ADB, Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund 2018 Fact Sheet at [www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org), accessed 7/15/2019.

The international community provides significant funding to support Afghanistan relief and reconstruction efforts. A large share of the international funding is administered through multilateral trust funds. The four main multilateral trust funds are the World Bank-managed Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-managed Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), the NATO-managed Afghan National Army (ANA) Trust Fund (NATO ANA Trust Fund or NATF), and the Asian Development Bank-administered Afghanistan Infrastructure Trust Fund (AITF). The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) leads annual humanitarian response plans and emergency appeals for Afghanistan, and provides timely reporting of humanitarian assistance provided by donors to facilitate funding of targeted needs.

The largest share of international contributions to the Afghan government's operational and development budgets comes through the ARTF. From 2002 to April 20, 2019, the World Bank reported that 34 donors had paid in nearly \$11.45 billion.<sup>65</sup> Figure 3.26 shows the five largest donors over this period as the United States, the UK, the European Union, Germany, and Canada.

## Contributions to the NATO ANA Trust Fund

The NATO ANA Trust Fund supports the Afghan National Army and other elements of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces through procurement by the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) and the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA).<sup>66</sup> The Fund has received contributions from 29 NATO members, including the United States, and from six other Coalition partners totaling more than \$2.82 billion through May 31, 2019.<sup>67</sup> Figure 3.26 shows Germany, Australia, Italy, and Canada as the four largest contributors to the fund. The United States made its first contribution in FY 2018 amounting to \$40.69 million to support two projects under an existing procurement contract.<sup>68</sup>

Source: SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update, July 30, 2019, pp. 58, 61.

# **Still Faltering Afghan Force Development**

# Afghan Force Development

The metrics for Afghan security forces shown in this section reflect a steady increase in the classification of virtually every area of force effectiveness. There now is virtually no official open source reporting beyond uncertain data on personnel levels by service and on the fluctuations in these levels.

Such data have little value and are often more misleading than useful. Military history has shown for thousands of years that such total “manning” levels are little more than meaningless when they cannot be related to the effectiveness of key units. No such data are available on the order of battle, the relative size and capability of Afghan government and threat forces, relative casualty levels, and ANSF ability to meet key warfighting needs.

The previous funding metrics show that there were long delays in properly funding the Afghan force development effort, and that the sudden peak in funding between 2009 and 2011 was followed by an equally precipitous fall. The metrics in this section show that even greater problems existed in creating stable force expansion plans, and then in providing the necessary training effort and capacity.

The limited personnel numbers that are still provided are also suspect in many ways because it is not clear how many personnel are really active and in place, how many can actually be committed to combat, and how corrupt various aspects of given forces still are. There also is no way to tie manning levels to loyalty in a country where unemployment is a major crisis, and few other jobs are available.

These problems are further compounded by the fact that media reporting indicates that the most effective ANA and ANP units tend to be grossly overburdened with combat assignments, are the most dependent on U.S. airpower, and still need direct combat support from U.S. special forces, other advisors, and intelligence. The failure to report the dependence of the best Afghan units on U.S. support indirectly implies far more capability in both these units and the overall mass of Afghan land forces than is actually the case.

Similarly, the data on the development of the Afghan Air Force and increases in Special Security Forces do warn about the slow pace of their development, but do not warn that even if all the Afghan Air Force’s current aircraft were fully combat ready, they could not approach the current level of airpower support that Afghan forces now get – and depend upon – from US and coalition airpower.

The same is true of increases in the Special Security Forces which cannot eliminate the need for Afghan land force dependence on U.S. combat forces – a dependence that the U.S. does not describe in open source material, but is reflected in a wide range of media reporting.

Coupled to the problems in ANP and ALP forces described in SIGAR Quarterly Reports, and summarized in the metrics that follow, the current levels of classification make it virtually impossible to determine the effectiveness of — and credible future timelines in — the U.S. and Resolute Support effort to improve Afghan forces.

# DoD Overview of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: July 4, 2019

Momentum towards peace negotiations between the Afghan Government and the Taliban during this reporting period directly affected the campaign objectives and method of employment of the ANDSF. With U.S. and Coalition support, the ANDSF increasingly targeted the Taliban with military pressure throughout the winter and into the spring to convince the Taliban that they cannot achieve their objectives by prolonging the conflict, and to set the conditions for a negotiated settlement. Increased ANDSF offensive operations against the Taliban and ISIS-K leaders and networks, primarily by the ASSF, during this reporting period focused on disrupting the Taliban's freedom of action and defending key terrain. Key terrain included major population centers, critical infrastructure, points of entry into Afghanistan, and lines of communication between population centers. During the last six months, the ANDSF focused on applying constant military pressure to the Taliban and ISIS-K networks to set the conditions for a negotiated settlement. The ANDSF experienced an extended summer fighting season and transitioned to parliamentary election security in the fall, followed by an increase in offensive winter operations. Although Taliban fighting capacity also suffered during this period, the Taliban retain safe havens and recruiting pools in areas not targetable by ANDSF. Meanwhile, the ANDSF must fulfill security and governance responsibilities, limiting opportunities to reset.

Neither the ANDSF nor insurgent forces have been able to gain a decisive advantage during the reporting period. The ANDSF maintain control of most of the populated areas and the Taliban consolidated gains in rural and remote portions of Afghanistan, as well as of contested lines of communications. Despite the atypical levels of violence during this period, the security situation and the geographical disposition of forces remained largely the same with the ANDSF in control of the population centers and the Taliban controlling or contesting large portions of lightly populated rural Afghanistan.

During this reporting period, the RS staff significantly improved integration of U.S. and Coalition CT and TAA objectives with ANDSF campaign objectives. On a weekly basis, RS operational planners and senior leaders met with MoD and MoI senior planners and senior leaders to share intelligence, set objective priorities, allocate assets, and synchronize operations. This collaborative process resulted in more focused application of military pressure and concentrated effects on Taliban and ISIS-K leaders and networks. It also reduced the number of operations not tied to priority objectives, and trained ministerial and ANDSF senior leaders to do a better job of planning and synchronizing operations.

Combined arms maneuver and integration of combat enablers such as artillery, ISR, and aviation assets presented challenges to the ANDSF as Operation *NASRAT* ended and Operation *KHALID*, the 2019 annual campaign plan, began. Kabul security remained a top priority for the ANDSF. HPAs in Kabul undermine the legitimacy of the Afghan Government and undercut population confidence in Afghan security forces.

Outside of Kabul, Operation *KHALID* prioritized agile and responsive concentration of combat power integrated with U.S. CT and RS TAA operations over large, Corps and Brigade-level extended operations. The ANDSF continued to utilize ASSF forces for most offensive operations, and conventional ANDSF focused on wide area security with an emphasis on controlling population centers. Where possible, the ANDSF extended security around the population centers to provide the standoff necessary to engage Taliban forces massing for an attack and mitigate the risk of civilian casualties. These efforts were only marginally successful due to the continued overuse of static checkpoints siphoning away combat power and presenting vulnerable targets for Taliban attacks.

# DoD on ANA Leader Development, July 4, 2019

In 2018, the MoD established the Unified Training, Education, and Doctrine Command (UTEDC). This critical point of TAA has brought together disparate organizations under one three-star command. UTEDC's Initial Operational Capability (IOC) will enable the ANA to reduce 13 separate branch schools to four, increasing affordability and effectiveness. RS identified the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC), the Regional Military Training Centers (RMTC), and the Regional Training Centers (RTC) as decisive terrain for advising. With massed advising efforts and prioritized resourcing at these nodes, CSTC-A will synchronize Assess, Monitor, and Evaluate (AME) TAA to ensure the institutions produce a capable soldiers, police, and leaders.

A generational change in leadership began within the MoD in January 2018 with the first wave of Inherent Law retirements (including 657 colonels and generals)—and subsequent merit-based promotions—and continued this reporting period when the MoD retired 996 colonels and 83 generals under the second and third waves of the Inherent Law. Similar changes in MoI leadership continued this reporting period when the MoI retired 1,138 colonels and 281 generals. This generational change of leadership will open senior leadership positions for the next generation of ANDSF leaders selected based on merit rather than patronage and who's formative military experience were with U.S. forces and training institutions rather than with the former Soviet Union. The anticipated rapid turnover of personnel underscores the importance of ministerial commitment to facilitate an orderly transition and oversee the education and training of new leadership.

MOD	GOs Identified	COLs Identified	GOs Retired	COLs Retired	% Complete
1st Wave	163	494	163	494	100%
2nd Wave	61	497	61	497	100%
3rd Wave	22	499	22	499	100%

MOI	GOs Identified	COLs Identified	GOs Retired	COLs Retired	% Complete
1st Wave	142	738	142	738	100%
2nd Wave	139	400	139	400	100%

# SIGAR on ANA Personnel Drop – July 2019 - I

ANDSF personnel strength figures reported this quarter declined considerably compared to last quarter. Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) said this was due to the ANDSF switching their reporting of personnel strength to the number of personnel enrolled in the Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS) rather than the number reported on-hand by ANDSF components. This means that only those ANDSF personnel who have been biometrically validated in APPS are included in strength figures.

The change was part of an effort by the United States and its partners to reduce opportunities for corrupt ANDSF officials to report “ghost” (nonexistent) soldiers and police on personnel rolls in order to pocket the salaries.

**CSTC-A said there are 180,869 Afghan National Army (ANA) and 91,596 Afghan National Police (ANP) personnel enrolled and accounted for in APPS as of May 25, 2019.**

**This is roughly 10,000 ANA fewer and 25,000 ANP fewer than the numbers reported to SIGAR last quarter...This quarter’s strength of 272,465 puts the ANDSF at 77.4%, and 79,535 personnel short, of its goal strength of 352,000.**

When asked about the gulf between last quarter’s Afghan-reported strength numbers and this quarter’s APPS validated ones, CSTC-A said that it “does not expect that the APPS reported data will ever equal the amount that was self-reported [by the Afghans]” and that it “cannot categorize the excess individuals as ‘ghost’ personnel, because it is not known why the Afghan reported numbers are higher.”... SIGAR’s Investigations Directorate is investigating the matter, and is contributing to efforts by SIGAR’s Audits Directorate, CSTC-A, and the Afghan Attorney General’s office to identify and address measures to reduce and/or eliminate payments for nonexistent police officers

## ... ANDSF Force Manning

CSTC-A informed SIGAR this quarter that the ANDSF switched to reporting its assigned (actual) personnel strength as the number of personnel enrolled in the Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS) rather than the number reported on-hand by ANDSF components. This means that only those ANDSF personnel who have been biometrically validated in APPS are included in strength figures. The ANDSF strength data reported this quarter thus reflect significant differences from previously reported strength data.<sup>113</sup> When asked about the gulf between last quarter’s Afghan-reported strength numbers and this quarter’s APPS validated ones, CSTC-A said that it “does not expect that the APPS reported data will ever equal the amount that was self-reported [by the ANDSF]” and that it “cannot categorize the excess individuals as “ghost” personnel, because it is not known why the Afghan reported numbers are higher.”<sup>114</sup>

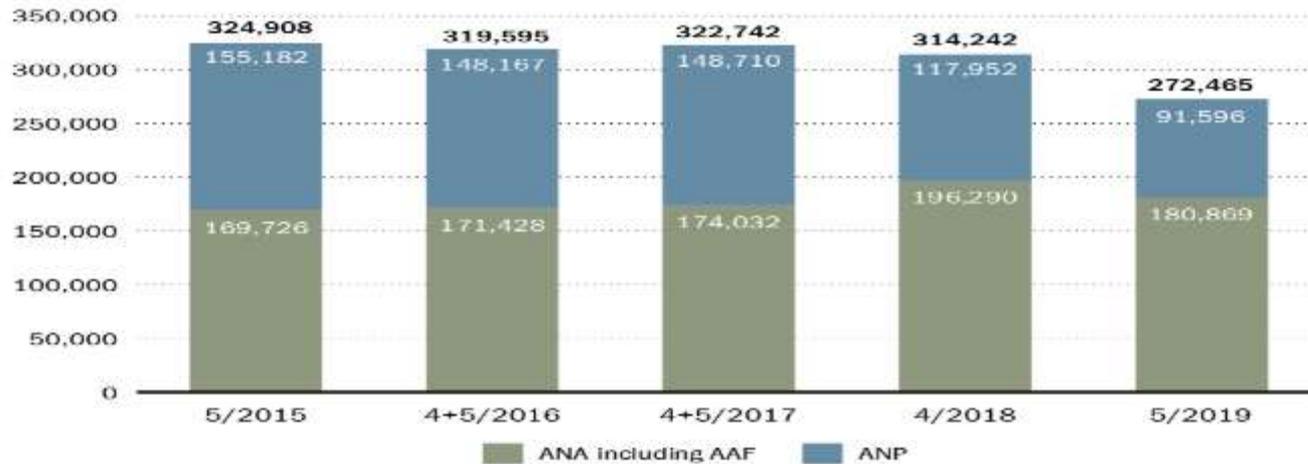
According to CSTC-A, as of May 25, 2019, there were 180,869 ANA and Afghan Air Force (AAF) and 91,596 ANP personnel, for a total of 272,465 ANDSF personnel enrolled and accounted for in APPS. **These figures reflect 9,554 fewer ANA and 24,788 fewer ANP than the assigned strength numbers reported to SIGAR last quarter.**

**For the fourth consecutive quarter, ANDSF strength is reported at the lowest level it has been since the RS mission began in January 2015. As seen in Figure 3.35, this quarter’s ANDSF strength decreased by 41,777 personnel since approximately the same period in 2018, and by 50,277 compared to about the same period in 2017.** CSTC-A continues to offer the caveat that they are unable to validate ANDSF strength data for accuracy.

According to DOD, the ANDSF’s total authorized (goal) strength in June 2019 remained 352,000 personnel, including 227,374 ANA and 124,626 ANP personnel, the number the international community has agreed to fund. Separately, the 30,000 Afghan Local Police, under the command of MOI, are authorized, but only DOD and the Afghan government fund them. Table 3.8 shows **this quarter’s ANDSF assigned strength at 77.4% (79,535 personnel short) of its authorized strength, a nearly 10 percentage-point decline from last quarter.**

# SIGAR on ANA Personnel Drop – July 2019 - II

## SECOND-QUARTER ANDSF ASSIGNED STRENGTH SINCE 2015



Note: This quarter's data is as of May 25, 2019. ANA = Afghan National Army; AAF = Afghan Air Force; ANP = Afghan National Police; ANDSF = Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. ANA strength numbers include the AAF and trainees, transfers, holdees, and student personnel. No civilians are included. ANP strength numbers do not include "standby" personnel, generally reservists, personnel not in service while completing training, or civilians. 4+5 in the data means the ANA data is as of April and the ANP data is as of May. The change in the individual strengths of the ANA and ANP from 2017 to 2018 is due to the transfer of two force elements from M01 to M02, but this change did not impact the overall strength of the ANDSF. The change in strength numbers from 2018 to 2019 is due to the transition of strength reporting from ANDSF-reported figures to reporting from the Afghan Personnel and Pay System. For more information, see page 80. The strength numbers reported here should not be viewed as exact: CSTC-A and SIGAR have long noted many data consistency issues with ANDSF strength numbers, and CSTC-A always provides the caveat that it cannot validate ANDSF strength data for accuracy.

Source: CSTC-A response to SIGAR data call, 6/21/2019; SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, 7/30/2019, 7/30/2019, 7/30/2017, and 7/30/2018; SIGAR, analysis of CSTC-A-provided data, 6/2019.

### ANDSF ASSIGNED AND AUTHORIZED STRENGTH

ANDSF Component	Authorized Strength	Assigned Strength	% of Target Authorization	Difference Between Assigned and Authorized	Difference
ANA including AAF	227,374	180,869	79.5%	(46,505)	(20.5%)
ANP	124,626	91,596	73.5%	(33,030)	(26.5%)
<b>ANDSF Total without Civilians</b>	<b>352,000</b>	<b>272,465</b>	<b>77.4%</b>	<b>(79,535)</b>	<b>(22.6%)</b>

Note: Data is as of May 25, 2019. ANDSF = Afghan National Defense and Security Forces; ANA = Afghan National Army; AAF = Afghan Air Force; ANP = Afghan National Police. CSTC-A always provides the caveat it cannot validate ANDSF strength data for accuracy.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 6/21/2019; DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 6/2019, p. 33; SIGAR, analysis of CSTC-A-provided data, 7/2019.

# SIGAR on Afghan Local Police Problems – July 2019

## Afghan Local Police

ALP members, known as “guardians,” are usually local citizens selected by village elders or local leaders to protect their communities against insurgent attack, guard facilities, and conduct local counterinsurgency missions. While the ANP’s personnel costs are paid via the LOTFA, only DOD and the Afghan government fund the ALP, including its personnel and other costs. DOD’s funding for the ALP’s personnel costs is provided directly to the Afghan government. Although the ALP is overseen by the MOI, it is not counted toward the ANDSF’s authorized end strength.<sup>361</sup> NSOCC-A reported the estimated amount of ASFF needed to fund the ALP for FY 2019 (assuming an ALP force authorization of 30,000 personnel) is about \$60 million, the same amount reported last quarter.<sup>361</sup>

NSOCC-A reported that according to the ALP Staff Directorate, the ALP had roughly 28,000 guardians on hand as of May 11, 2019, roughly 23,500 of whom were fully trained. The ALP’s strength declined by roughly 150 personnel since last quarter, and by about 1,300 since the same period in 2018. However, the number of trained personnel increased by about 2,000 personnel since last quarter, causing the percentage of the force that is untrained or in training to decrease to 15%, down eight percentage points since last quarter.<sup>362</sup>

This quarter, NSOCC-A reported on the ALP’s continuing efforts to enroll personnel in APPS and to transition ALP salary payments to an electronic funds-transfer process. According to NSOCC-A, as of May 5, 2019, 73% of

ALP personnel reported to be on-hand have been slotted into APPS, with 65% meeting the minimum data-entry requirements in APPS to be paid. Both figures represent slight improvements from last quarter. In addition, 85% of ALP personnel (the same as last quarter) have banking, ATM, or mobile money resources available to them and are encouraged to utilize these services instead of the previous system of turning over salaries to a “trusted agent.”<sup>363</sup>

NSOCC-A reported last quarter that ALP reform has been a challenge due to the uncertainty regarding the ALP’s future. Both RS and NSOCC-A, in coordination with the Afghan government, are planning a possible transfer of the ALP to other ANDSF force elements. This quarter, USFOR-A confirmed this is still the case. They added that the FY 2020 ASFF budget request does not include funding for the ALP and that it is possible the ALP may be reorganized within the ASSF. USFOR-A will report on changes to the ALP force structure if and when the MOI orders them to occur.<sup>367</sup>

This quarter, NSOCC-A provided SIGAR with the latest ALP **powerbroker-influence report** that lists ALP personnel determined to be under the influence of local powerbrokers such as village elders, parliamentarians, and other individuals outside the proper chain of command. As of March 2019, 147 ALP personnel were under the influence of powerbrokers across five provinces, an increase of 31 personnel but a decrease of six provinces since last quarter’s report (as of December 2018). This quarter’s figures still reflect a decrease from the 219 ALP personnel across 12 provinces reported under the influence of powerbrokers in July 2018. The provinces with the most ALP personnel under the influence of powerbrokers shifted since December 2018, with the most in March in Takhar Province (46 ALP) and Baghlan Province (41 ALP). In December, it was Nangarhar with 36 ALP under powerbroker influence and Uruzgan (40 ALP).<sup>208</sup>

## SIGAR on Corruption in the ANSF

According to CSTC-A, powerbrokers vying for political power and profit help drive corruption in the Afghan security forces. The Afghan government has weak oversight of units and their commanders in peripheral areas. CSTC-A predicts corruption will remain a problem at least through the presidential election season.<sup>387</sup>

CSTC-A believes that partnering with the new ministers of interior and defense has been helpful in driving increased countercorruption efforts.<sup>388</sup> CSTC-A said the insistence and assistance of CSTC-A leaders and countercorruption advisors led to an MOI investigation of the commander of the regional logistics center in Nangarhar Province and an MOD investigation into fuel corruption in northern Afghanistan.<sup>389</sup>

Among the MOD and MOI elements tasked with reducing corruption, CSTC-A singled out the MOI Criminal Investigative Directorate (MOI CID) for critique this quarter. According to CSTC-A, the MOI CID has undertaken no investigations or other actions to counter corruption. CSTC-A believes that MOI CID leadership participates in, rather than disrupts, corruption.<sup>390</sup>

CSTC-A's critique is particularly noteworthy since MOI CID recently received additional personnel when the Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) was transferred from the MOI Inspector General (MOI IG) to the MOI CID. Last quarter, CSTC-A said this transfer caused the MOI IG to lose critical anticorruption capabilities to prepare and conduct the monthly meetings, collect asset declarations, and administer the ministerial internal-control program.<sup>391</sup> This quarter, however, CSTC-A said that the loss of 33 of its personnel has not significantly altered MOI IG's work.<sup>392</sup>

CSTC-A reported that the MOD has empowered its criminal-investigative directorate (MOD CID) by nearly doubling its personnel strength and removing the layers of leadership between it and the defense minister. According to CSTC-A, under the previous arrangement, corrupt actors could intervene to stop investigations. Now, the MOD CID, as well as the MOD Inspector General, reports directly to the minister.<sup>393</sup> Additional reforms include nominating new MOD judges and reviving the former practice of nonjudicial punishments for minor military infractions.<sup>394</sup>

# SIGAR High Risk Assessment of ANSF Development – April 2019

Since the previous *High-Risk List* in January 2017, SIGAR has published numerous oversight products on Afghanistan's security institutions and has reported new developments in its quarterly reports to Congress. Of those, SIGAR's most comprehensive effort is the Lessons Learned Program report, *Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan*. That 2017 SIGAR product presented key findings, including that the U.S. government was not properly prepared from the outset to help build an Afghan army and police force capable of protecting Afghanistan from internal and external threats and preventing the country from becoming a terrorist safe haven.<sup>17</sup>

SIGAR found that the U.S. government lacked a comprehensive approach to security-sector assistance and a coordinating body to successfully implement whole-of-government programs that were necessary to develop a capable and self-sustaining ANDSF.<sup>18</sup>

The 2019 *High-Risk List* reported that according to DOD, RS, and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A), the ANDSF currently face critical capability gaps in key areas that hinder the force's effectiveness and readiness and may continue to do so in the future, including

*Force manning: recruiting, retention, and attrition:* As of October 31, 2018, the Afghan National Army (ANA) was 36,621 personnel below its authorized strength of 227,374, and the Afghan National Police (ANP) was 6,686 personnel below its authorized strength of 124,626.<sup>19</sup>

With insufficient personnel, the ANDSF are less able to provide security to the Afghan population, are increasingly vulnerable to enemy attacks, and are at risk of incurring higher casualties. These issues make the force less sustainable in the long term and less capable of conducting its mission successfully.

*Personnel accountability and pay systems:* The ANDSF also struggles to accurately pay and account for its personnel. Since the beginning of the RS mission in January 2015, U.S. and Coalition personnel had scant presence at the lower tactical levels of the ANDSF, forcing the mission to rely on unverifiable Afghan personnel reporting.<sup>20</sup> Over the past two years, RS advisors have worked to reduce their reliance on manual Afghan personnel reporting by implementing the Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS), in which ANDSF personnel are biometrically enrolled. The system is designed to integrate personnel data with compensation and payroll data to process authorizations, record unit-level time and attendance data, and calculate payroll amounts, among other uses.<sup>21</sup> According to USFOR-A, as of December 2018, the APPS system has been delivered to and is fully capable for use by both the ANA and the ANP, but only 84% of ANA personnel (including civilians) and 60% of ANP personnel were enrolled into the system, matched to authorized positions, and met the minimum data-input

*Logistics and maintenance:* The Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Ministry of Interior (MOI) face key logistics and maintenance challenges, one of which is the implementation and maintenance of their electronic equipment-inventory and repair-status system, Core Inventory Management System (CoreIMS). According to DOD in December 2018, overall, MOD and MOI logisticians require persistent RS advisor attention, and their problems conducting national logistics planning remain "a vulnerability to the mission."<sup>22</sup>

*Institutional training:* DOD reported in December 2018 that institutional and professional training for ANDSF personnel, coordinated at the national and regional levels (above corps or zone levels), are at a relatively nascent phase. DOD reports that despite RS advisory efforts, strong training institutions have not emerged, particularly within MOI, which controls the national police.<sup>24</sup>

*Persistent terrorist threat from Islamic State:* Although U.S. officials have consistently asserted that Islamic State Khorasan, the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan, has been degraded on multiple fronts, the group poses a greater security threat to the Afghan people and security forces than it did in 2016.<sup>25</sup> As the terrorist group has not been defeated, is not a party to peace negotiations, and continues to execute high-casualty attacks in major Afghan population centers, it remains potent.

*Stalemate control of districts, population, and territory:* The stalemate battlefield situation between the ANDSF and the Taliban is another risk, as the intensity of fighting has increased and both sides have incurred more casualties as they seek greater leverage at the negotiating table.<sup>26</sup> If negotiators fail to secure a peace agreement, the ANDSF will be hard pressed to increase its control over Afghanistan's population, districts, and territory. From November 2016 through October 2018, Afghan government control and influence over its districts ranged between 54% and 60%. Over the same period, the Afghan government controlled or influenced between 64% and 66% of the population.<sup>27</sup>

These issues indicate the importance of considering questions regarding the U.S. role in training, advising, and assisting the ANDSF following a peace agreement; preserving the capability gains of the Afghan Air Force and special forces; assisting the ANDSF in adapting to peacetime security functions and sustaining its systems and equipment; and integrating former Taliban fighters into the national security forces.

# Seeking New ANSF Leadership

	Officers Identified for Retirement	Jan. 1-Mar. 1, 2018	Jul. 1-Sep. 1, 2018	Jan. 1-Mar. 1, 2019	Total Retirements	Waivers Granted
<b>MoD</b>	293 Generals 1,619 Colonels	<b>Wave 1</b> 162 Generals 494 Colonels	<b>Wave 2</b> 61 Generals 497 Colonels	<b>Wave 3</b> 24 Generals 344 Colonels	247 Generals 1,335 Colonels	46 Generals 284 Colonels*
<b>MoI</b>	302 Generals 1,473 Colonels	—	<b>Wave 1</b> 142 Generals 738 Colonels	<b>Wave 2</b> 139 Generals 400 Colonels	281 Generals 1,138 Colonels	21 Generals 335 Colonels

\*Some waivers pending approval

**New Leadership.** The increase in ANA offensive military pressure on the enemy throughout winter was a result of a culture shift within the force driven by the new leadership, including replacing five of six Corps commanders, the Chief of General Staff (CoGS), and the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Interior. Parliament subsequently confirmed the appointments of Minister of Defense Bahrami and Minister of Interior Barnak, empowering both leaders to pursue much-needed reform. For example, soon after his confirmation, Minister Barnak replaced seven Provincial Chiefs of Police (in Farah, Sar-e Pul, Herat, Takhar, Samangan, Khost, and Kabul) and all 18 Kabul District Chiefs of Police. Selection for replacements included a merit-based screening and board process culminating with Presidential approval.

**Inherent Law.** A generational change in leadership began within the MoD in January 2018 with the first wave of Inherent Law retirements (including 656 colonels and generals)—and subsequent merit-based promotions—and continued this reporting period when the MoD retired 497 colonels and 61 generals under the second wave of Inherent Law. Similar changes in MoI leadership began this reporting period when the first wave of MoI Inherent Law retired 738 colonels and 142 generals. This generational change of leadership will open senior leadership positions for the next generation of ANDSF leaders selected based on merit rather than patronage. The anticipated rapid turnover of personnel underscores the importance of ministerial commitment to facilitate an orderly transition and oversee the education and training of new leadership.

## *Unity of Effort/Unity of Command*

The FY17-18 MoD Optimization program sought to correct command and control shortcomings by decreasing the span of control of some organizations and by increasing the number of civilian positions at the ministerial level. Reducing the top-heavy structure, civilianizing the workforce, and enabling a progressive generation of leaders are all among the optimization goals. These efforts led to more than 900 personnel reductions, which allowed for ASSF and AAF growth. In 2017, the Afghan Border Police transferred to MoD and became the Afghan Border Force (ABF).

## *Counter-Corruption<sup>17</sup>*

The Afghan government made tangible progress on important anti-corruption reforms, but more work remains. President Ghani unveiled the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) in September 2017. Corruption remains the top strategic threat to the legitimacy and success of the Afghan government. President Ghani continues to demonstrate his commitment to reform in this critical area by enforcing the investigation and prosecution of corrupt officials through the concerted efforts of the Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF), the Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC), and the Afghan Attorney General's office.

# DoD on Key ANSF Attrition and Training Issues, July 4, 2019

## Reducing Attrition through Better Care of Soldiers and Police

During this reporting period, recruiting outpaced attrition, but attrition<sup>25</sup> remains problematic for both the ANA and the ANP. ANA attrition data is more accurate than ANP attrition data due to better personnel systems and higher ANA enrollment rates in APPS. The number of personnel dropped from the rolls (DFR) accounts for the greatest portion of ANA and ANP attrition rates, but DFR rates for both the ANA and the ANP are the lowest levels in four years<sup>25</sup>. DFRs occur for a variety of reasons, including poor unit leadership, low pay or delays in pay, austere living conditions, denial of leave, and intimidation by insurgents. The single greatest contributor to DFRs is poor leadership. Soldiers and police grow disillusioned with leaders who fail to take care of them by ensuring they can take sufficient leave, get promoted, and get paid regularly.

## Standardization of Training<sup>26</sup>

The Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC) made strides to improve its leadership, facilities, and program of instruction under the oversight of the Unified Training, Education, and Doctrine Command (UTED-C); however, lack of trainers largely muted the effects of these improvements. Coalition advisors helped improve the efficiency and quality of the training at KMTC. Advisors assist the MoD and MoI with efforts to make better use of Regional Military Training Centers (RMTC).

UTED-C training and education programs operate at 60 percent of capacity due to a shortage of students and trainers. KMTC has the capacity to conduct concurrently training for up to five classes of 1,400 recruits. With a 12 week Program of Instruction, the annual output would be approximately 28,000 soldiers. In 2018, however, ANAREC was only able to recruit enough soldiers to produce 13 classes, and none of them at capacity. Fifteen of 28 classes cancelled.

During this reporting period, RMTCs saw some improvement, but still struggle with a number of challenges. RMTCs are owned and operated by ANA Corps commanders rather than UTED-C and are required to conduct Basic Warrior Training (BWT) four times per year in support of ORCs.

The RMTCs do not contain enough manpower and equipment to conduct this training, and operational requirements often result in lack of adherence to ORCs and canceled training. UTED-C is working to standardize the program of instruction for initial and advanced combat training at the KMTC in Kabul, reducing the burden on Corps and allowing RMTCs to focus on collective training. This in turn presents challenges across certain provinces such as 215th and some ANA-TF *tolays*, where success heavily relies upon local recruitment and training at a facility nearby rather than Kabul to aid in recruiting. Increased RS emphasis on building capacity at RMTCs tied to implementation of the ANA-TF program may result in better and more convenient training opportunities for ANDSF units.

Poor human resource and career management systems across the ANDSF continue to prevent progress with Professional Military Education (PME). Career management systems provide the roadmap for ANDSF personnel to attend progressive PME courses preparing them for positions of increased responsibility and remaining on path for promotion. A functional human resource system is required to ensure individuals stay on path and attend PME at the appropriate time in his or her career. Presently, dysfunctional human resource systems often deprive individuals of the opportunity to attend PME and courses are too often filled based on favoritism and nepotism.

# DoD on Counter Corruption & Better Budgeting and Pay, July 4, 2019

## Counter-Corruption<sup>22</sup>

President Ghani continues to demonstrate his commitment to addressing corruption by enforcing the investigation and prosecution of corrupt officials through the concerted efforts of the MoI's Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF), the Ministry of Justice's Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC), and the Afghan Attorney General's office.

From December 1, 2018 to March 1, 2019, the ACJC prosecuted more than 30 high-level corruption defendants, with a 94 percent conviction rate. Convictions included four Colonels, a Deputy Finance Minister, a Mayor, multiple police chiefs, and a Provincial Council Member. The most notable conviction is that of COL Abdul Hamid, former Chief of the General Command Police Special Units (GCPUSU), who is carrying out a sentence of seven years and six months in jail for treachery and forgery in connection with an \$80,000 fraud scheme. COL Hamid's case also marks the first time that a suspect arrested through the Rule of Law-led Warrant Action Group process led to trial and conviction.

The ACJC's monthly rate of prosecutions is still far below expectations for the 84 investigative prosecutors currently assigned there. From December 1, 2018 to March 1, 2019, however, the number of ACTC trials was 33 percent higher than during the same period in 2018. In fact, in January 2019, the ACJC held five trials—more than in any other month since the court's inception.

## Better MoD and MoI Budget Execution

Inefficient MoD and MoI budgeting processes have traditionally led to under execution of funding. In order to build and maintain long-term security cooperation relationships with the United States and the international community, the MoD and MoI must improve its planning, programming, budgeting, and execution (PPBE) capability. Presidential Ghani issued a decree on November 11, 2018, directing procurement centralization in the Afghan Government. The National Procurement Authority (NPA) issued a circular on January 13, 2019, to all Afghan Government procurement entities, including the MoI and the MoD, enacting centralized procurement and providing implementation instructions. The first phase of implementation included all U.S. and Coalition funded projects and all GHRoA projects above the National Procurement Commission (NPC) approval threshold. In the centralized process, the MoI and MoD now deliver requirement packages to the NPA after approval from the Requirements Approval Board (RAB). The NPA will then produce a Standard Bid Document, advertise for bids, receive bids, execute bid opening and bid evaluation, obtain Procurement Approval Board (PAB) and NPC approval, and deliver a contract to the MoI or MoD for signature and implementation.

This centralized procedure should result in decreased opportunities for corruption, increased transparency, and decreased procurement timelines. TAA focusses on the efficient transfer of U.S. and Coalition-funded projects to the NPA; optimizing the RAB and PAB as control mechanisms; establishing adequate communication and reporting mechanisms to track U.S. and Coalition-funded projects at the NPA; and streamlining requirements planning at the security ministries to increase both throughput and percentage of contracts awarded.

## Improving Processes for Paying Soldier and Police Salaries<sup>27</sup>

APPS integrates previous MoD and MoI systems for personnel management and payroll, like the Afghan Human Resources Information System (AHRIMS) and Afghan Automated Biometrics Information Systems (AABIS), into a single platform capable of providing timely and accurate reporting of all ministerial personnel, including civilians. The extensive, multi-year effort to implement APPS improves transparency, audit capability, and personnel accountability; helps root out "ghost soldiers" and limits ANDSF payroll fraud. MoD and MoI personnel must provide personal data, possess an identification card, have biometric data on file, and occupy a valid and current authorized level position to validate and slot within the APPS system. APPS achieved Full Operational Capability (FOC) during the last reporting period, and since September 2018, CSTC-A only funds ANA personnel that meet the minimum base pay requirements. To meet minimum base pay requirements in APPS, individuals' files must contain a biometric number, name, father's name, grandfather's name, ID card number, date of birth, and actual rank.

APPS is a major shift in the ministries' traditional way of managing pay and personnel. This transformation will encounter challenges; however, with RS assistance, the MoD and MoI already have made progress towards greater accountability and transparency.

RS normalized APPS data and finalized enrollment of the current force during this reporting period. ANA and ANP forces are enrolled in APPS and eligible for pay.

# Classifying Most Key Reporting on the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces

## ANDSF Data Classified or Not Publicly Releasable

USFOR-A newly classified the following data this quarter:

- A narrative assessment about Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) misuse by the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Ministry of Interior (MOI)

USFOR-A continued to classify or restrict from public release, in accordance with classification guidelines or other restrictions placed by the Afghan government, the following data (mostly since October 2017):

- ANDSF casualties, by force element and total
- Corps- and zone-level Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) authorized and assigned strength by component
- Performance assessments for the ANA, ANP, MOD, and MOI
- Information about the operational readiness of ANA and ANP equipment
- Special Mission Wing (SMW) information, including the number and type of airframes in the SMW inventory, the number of pilots and aircrew, and the operational readiness (and associated benchmarks) of SMW airframes
- Reporting on anticorruption efforts by the MOI (unclassified but not publicly releasable)
- Reporting on the status of the ANDSF's progress on security-related benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact (unclassified but not publicly releasable)

## ANDSF Combat Element Performance – Most Data Classified

USFOR-A continued to classify most assessments of ANDSF performance. SIGAR's questions about ANDSF performance can be found in Appendix E of this report. Detailed ANDSF performance assessments are reported in the classified annex for this report.

This quarter, USFOR-A provided a general overview on ANDSF performance. According to USFOR-A, senior ANDSF leaders are continuing to demonstrate progress in organizational management, decision-making, and operational planning and execution. The Afghan government has been striving to employ quality leaders and continues to successfully identify and replace ANDSF leaders found guilty of corruption.<sup>197</sup>

USFOR-A continued to report that ANA corps receive the preponderance of Coalition train, advise, and assist (TAA) support, and that as a result, their capabilities continue to advance more rapidly than the ANP's. USFOR-A said the ANA's improvements are evident in their ability to synchronize combat enablers (e.g., air and artillery support) and to conduct coordinated operational planning with adjacent corps.<sup>198</sup>

USFOR-A also reported this quarter that the Afghan government has dissolved the ANP's zone system, which has challenged Coalition advisors, who must now provide TAA support to multiple provincial police headquarters (PHQs) rather than to a single zone. Now instead of eight regional ANP zones, the 34 PHQs serve as the command structure for ANP throughout the country.<sup>199</sup>

# But, Major U.S. Aid for Afghan Forces Still Continues: FY2005-FY2020

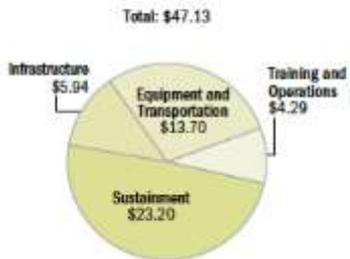
ASFF FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST—SUSTAINMENT (\$ MILLIONS)					
Sustainment Budget Categories and Line Items	Afghan National Army	Afghan National Police	Afghan Air Force	Afghan Special Security Forces	Total
Vehicles and Aircraft <sup>1</sup>	\$116.1	\$108.3	\$729.3	\$150.3	\$1,104.0
Personnel <sup>2</sup>	539.8	12.8	31.4	115.6	699.7
Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants	170.9	88.8	26.5	9.9	296.1
Communications & Intelligence	116.6	49.0	N/A	73.8	239.3
Ammunition	93.9	16.6	95.8	N/A	206.3
Facilities	109.6	72.4	4.5	13.6	200.0
All Other	166.1	75.0	6.3	74.8	322.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,313.0</b>	<b>\$422.8</b>	<b>\$893.8</b>	<b>\$437.9</b>	<b>\$3,067.6</b>

Note: Numbers have been rounded. N/A – Not available.  
<sup>1</sup> Vehicles and Aircraft consists of the Vehicles and Transportation budget category for the four DAGs and the Aircraft Sustainment budget category for ANP and ASFF, less the Ammunition budget line item in ANP Aircraft Sustainment.  
<sup>2</sup> Personnel excludes \$273.3 million budgeted by LOTA for its contribution to ANP and ASFF personnel requirements.

Source: ODD, Department of Defense Budget Justification for FY 2020 Overseas Contingency Operations, Afghanistan Security Forces Fund, 3/2019.

ASFF FY 2019 BUDGET AND FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST (\$ MILLIONS)		
	FY 2019 Appropriated	FY 2020 Budget Request
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,920.0</b>	<b>\$4,804.0</b>
<b>Afghan National Army, Total</b>	<b>1,764.4</b>	<b>1,589.7</b>
Sustainment, Total	1,399.7	1,313.0
Personnel	609.0	539.8
Ammunition	158.2	93.9
Communications and Intelligence	187.6	116.6
Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants	92.2	170.9
All Other	352.7	391.8
Infrastructure, Total	137.7	37.2
Equipment and Transportation, Total	61.9	120.9
Training and Operations, Total	165.1	118.6
<b>Afghan National Police, Total</b>	<b>726.3</b>	<b>660.4</b>
Sustainment, Total	497.6	422.8
Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants	105.5	88.8
All Other	392.1	334.0
Infrastructure, Total	43.0	2.4
Equipment and Transportation, Total	14.6	127.1
Training and Operations, Total	171.2	108.1
<b>Afghan Air Force, Total</b>	<b>1,727.3</b>	<b>1,825.5</b>
Sustainment, Total	892.5	893.8
Ammunition	98.3	95.8
Rotary-Wing Contract Support	516.8	542.3
Fixed-Wing Contract Support	175.5	174.6
All Other	101.9	81.1
Infrastructure, Total	30.4	8.6
Equipment and Transportation, Total	537.3	567.0
Rotary-Wing Aircraft (UH-60s)	419.6	463.3
All Other	117.7	103.7
Training and Operations, Total	267.2	356.1
<b>Afghan Special Security Forces, Total</b>	<b>702.0</b>	<b>728.4</b>
Sustainment, Total	353.7	437.9
Aircraft Sustainment	132.9	134.4
Personnel	142.7	115.6
All Other	78.2	188.0
Infrastructure, Total	43.1	21.1
Equipment and Transportation, Total	151.8	153.8
Training and Operations, Total	153.4	115.6

ASFF DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE ANA BY SUBACTIVITY GROUP, FY 2005 TO FY 2018 APPROPRIATIONS THROUGH MARCH 31, 2019 (\$ BILLIONS)

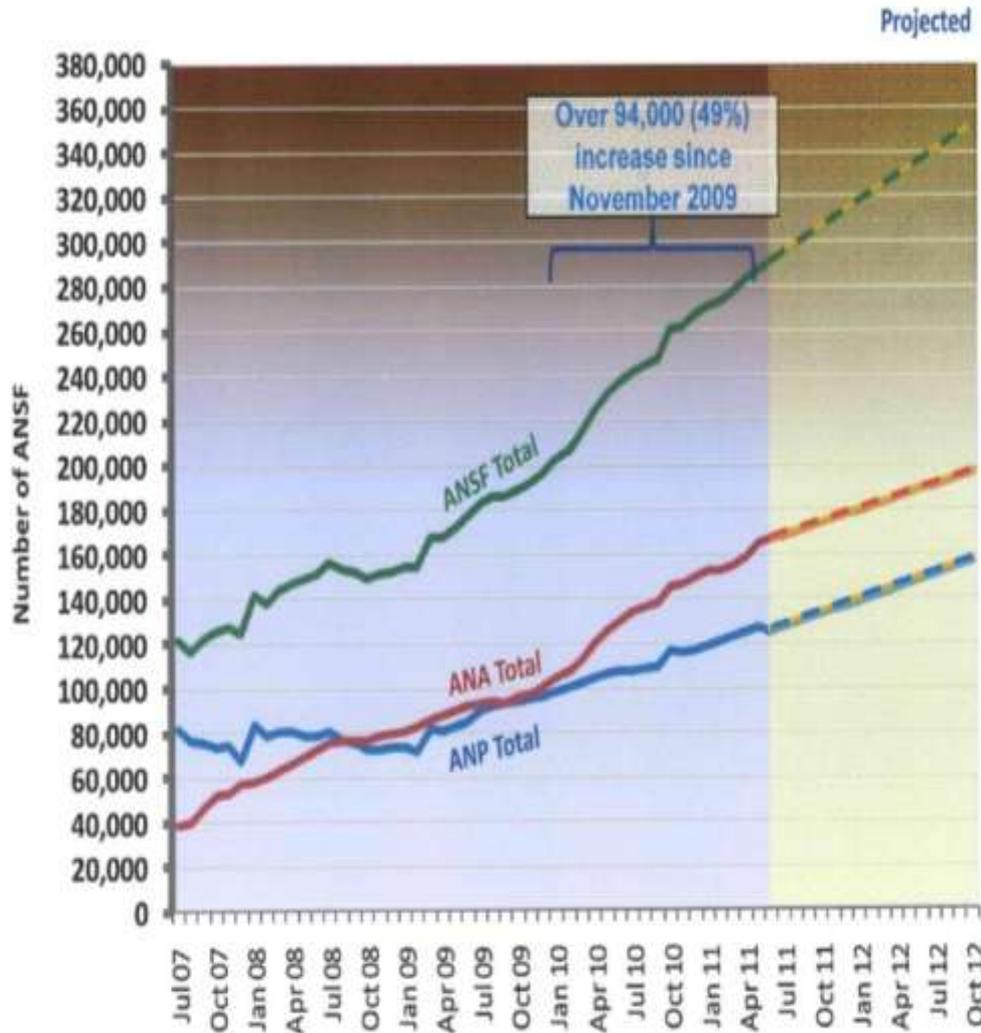


ASFF DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE ANP BY SUBACTIVITY GROUP, FY 2005 TO FY 2018 APPROPRIATIONS THROUGH MARCH 31, 2019 (\$ BILLIONS)



Source: SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update, April 30, 2019, pp. 57-59.

# Many ANSF Problems Are Our Fault: Waiting Until 2008 to React to the Taliban



Force Element	Manpower Goal End 2012	% of Total
<b>MOD</b>	NA	NA
<b>ANA</b>	172,055	49%
<b>AAF</b>	7,639	2%
<b>Subtotal</b>	195,000	51%
<b>MOI</b>	NA	NA
<b>ANCOP</b>	14,451?	4%
<b>AUP</b>	110,279	31%
<b>ABP</b>	23,090	7%
<b>Subtotal</b>	157,000	45%
<b>CNPA</b>	2,986?	0.8%
<b>ALP-</b>		
<b>Militias</b>	30,000-40,000	NA
<b>APPF</b>	11,000-23,000	NA

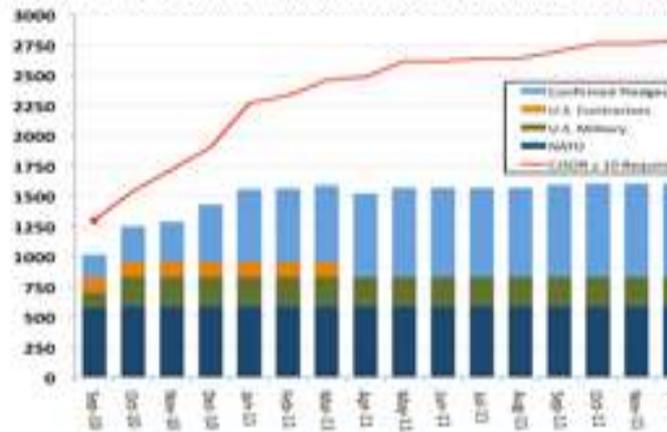
# Grossly Inadequate Trainers and Training Capacity Through Early 2011

**Suitable ANSF Force Growth and Adequate Training Capacity Do Not Occur Until 2011**



Source: NTM-A, *Year In Review, November 2009 to November 2010*, p. 8.

## Critical Shortfalls in ANSF Trainers Existed Before Decision to Create Effective ANSF Forces in 2010 and Continued Through 2012



### Only 32% of Trainers Actually in Place on September 1, 2010

Authorized	In Place	Pledged	Shortage
2,796	896	980	920

Following the September 23, 2010 NATO Force Generation Conference, in-place trainers and pledges increased by 18 percent and 34 percent, respectively, which decreased the remaining shortage of trainers by 35 percent. The total requirement in CJSOR v10 is 2,796, a net growth of 471 personnel.

To address the NATO CJSOR v10 shortfall temporarily, the United States is providing an additional 868 personnel with skills not found in the deployed units. For the fielded ANSF Force, the current shortfall is 16 Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and 139 Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (POMLTs). In 2011, the shortfalls will increase with the departure of the Canadian brigade in Kandahar and the additional growth of the ANSF. By 2011, the shortfall is projected to be 41 OMLTs and 243 POMLTs.

Source: NTM-A, *Year In Review, November 2009 to November 2010*, p. 25; *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, Report to Congress in accordance with section 1230 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181), as amended, November 2010, p. 20-21

# Afghan Force Strength Still Comes at the Expense of Force Quality At the End of March 2019

The total ANDSF force strength is an indicator of whether the ANA and ANP are able to recruit and retain personnel at levels that meet operational needs. USFOR-A reported that the ANA had 190,423 soldiers at the end of January 2019, and the ANP had 116,384 personnel at the end of December 2018.<sup>140</sup> This represents a slight decline from the 308,693 personnel reported as of the end of October 2018 and is approximately 12 percent lower than the maximum authorized force strength of 352,000.

NSOCC-A reported that the Afghan Local Police (ALP) had approximately 28,000 personnel on hand and present for duty. The ALP was created a decade ago as a bilateral initiative of the U.S. and Afghan governments. Therefore, it is not included as part of the 352,000 authorized ANDSF force strength that international donors have agreed to fund .

Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) reported that 2,953 soldiers completed their basic training during the quarter (approximately 70 percent of the total capacity of 4,200 students) of which the actual graduation rate was 99 percent. By comparison, the enrollment rate for the four courses that finished last quarter was 53 percent, of which 86 percent graduated.

***Few graduates of basic training go on to complete advanced training for a specialized military role.*** Utilization rates (percentage of available seats that are filled) at the ANA’s 12 branch schools, where advanced training takes place, were below 50 percent for many specialties during the quarter.. However, the MoD Chief of General Staff issued contradictory guidance in November 2017 that all basic training graduates be immediately assigned to their units, which then decide whether or not the soldier should attend advanced training. Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) told the DoD OIG that there are many reasons for low utilization rates at the branch schools. One reason is that corps commanders, facing personnel shortfalls request immediate assignment of new soldiers to their units. CSTC-A said that these training deficiencies “result in under-trained soldiers who are not trained in necessary military occupational specialty skills essential to combat units. This in turn compounds units’ inability to sustain continuous operations and achieve mission success.

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*In contrast, the DoD stated that the MoD is generally on pace to meet the Afghan government’s goal of doubling the Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) to more than 33,000 personnel by 2020.* To keep pace with growing training requirements, the ANA Special Operations Command School of Excellence, which provides all training for ASSF personnel, added two new courses and reinstated two others. One element of the expanded training program is the Cobra Strike Maneuver Course, which includes dismounted infantry collective training, vehicle commander training, additional leadership training, and other skills.

***Resolute Support noted weaknesses in the maintenance and logistical support provided to ASSF units. This has been exacerbated by persistent deployment of ASSF units for long periods without returning for refit and resupply. Because of misuse and poor support, many ASSF units operate with broken or damaged equipment, and poor readiness***

# Train and Assist Forward or Fail: 2nd SFAB Deploys to Afghanistan as a Leaner Force

The 2nd Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB) arrived in Afghanistan during the quarter as part of the Resolute Support mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan security forces. The SFAB, established in 2018, is a brigade of experienced Soldiers with specialized security force assistance capabilities. The Department of the Army told the DoD OIG that the 2nd SFAB has 806 assigned Soldiers, of whom 419 deployed during the quarter. The remaining soldiers arrived by April 15, 2019.<sup>125</sup> The 2nd SFAB is scheduled to complete its mission in Afghanistan in fall 2019.

The 2nd SFAB has three key differences when compared to its predecessor, the 1st SFAB, which departed from Afghanistan in fall 2018. First, USFOR-A reduced the 2nd SFAB to about 60 percent of its deployable strength. The 2nd SFAB includes two infantry battalions, a cavalry squadron, an artillery battery, an engineer battalion, and support battalion. There are 648 trained advisors—54 advisor teams, each comprising 12 Soldiers— spread across the brigade. The 2nd SFAB does not have its own force protection personnel (often referred to as “guardian angels”). Instead, the U.S. Army in theater supplies these forces, at a level determined by the combatant command.

Second, the 2nd SFAB will focus on advising the ANDSF at the corps level, rather than the battalion level, although some advisors will be available to work with the lower-level ANDSF units. By comparison, the 1st SFAB provided persistent advising at the brigade and battalion levels. USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that this realignment occurred, in part, due to the SFAB’s smaller size. In addition, the 2nd SFAB’s support battalion will be available to advise ANDSF logistics units, such as the Central Supply Depot and the National Transportation Brigade, on a “point of need” basis.

Third, while the 2nd SFAB deployed to all Train, Advise, and Assist Commands (TAACs) in Afghanistan, the ANA brigades that it advises may differ from the 1st SFAB deployment. The only location where 2nd SFAB personnel are not assigned is Task Force-Southwest, which covers Helmand and Nimroz provinces.

After the 1st SFAB departed from Afghanistan in fall 2018, USFOR-A continued advising operations “at a reduced scale,” using forces that were already in theater. USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that these advisors provided periodic advising at the brigade and battalion levels, and had fewer key leader engagements. Some non-SFAB advisors, however, remained assigned to specific ANA brigades on a persistent basis. General Robert Abrams, Commander of U.S. Army Forces Command, said that the Army preferred to have a gap during the quieter winter season than having an immediate nine-month rotation that would have to change over during the 2019 summer fighting season. Some members of the 1st SFAB supported the 2nd SFAB during their training and their transition period in-theater.

The Department of the Army told the DoD OIG that it intends to establish a total of six SFABs by 2022. In addition to its deployment in support of OFS, a smaller unit (139 personnel) from the 2nd SFAB will also advise Iraqi security forces as part of the Operation Inherent Resolve mission. The Department of the Army allocated approximately \$9 million of OCO funds to support 1st SFAB transportation, maintenance, unit support, and some training. The 2nd SFAB has been obligated approximately \$8.8 million in OCO funds.

# MoD Afghan Special Security Forces and Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (ANASOC): June 2019

ANASOC exceeded ASSF personnel growth milestones and continues to serve as the premier strike unit of the MoD, conducting nearly 80 percent of all offensive operations independent of U.S. and coalition enablers or advisors. During this reporting period, ANASOC, with the assistance of advisors, curbed the levels of ANASOC misuse and worked to repair damaged readiness rates of ANASOC units. ANASOC took these necessary actions and improvements despite remaining engaged in an active winter fighting season. Advisors expect the effectiveness and tempo of ANASOC operations to improve over the coming months due to the sustainment actions taken during this reporting period.

ANASOC is a Corps-level organization responsible for command and control of all ANA special operations forces. ANASOC consists of four Special Operations Brigades (SOB) and a National Mission Brigade (NMB). Ten battalion-sized ANA Commando Special Operations Kandaks (SOK), eight Mobile Strike Kandaks (MSK) and Cobra Strike Kandaks (CSK), and seven support elements spread across the Corps. ANASOC's mission is to increase the Afghan Government's ability to conduct counterinsurgency (COIN) and stability operations and, as directed, execute special operations against terrorist and insurgent networks in coordination with other ANDSF pillars. ANASOC can respond to simultaneous crises across the country, as well as conduct future operations planning with other ASSF components and ANDSF.

SOKs, ANASOC's primary tactical elements, conduct core special operations tasks against threat networks to support regional corps' COIN operations. They provide a strategic response capability against select threats and can forward-deploy expeditionary mission command packages in support

of planned offensive and contingency operations. Nine of the ten SOKs align with regional SOBs and have the ability to work with a specific ANA corps, if requested. The 6<sup>th</sup> SOK, assigned to the NMB and located in the Kabul area, functions as the ANA's national mission unit.

MSKs and CSKs utilize maneuver with combined arms to conduct lightning strike, enhanced direct-fire lethality, strongpoint penetration, and high-mobility operations. This capability enhances ANASOC's firepower, mobility, survivability, and lethality on the battlefield. General Support Kandaks (GSK) conduct emergency resupply and facilitate delivery of SOF-specific equipment and supplies to the Kabul Cluster units.

The NMB provides the President of Afghanistan and the MoD with rapidly deployable special operations forces capable of conducting national-level operations to achieve strategic effects across Afghanistan. The NMB has a deployable mission-command package, including the 6<sup>th</sup> SOK, *Kitah Khat* (KKA), and two Special Forces Kandaks. The NMB conducts short notice, theater-wide counterterrorism operations, crisis response, national emergency response, and internal defense and development. The NMB performs direct action, hostage rescue, special reconnaissance, security forces assistance, and counterinsurgency, and it can integrate Afghan ISR) into operations. MoI and NDS liaisons serve in the NMB HQ to ensure ANA-ANP coordination. The SMW and the AAF provide priority support to the NMB.

The KKA is a light infantry SOK assigned to ANASOC's NMB. The KKA has eight companies that remain nearly at full strength: three operational companies, a training company, an engineer company, a military intelligence company, a support company, and a headquarters company. These additional companies support the KKA training cycle and operations, including transportation for the KKA strike forces, explosive ordnance disposal to conduct counter-IED (C-IED) operations, and supporting the female tactical platoon, which enables interactions with women and children on missions. KKA platoons and companies conduct successful intelligence-driven counterterrorism raids, particularly against high-value individuals, and vehicle interdictions utilizing both ground and air mobility platforms. According to RS advisors, KKA are not subject to the same misuse as the rest of the ASSF forces.

As part of the ANDSF Roadmap, the ANDSF expanded the ANASOC from a Division to a Corps with four brigades and a NMB. ANASOC's growth exceeded scheduled growth by nearly 15 percent during this reporting period.

qualified CSKs and six MSKs. Although the ANASOC growth plan calls for all MSKs to transition to CSKs, high demand for maneuver strike capabilities affects ANASOC's ability to place the remaining six MSKs into the CSMC. Therefore, ANASOC plans to restructure by transitioning the CSK growth plan from eight CSKs consisting of three companies to six CSKs made up of four companies. This transition should allow ANASOC to reinforce operational readiness.

The SOE also employs mobile training teams (MTT) to conduct on-site training and refresher courses for deployed SOKs, MSKs, and CSKs. MTTs provide tailored training at the request of the ANASOC Corps and are essential to addressing training requirements for kandaks unable to block off time to pursue collective training.

# DoD Reporting on ANASOC Special Mission Wing: July, 2019

ANASOC conducts the vast majority of all ANDSF offensive missions. RS TAA since 2006 resulted in ANASOC's increasing ability to conduct independent operations; nearly 80 percent of ANASOC operations during this reported period were conducted independent of the Coalition, while the remaining 20 percent consisted of enabled and partnered operations. ANASOC's expanded offensive capabilities make them more prone to misuse or overuse, an issue that significantly affected their readiness rates last reporting period. ANASOC misuse levels, however, dropped significantly, and readiness rates increased.

The SMW is a special operations aviation wing that provides operational reach for the ASSF during counterterrorism (CT) and counter narcotics (CN) missions designed to disrupt insurgent and narcotics networks in Afghanistan. It supports helicopter assault force raids and provides resupply, CASEVAC, and ISR support for ASSF. The SMW is the only ANDSF organization with night-vision and rotary-wing air assault capabilities. Its structure consists of assault squadrons in Kabul, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif and an ISR squadron in Kabul that provides ASSF with operational reach across the country and integrates with the AAF to provide real-time intelligence to their A-29 bombers.

SMW's ability to conduct unilateral operations improved, with all four squadrons now effectively conducting operations, and SMW misuse issues notably decreased during this reporting period. Challenges to long-term SMW recruitment and growth remain, due to high recruiting standards, additional levels of screening, competition with other ANDSF forces, and training timelines. SMW recruits ground specialties from the AAF, ANDSF, and ASSF, but selects aviation recruits from initial entry rotary-wing and fixed-wing students. Once identified, SMW vets candidates via a comprehensive background check and recruiting board review. Advisors are working to build standard operating procedures for recruiting that provide a level of predictability and standardization to the process. SMW does not currently have any challenges with retention.

The SMW operates four rotary-wing squadrons and one fixed-wing squadron capable of conducting independent missions in support of ASSF elements. SMW conducts day and night infiltration and exfiltration from three locations throughout Afghanistan in support of the ASSF. SMW increased their helicopter assault missions by 90 percent, flying an average of 19 assaults a month, up from 10 in previous years.

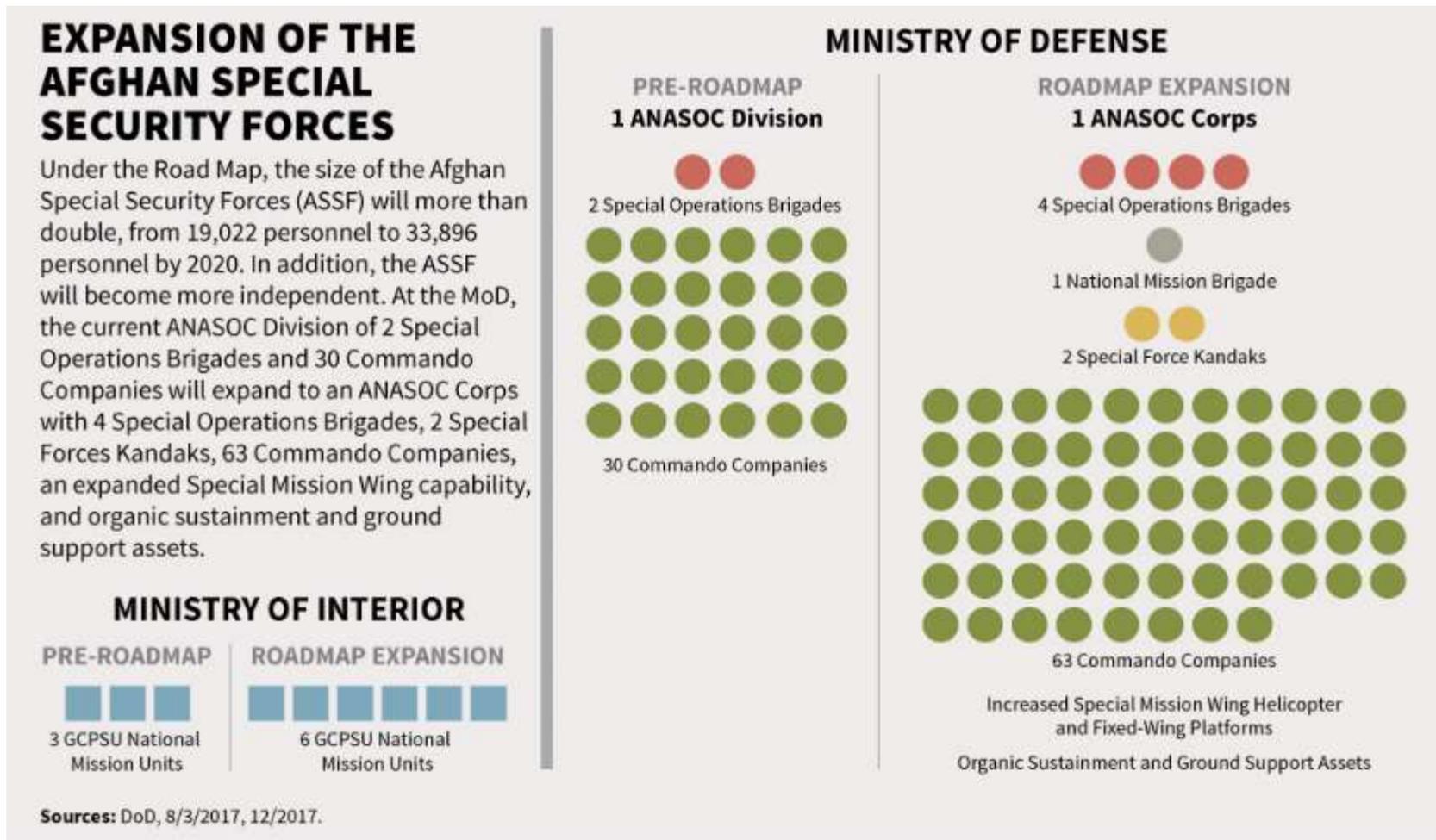
During this reporting period, SMW sustained a unilateral execution rate of 80 percent, in line with last reporting period. This included helicopter assault, A-29 strike support, casualty evacuation, resupply, unit rotation, assault support, preparation of the battlefield, ISR, over watch, Quick Reaction Force, and unit staging. Ten percent of these missions were in support of counter narcotics and 90 percent were in support of counterterrorism. During this reporting period, the SMW achieved full operational capability for Fast Rope Insertion Extraction System and Aerial Sniper Platform.

The SMW utilizes the PC-12 fixed-wing aircraft to conduct ISR in support of CT and CN operations, including over watch of ASSF ground assault forces and helicopter assault force raids, during both daytime and nighttime operations. In addition, the PC-12 integrates with AAF A-29 aircraft in support of strike operations, providing target identification and collateral damage scans.

PC-12 aircraft provide the ANDSF with day and night surveillance and air-based signals intelligence capabilities. The PC-12 can send full-motion video (FMV) to a ground station and the onboard crew can perform real-time analysis of collected data. PC-12 ISR capabilities continued to mature during this reporting period.

# Focusing on Elite Units: Expansion of Afghan Special Security Forces

As part of the ANDSF Roadmap, the ANASOC division expanded from a division of 11,300 personnel to a corps with four brigades and a National Mission Brigade, totaling 22,994 personnel.



Source: **Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan**; December 2018, Report to Congress In Accordance With Section 1225 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (P.L. 113-291), as amended, p. 83.

# Lead IG Estimate of Afghan Local Police and Territorial Forces Raises Additional Issues, March 2019

## Comparison of the ALP and ANA-TF

Afghan Local Police	ANA Territorial Force
Administered and resourced by the Ministry of Interior Affairs.	Administered and resourced by the Ministry of Defense.
Soldiers are locally recruited, serve in home district.	Soldiers are locally recruited, serve in home district.
Flexible entrance and training requirements.	Entrance requirements, vetting, and training same as ANA.
Provincial/district police chiefs and local elders provide accountability.	Integrated into higher-level leadership, including the provincial government and a national inter-ministerial committee.
Accountability and support varied based on the personalities of the provincial and district police chiefs.	Assigned regular ANA leadership who are not from the district to provide better accountability.
Deployed at the direction of local leaders.	Deployed at the direction of the local ANA battalion commander.

Source: USFOR-A

During the quarter, the ANA continued to recruit and train soldiers to serve in the ANA Territorial Force (ANA-TF), which are locally-recruited forces that seek to “hold” territory while conventional ANA units focus on tactical offensive operations. During the current phase of ANA-TF growth, scheduled to finish in May 2019, the Afghan government plans to establish 55 ANA-TF. The Afghan government plans to establish an additional 50 ANA-TF companies in second phase. By 2020, it intends to have 12,705 ANA-TF soldiers, or 105 ANA-TF companies.

In December 2018, USFOR-A reported that there were 16 fully-trained ANA-TF companies, and an additional 22 companies in training.

This quarter, USFOR-A reported that 14 ANA-TF companies are currently in training and 6 more are planned to enter training, but the number of operational companies was classified.

Since the ANA-TF was first announced in 2017, the DoD OIG has asked USFOR-A how the new Territorial Force differs from the ALP, the 28,000-strong force of locally-recruited units that provide security in Afghanistan’s smaller villages and towns.

Independent researchers have reported that since it was established in 2010, the ALP has provided security in some areas, but exacerbated conflict in other areas, because the ALP “prey upon the people they as a means for patronage, discrimination, and to settle personal disputes. are supposed to guard.”<sup>160</sup> In addition, ALP units were often co-opted by local powerbrokers.

USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that President Ghani established the ANA-TF to move away from the use of private militias and similar groups to address local security challenges. The administration, resourcing, recruiting, training, and deployment of the ANA-TF are all executed by the MoD, which USFOR-A said should provide the ANDSF greater control and accountability of the new force and limit the role of corrupt local actors. While the structure of the ANA-TF may provide the MoD more control over the local forces, it remains unclear if increased MoD oversight will prevent regional and company-level staff from coming under the influence by local powerbrokers. In addition, the ANA-TF has had recruiting challenges, discussed in the Lead IG quarterly report for the fourth quarter of FY 2018, which were caused, in part, by local powerbrokers’ reluctance to participate in the ANA-TF initiative.

# Nearly Half the Force is Not Designed to Fight: Afghan Military vs. Police Forces: 2019

FIRST-QUARTER ANDSF ASSIGNED STRENGTH SINCE 2015



Note: ANA = Afghan National Army; AAF = Afghan Air Force; ANP = Afghan National Police; ANDSF = Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. ANA strength numbers include the AAF and trainees, transfers, holdovers, and student personnel. No civilians are included. ANP strength numbers do not include "standby" personnel, generally reservists, personnel not in service while completing training, or civilians.

This quarter, ANA data is as of January 31, 2019, and ANP data is as of December 21, 2018. The change in the individual strengths of the ANA and ANP from 2017 to 2018 and 2018 to 2019 is skewed due to the gradual transfer of two force elements from MOI to MOD, but this change did not impact the overall strength of the ANDSF. The strength numbers reported here should not be viewed as exact. CSTC-A and SIGAR have long noted many data consistency issues with ANDSF strength numbers, and CSTC-A always cautions that ANDSF strength numbers are Afghan-reported and that RS cannot validate the data for accuracy.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 3/20/2019 and 3/20/2015; CSTC-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 5/10/2018; SIGAR, Quarterly Reports to the United States Congress, 4/30/2016 and 4/30/2017; SIGAR, analysis of CSTC-A-provided data, 4/2019.

TABLE 3.7

## ANDSF ASSIGNED AND AUTHORIZED STRENGTH

ANDSF Component	Authorized Strength	Assigned Strength	% of Target Authorization	Difference Between Assigned and Authorized	Difference
ANA including AAF	227,374	190,423	83.7%	(36,951)	(16.3%)
ANP	124,626	116,384	93.4%	(8,242)	(6.6%)
<b>ANDSF Total without Civilians</b>	<b>352,000</b>	<b>306,807</b>	<b>87.2%</b>	<b>(45,193)</b>	<b>(12.8%)</b>

Note: ANP data is as of December 21, 2018, and ANA data is as of January 31, 2019; ANDSF = Afghan National Defense and Security Forces; ANA = Afghan National Army; AAF = Afghan Air Force; ANP = Afghan National Police. CSTC-A always cautions that ANDSF strength numbers are Afghan-reported and that RS cannot validate the data for accuracy.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 3/20/2019; SIGAR, analysis of CSTC-A-provided data, 4/2019.

According to DOD, the ANA's total authorized (goal) end strength as of December 2018 was 227,374.<sup>207</sup> USFOR-A reported that the assigned (actual) strength of the ANA and AAF as of January 31, 2019, (not including civilians) was 190,423 personnel, a decrease of 330 personnel since last quarter. This quarter's ANA strength represents a 5,851-person increase from the same period in 2017, but this figure is skewed due to the transfer of 18,950 personnel from the Afghan Border Police (formerly under MOI) to MOD. When adjusting for that transfer, the ANA actually lost 13,099 personnel compared to the same period in 2017.<sup>208</sup> CSTC-A always offers the caveat that ANDSF strength numbers are Afghan-reported and that RS cannot validate the data for accuracy.<sup>209</sup>

The ANA's 190,423 personnel consisted of 83,702 soldiers, 72,027 noncommissioned officers, and 34,694 officers. The ANA's noncommissioned officer and officer ranks experienced attrition since last quarter (losing 429 and 69 personnel, respectively), but the number of soldiers increased by 168.<sup>210</sup> This quarter's assigned strength puts the ANA at 83.7%, or 36,951 personnel short, of its goal strength, a slight decrease since last quarter.<sup>211</sup>

According to CSTC-A, ANA monthly attrition rates averaged approximately 2.2% over the quarter, a slight improvement from the 2.5% recorded over the previous quarter. This percentage accounts for attrition alone, not the total decrease in force strength listed on the previous page, as that percentage change includes any gains made from recruitment occurring over the quarter. CSTC-A reported that attrition figures are calculated by taking an average of monthly ANA attrition rates over the last three months. CSTC-A noted this figure was calculated from Afghan-owned and -reported data provided by the MOD and that CSTC-A cannot independently verify its accuracy.<sup>212</sup>

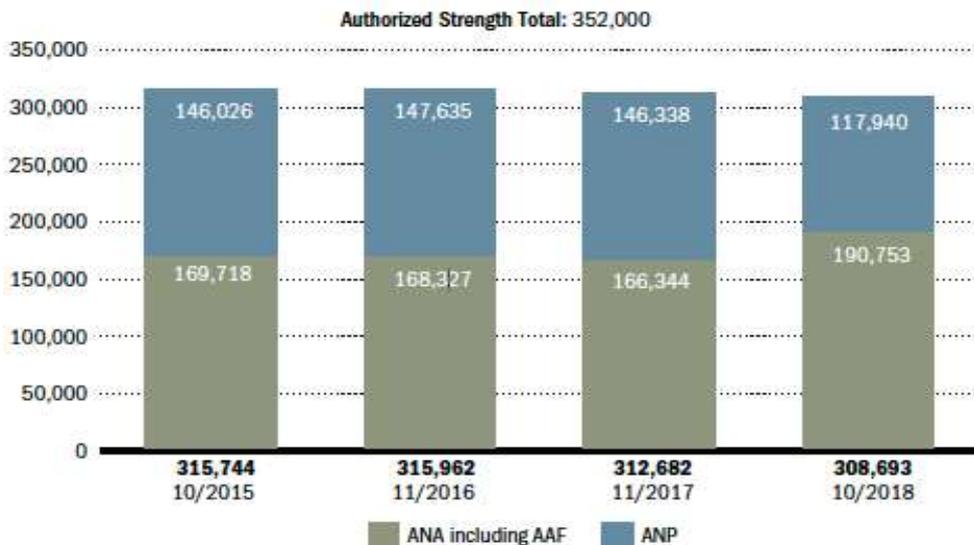
According to DOD, the ANP's total authorized (goal) end strength in December 2018 was 124,626.<sup>213</sup> The assigned (actual) strength of the ANP, as of December 21, 2018, was 116,384 personnel. This figure represents a decrease of 1,566 personnel since last quarter, and a 12,772-person decrease compared to the same period in 2018. The latter decrease was mostly due to the transfer of 18,950 Afghan Border Police (formerly MOI) personnel to MOD. When adjusting for that transfer, the ANP actually gained 6,178 personnel compared to last year. CSTC-A always offers the caveat that ANDSF strength numbers are Afghan-reported and that RS cannot validate the data for accuracy.<sup>214</sup> This quarter's strength puts the ANP at 93.4% (or 8,242 personnel below) of its authorized strength.<sup>215</sup>

According to CSTC-A, ANP attrition rates this quarter averaged approximately 2.2%, the same average reported last quarter. This percentage accounts for attrition alone, not the total decrease in force strength above as that percentage change would include any gains made from recruitment occurring over the quarter. CSTC-A reported that attrition figures are calculated by taking an average of monthly ANP attrition rates over the last three months. CSTC-A noted this figure was calculated from Afghan-owned and -reported data provided by the MOI.<sup>216</sup>

Source: SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update, April 30, 2019, pp. 84, 98-99.

# Afghan Police Forces do Shrink Relative to Military Forces : 2015-2018

## FOURTH QUARTER ANDSF ASSIGNED STRENGTH SINCE 2015



### ANNSF ASSIGNED AND AUTHORIZED STRENGTH, AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2018

ANNSF Component	Authorized Strength	Assigned Strength	% of Target Authorization	Difference Between Assigned and Authorized	Difference
ANA including AAF	227,374	190,753	83.9%	(36,621)	(16.1%)
ANP	124,626	117,940	94.6%	(6,686)	(5.4%)
<b>ANNSF Total without Civilians</b>	<b>352,000</b>	<b>308,693</b>	<b>87.7%</b>	<b>(43,307)</b>	<b>(12.3%)</b>

Note: ANNSF = Afghan National Defense and Security Forces; ANA = Afghan National Army; AAF = Afghan Air Force; ANP = Afghan National Police. CSTC-A always cautions that ANNSF strength numbers are Afghan-owned and that RS cannot validate the data for accuracy.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/20/2018 and response to SIGAR vetting, 1/16/2019; DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 12/2018, p. 41; SIGAR, analysis of CSTC-A-provided data, 1/2019.

## ANNSF Personnel Strength

USFOR-A reported that the assigned (actual) personnel strength of the ANNSF as of October 31, 2018, (not including civilians) was 308,693 personnel, which includes 190,753 personnel in the ANA and AAF and 117,940 in the ANP.<sup>135</sup> ANNSF strength this quarter is the lowest it has been since the RS mission began in January 2015. ANNSF strength decreased by 3,635 since last quarter and by 3,983 since the same period in 2017. CSTC-A always cautions that ANNSF strength numbers are Afghan-owned and that RS cannot validate the data for accuracy.<sup>136</sup> See Figure 3.38 for a historical record of fourth-quarter ANNSF strength since 2015.

According to DOD, the ANNSF's total authorized (goal) end strength in December remained 352,000 personnel, which includes 227,374 ANA and 124,626 ANP personnel, but excludes 30,000 Afghan Local Police, who are under MOI's command.<sup>137</sup> Seen in Table 3.5 on the next page, this quarter's assigned strength puts the ANNSF at 87.7% (43,307 personnel short) of its authorized strength, down from 88.8% during the same period in 2017.<sup>138</sup>

# DoD on Issues in the Ministry of the Interior and Police: July 4, 2019

The MoI formulated a budget aligned to projected resources and monitored budget execution to identify opportunities to reallocate available resources, however they continue to have significant unexecuted resources. Similar to past reporting periods, MoI offices do not effectively communicate strategic guidance to the PHQs, so finance personnel at lower levels cannot conduct requirements planning based on high headquarters guidance. These shortcomings demonstrate poor vertical communication; RS will continue to focus resource-related TAA on improving communication and linking requirements to strategic guidance.

The MoI lacks a refined human resource and career management capability. The majority of MoI's personnel management activities this reporting period consisted of enrolling and slotting ANP personnel in the APPS system. Maintaining a clear picture of the ANP force size and ensuring police are paid is a fundamental service that the MoI must accomplish before it can develop additional human resource management tools. The MoI continues to struggle with an inadequate promotion process and an ambiguous career path structure. A functional Performance Appraisal system to support the promotion process does not exist. Instead, the ministry relies on the High Oversight Board (HOB) and advisory assistance to standardize promotion.

The MoI's institutional training arena has suffered from shifting visions and priorities for how best to train and utilize MoI police forces. Police training over time has swung from combat training to law enforcement training as the ANP and its employment have transitioned towards typical policing functions, but institutional training remains nascent. Initiatives like the MoD's UTEDC are notably absent within the MoI. The MoI also lacks human resource expertise and career management.

The ANP recruit locally at one of the 34 Provincial Recruiting Stations and send new recruits to one of the ten Regional Training Centers (RTC) for police training. Police training generally consists of an eight to twelve week training course. Beyond early training, the ANP lacks an institutionalized leadership development program at the district and local level. Furthermore, mid-level ANP leaders lack leadership development opportunities.

The MoI maintains a robust stockpile of supplies, but struggles to execute distribution processes. Inadequate convoy security for logistics re-supply, lack of trained logisticians capable of understanding and correlating warehouse inventory with automated systems, poor retention of qualified logistics specialists, and inaccurate consumption reporting of commodities represent persistent roadblocks to ANP logistics maturity. The ANP's lack of supply chain management and poor coordination and distribution of parts has direct impacts on equipment maintenance and the ANP's ability to properly supply and sustain its forces. During this reporting period, advisors dedicated efforts to improving the MoI's distribution gaps and emphasizing the importance of logistics and logisticians.

In April 2018, the MoI developed the comprehensive Ministry of Interior Strategic plan (MISP). The MISP provides a single and coherent plan to meet the strategic vision for reforming the Ministry and ANP through 2021. The MISP seeks to transform the ANP into a publicly trusted, accountable, transparent, and professional organization focused on enforcing the rule of law by establishing a framework of goals that can be achieved and strategic direction on how to achieve them. Successful implementation requires considerable national effort and international support to build ministerial-level ownership and capacity of national-level strategy, planning, and dissemination.

PHQs and the MoI struggle to translate a flood of intelligence and reports from sources and district police into a common operating picture (COP) of operations or activities within the province. Furthermore, many PHQs have poor or limited coordination with ANA brigades. Part of this challenge stems from the dissolution of the zones; the responsibility to coordinate with ANA Corps rests with the PCoP instead of the Zone Commander.

Following efforts last reporting period to increase information sharing between the Directorates of Police Intelligence (DPI) and Counter-Terrorism Police (CTP), the Ministers of Defense and Interior issued a verbal order to share intelligence data between the two ministries. Neither ministry, however, produced official directions to authorize the departments to share the data.

The AUP is the largest police agency in Afghanistan and the primary police force the local populace encounters in their daily lives. The AUP consists of the traffic police, fire and rescue departments, and a provincial police headquarters (PHQ) in each of the 34 provinces.

The AUP mission is to maintain the rule of law, provide security and civil order, prevent cultivation and smuggling of narcotics, and prevent the smuggling of weapons and other public property, such as historical and cultural relics. Other AUP duties include the detention of criminal suspects to be handed over to the judicial system, maintenance of reliable security measures for key infrastructure including roads and facilities, intelligence collection, and the provision of firefighting and rescue services during natural or man-made disasters. Leadership across AUP units varies, but generally senior MoI and AUP leaders do not empower lower-level leaders to make decisions. Moreover, local AUP units and leaders are susceptible to influence by local power brokers and government officials.

## DoD on Afghan Special Security Forces : July 4, 2019

GCPSU met ASSF personnel growth milestones during this reporting period and remains the MoI's preeminent police component. Unlike some elements of the ASSF, the GCPSU does not suffer from high levels of misuse. Advisors noted that the quality of the GCPSU training pipeline enabled the growth and professionalism of the National Mission Units (NMU).

The GCPSU is the most capable law enforcement component of the MoI. It conducts rule of law operations, including CT, CN, and counter-organized crime, and can execute high-risk arrests and crisis response operations like hostage recovery. The GCPSU is composed of a HQ responsible for C2 of all special police units, six NMUs, 33 Provincial Special Units (PSU), and 25 Provincial Intelligence (J2) Detachments. Advisors noted that misuse and low operational readiness rates of GCPSU special police were minimal during this reporting period.

The ANDSF Roadmap calls for the expansion of the GCPSU HQ and Training Directorate, an increase in the number of Provincial J2 Detachments, and the creation of three additional NMUs as part of ASSF expansion. The new NMUs will provide crisis response, HPA prevention and reaction, and high-risk arrest capabilities to areas in western, northern, and eastern Afghanistan. The three new NMUs reached initial operational capability during this reporting period. In September 2018, each new NMU deployed and collaborated with an existing NMU as part of a "big brother" concept in which advisors and existing NMUs mentor the new units. Advisors assess that continued TAA over the next six months is necessary to help mature the new units' target development and intelligence integration. With the expansion of the GCPSU, challenges associated with maintaining the effectiveness of existing NMUs while distributing the necessary equipment and leadership may grow. Key leaders from the existing NMUs redistribute across the GCPSU to help build the new capabilities. Although this may reduce the effectiveness of existing NMUs, advisors noted that they have not witnessed an atrophy in existing capabilities.

Overall, NMUs have continued to develop, conducting a range of complex Helicopter Assault Force (HAFs) and HPA response operations. The existing NMUs are conducting fully independent IIAF operations utilizing SMW, and acting on Afghan-derived targets. However, NMUs—and the GCPSU—remain reliant on coalition enablers, including ISR support, to be fully effective.

PSUs provide a quick reaction capability and special investigative element for the provinces and hold broad responsibilities for public order, high-risk arrests, and evidence-based policing operations within the rule of law construct and other police tasks not suited to the conventional ANP. PSUs directly support to the Provincial Chief of Police (PCoP) in their assigned province, but reside under operational control of the GCPSU HQ. GCPSU HQ maintains responsibility for the provision of manpower, training, and equipment of the PSUs, while the PCoP sustains the units through provisions of ammunition, food, pay, and other sustainment material. The PSUs consist of three Special Response Teams (SRT) and an intelligence detachment that provides localized human intelligence.

GCPSU recruits attend the Special Police Training Center (SPTC) for basic police training. The Special Police Training Wing (SPTW) provides advanced special police training. SPTW courses provide advanced training on topics like special reconnaissance, explosive ordnance, ATAC, and sensitive sight exploitation. Advisors plan to leverage the SPTW to enable NMU growth so that new units learn specialized skills like special reconnaissance and explosive ordnance.

During this reporting period, the GCPSU continued to focus on developing its high-profile attack (HPA) response and high-risk arrest (HRA) capability. HRA of counter-terrorist-related warrants remains the focus for the NMUs. The PSUs, through their tasking by the PCoPs, typically focus on lower complexity operations as a show of force in areas of increasing criminal activity. The MoI has employed the PSUs and NMUs heavily this year in a crisis response role across Afghanistan. The majority of GCPSU operations are independent ground assault forces (GAFs), with advised operations typically occurring when coalition air assets and ISR are required.

GCPSU has minimal organic sustainment assets, which make them dependent on the MoI to provide logistical support. During this reporting period, the MoI and ALS performed logistics and sustainment operations to maintain GCPSU's operational readiness. GCPSU logistics and maintenance during this reporting helps explain why it remains an impactful force within the MoI.

# SIGAR Assessment of High Risk in The Current Capabilities of the Afghan Police- I

SIGAR's quarterly reports track ANP reconstruction metrics, some of which appear to show that the ANP has sustained itself or even improved in important areas such as organizational structure, the number of security incidents involving the ANP, personnel strength, and personnel accountability since SIGAR's last *High-Risk List* was published in January 2017. Challenges, of course, remain in all of these areas.

In late 2017 and early 2018, the ANP's Afghan Border Patrol (ABP) and Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) were reassigned from the MOI to the MOD. Technically, the ANCOP had been the ANP's element responsible for high-risk districts. The ABP was meant to be responsible for securing ports of entry along international borders and at airports. But, ANCOP and ABP were often misused as military forces because no other security element had the ability to handle certain missions. For example, on one day in 2010 in Kandahar Province, the ABP attacked and secured key Taliban-controlled villages in Arghandab District. Arghandab is a lush agricultural district more than 60 miles from the Pakistan border. This mission was not related to airport or border security. The ABP was used for fighting in a high-threat district, very far from the border, because Kandahar authorities believed the ABP would succeed where the ANA and other forces had not. In this context, the intent of transferring ANCOP and ABP to the MOD was to move police forces that were focused more on military operations to the MOD, leaving MOI to deal with civil policing.<sup>75</sup>

Security incidents involving the ANP are also decreasing. According to data compiled by the State Department-sponsored Armed Conflict

Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), from January 1, 2017, through January 31, 2019, the number of security incidents involving the ANP has been trending downward, despite significant increases during the summers of 2017 and 2018. For example, in January 2017, 152 security incidents involving the ANP were recorded; in contrast, only 72 such incidents were recorded in January 2018 and 41 in January 2019. The vast majority of ACLED-recorded incidents pertaining to the ANP are of military-style armed conflict.<sup>76</sup> The exact reasons why ANP armed conflict is declining is unclear, but a decline in police fighting, under any circumstances, is an important step towards a final cessation in hostilities. Further, this downward trend in ANP security incidents has likely helped the ANP sustain its force strength numbers. ANP strength has improved after adjusting for the transfers of 30,689 ANCOP and ABP personnel from the MOI to MOD, the ANP gained 2,291 personnel since 2017 (ANP assigned strength has declined by 28,398 personnel as of October 31, 2018, due largely to ANCOP and ABP transfers during 2018, in comparison to October 2017). This puts the ANP assigned strength at 94.6% of its authorized strength of 124,626 personnel. The ANP is thereby at nearly full strength, and the January 2019 assigned-to-authorized strength ratio is consistent with the 94% assigned-to-authorized strength reported in January 2017.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, since SIGAR published its 2017 *High-Risk List*, improvements have been made in accounting systems that should verify if these strength numbers are accurate.

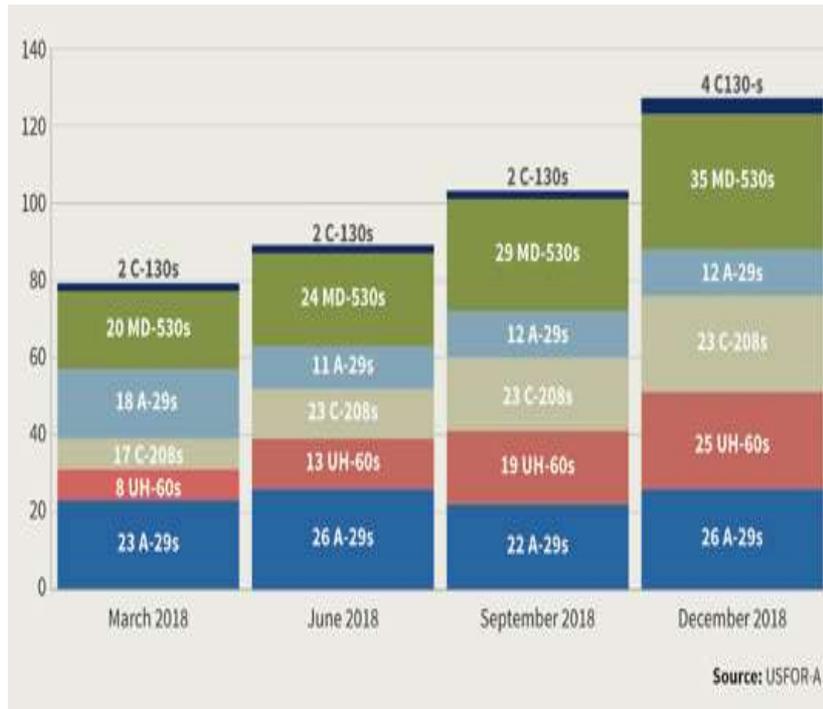
## SIGAR High Risk Area: Civil Policing Capability - II

Based on its work and analysis, SIGAR has found there is no comprehensive strategy for how the United States and Coalition partners will align its nationwide police advising mission to support Afghan rule of law and civil policing.<sup>28</sup> Throughout the reconstruction effort, the United States has placed more emphasis on reconstructing the Afghan National Army (ANA) than the Afghan National Police (ANP). For years, the ANP were used to provide paramilitary support to ANA counterinsurgency rather than performing core police functions.<sup>29</sup>

This presents a problem and a serious risk: Following a political settlement, Afghan police, rather than the army, are likely to be the element responsible for everyday security and will serve as a direct link between the Afghan government's authority and the Afghan people. The U.S. Department of Justice has a program to train foreign police forces—the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program—but that program has no independent funding or operational authority and must fully rely on State or DOD.<sup>30</sup> NATO itself does not have a police advising capability, although efforts are underway to create a capability to deploy professional police advisors in future NATO operations. The concept is pending review and approval.<sup>31</sup>

The need to revise the role and raise the normal policing capabilities of the ANP raises questions about the U.S. strategy going forward with allies and the Afghan government to improve civil policing, provide funding, potentially integrate former Taliban fighters into the force, promote observance of the rule of law, and counter the impacts of corruption and narcotics trafficking.

# A Small and Uncertain Afghan Air Force – LIG Reporting as of 12/2018



AIRCRAFT	Total	Usable	Command Pilots	Co-Pilots	Other Aircrew
A-29	12	11	15	0	8
Mi-17	47	26	25	33	7
UH-60	26	25	11	26	35
MD-530	35	35	50	30	0
C-130	4	4	8	3	15
C-208	24	23	27	22	0

Note: Only qualified pilots and aircrew are listed in this table. "Other Aircrew" includes loadmasters, flight engineers, and special mission operators and vary by airframe. These figures do not include the aircraft or personnel for the Special Mission Wing, which are classified.

Source: TAAC-Air, response to SIGAR data call, 12/20/2018 and response to SIGAR vetting, 10/3/2018; SIGAR, analysis of TAAC-Air-provided data, 12/2018.

In December, 25 AAF aircraft, mostly Mi-17 helicopters, were not usable. The AAF had 9 A-29 light attack aircraft based in the United States for pilot training, in addition to 12 usable A-29s in Afghanistan.

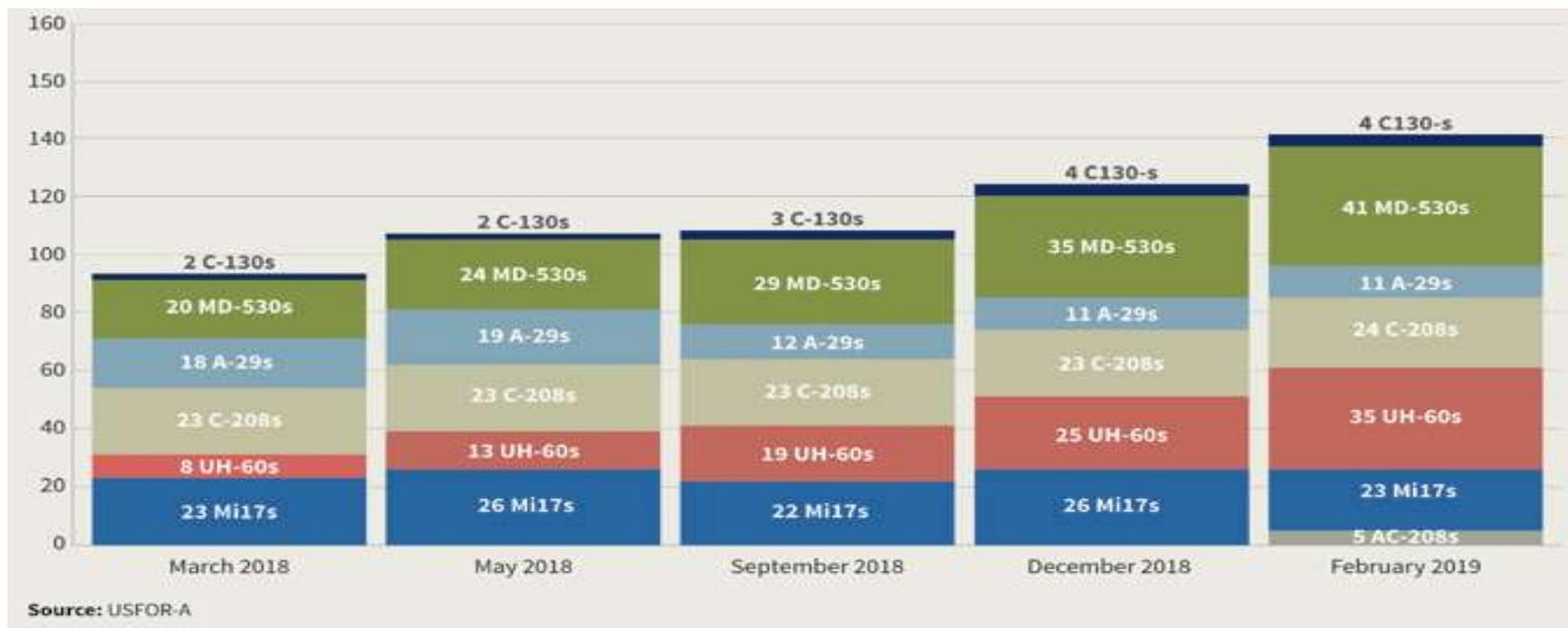
However, the AAF has not been able to train enough pilots to keep pace with its rapidly growing fleet. The UH-60 program, for example, has not filled all of its pilot classes due to attrition and lack of candidates, USFOR-A said.<sup>126</sup> The DoD said that because the initial fielding of the UH-60s occurred nearly two years earlier than initially planned, the throughput of pilot candidates initially lagged the pace of aircraft fielding. In addition, some UH-60 pilots who were in the United States for training went AWOL. The DoD has ended U.S.-based training for rotary wing pilots and is conducting it in other

Training of MD-530 pilots is also unable to keep pace with projected expansion due to low numbers of pilot candidates. The A-29 pilot training program, conducted at Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, is training a sufficient number of pilots, USFOR-A said. Continued pilot production will depend on full program resourcing as it transfers to Afghanistan by 2021.

Source: Adapted from Lead Inspector General, OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL, LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, OCTOBER 1, 2018–DECEMBER 31, 2018, pp. 28; SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update, January 30, 2019, pp. 94.

# Aircraft Deliveries to Afghan Air Force Provide a Small Combat Force

## AAF Useable Fleet, March 2018-February 2019



The Afghan Air Force fleet continued to grow, in accordance with the AAF Modernization Plan. Train Advise and Assist Command-Air (TAAC-Air) reported that the United States delivered 8 MD-530 helicopters, 6 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, and the first 5 AC-208 light attack aircraft to the AAF in January and February 2019.<sup>166</sup> The AC-208 is a variant of the C-208 transport aircraft that is reconfigured for attack missions and can be flown by C-208 pilots (with some additional training). With the new aircraft that arrived during the quarter, the AAF had 170 aircraft as of February 2019, compared to 148 in December 2018. Of the 170 aircraft in the AAF inventory, 143 were “useable,” which means they were either mission capable or undergoing maintenance.<sup>168</sup> (See Figure 5) The 27 AAF aircraft that were not useable were undergoing depot/overhaul maintenance or were damaged beyond repair in accidents. Two MD-530 helicopters were declared total losses due to accidents this quarter.

In late 2018, the DoD decided to stop sending Afghan UH-60 Black Hawk and AC-208 pilots to training in the United States. AC-208 students returned to finish their training in Afghanistan. UH-60 students currently in U.S.-based training and other AAF pilots enrolled in English language courses at the Defense Language Institute will remain in the United States until they complete their courses.<sup>170</sup> Training of A-29 pilots will continue at Moody Air Force Base in Georgia until the end of 2019 and then transition to This shift is designed to address high rates of Afghan pilot candidates who have gone absent without official leave during their training in the United States.<sup>172</sup> For example, TAAC-Air reported that 40 percent of AC-208 pilot candidates deserted during U.S.-based training. Initial training for UH-60 pilots will now take place in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the United Arab Emirates, while training of AC-208 pilots will take place in Afghanistan.

# An Uncertain Afghan Air Force – SIGAR Reporting: 4/2019

## Note the Crisis in Training for Fixed Wing Attack Aircraft

As seen in Table 3.12, the AAF's current in-country inventory, as of February 2019, includes 160 aircraft (133 of which are operational).<sup>228</sup>

Train, Advise, Assist Command-Air (TAAC-Air) reported this quarter that the AAF received six more MD-530s and 10 UH-60s in Afghanistan. Additionally, the AAF received its first five AC-208 light attack aircraft this quarter. Five more AC-208s are scheduled to arrive in Afghanistan by late May 2019, and two MD-530s, six UH-60s, and three A-29s are scheduled to arrive by September. Two MD-530s were lost this quarter: one was hit by surface-to-air fire near Ghazni City on February 7 and destroyed in place; another experienced engine failure after a hard landing in Zabul Province on February 10. The latter aircraft is expected to be recovered, but TAAC-South has so far had higher-priority missions.<sup>229</sup>

TAAC-Air reported that the AAF flew 14,398 sorties from December 1, 2018, through March 31, 2019. A sortie is defined as one takeoff and one landing. There were an average of 3,600 sorties per month this quarter, with the most sorties (4,027) flown in March 2019. This is a 10% increase from the 3,264 average sorties per month reported last quarter (August 1–November 30, 2018).<sup>230</sup> As in previous quarters, the Mi-17 flew the greatest number of sorties (6,182), followed by the UH-60 (3,270).<sup>231</sup>

- **UH-60:** The UH-60 program is currently making a new effort to maximize the recruitment and training of pilots and aircrew utilizing a third-country location. The new effort will push all aircraft-qualification training through a third-country and mission-qualification training (which includes combat skills training) will take place in Kandahar. This adjusted, parallel effort will allow for qualified aircrew to keep pace with aircraft deliveries in Afghanistan. TAAC-Air is also using smaller class sizes in more frequent intervals to minimize the delay time for students between training programs. Some Mi-17 aircrew will be converted to UH-60 aircrew as the Mi-17 mission draws to a close for the AAF. There remains a continued emphasis on night-vision goggle training and employment for the UH-60 platform.
- **AC-208 and C-208:** The AC-208 pilot training classes that were underway in the United States were disbanded due to the number of trainees who were going absent without leave (AWOL). Those students that did not go AWOL were pulled back to Afghanistan to complete their training; as a result, only one class graduated from the U.S.-based program. The second and third classes will continue and finish their training in Afghanistan. TAAC-Air has a plan to continue the student training and is developing a contract solution to support the effort to train the initial group of AC-208 aircrew. TAAC-Air said the C-208 trainees continue to progress to a self-sustaining level of proficiency.

AFGHAN AVIATION SUMMARY AS OF FEBRUARY 2019

Aircraft	Total	Usable	Quarter Change	Command Pilots	Co-Pilots	Other Aircrew
A-29	12	11	0	13	0	8
Mi-17	46	23	(3)	25	33	7
UH-60	36	35	10	11	26	35
MD-530	43	41	6	32	28	0
C-130	4	4	0	8	3	14
AC-208	5	5	5	5	0	4
C-208	24	24	1	25	25	0

Note: Only qualified pilots and aircrew are listed in this table, except for AC-208 personnel (who will be fully qualified in May 2019). "Other Aircrew" includes loadmasters, flight engineers, and special mission operators and vary by airframe. These figures do not include the aircraft or personnel for the Special Mission Wing, which are classified. "Quarter Change" refers to the change in usable aircraft only. All AC-208s are in this category because the air platform is new this quarter to the AAF's inventory.

- **A-29:** The A-29 program is still building its pilot force at Moody Air Force Base in the United States. The U.S.-based program will end in late 2020 and the A-29 training efforts will transition to Afghanistan in order to develop the remaining A-29 force. After the required force is built, A-29 pilot training in Afghanistan will still be needed to create new pilots as older pilots leave due to promotions and retirements. The Afghanistan portion of the program will begin with a very small footprint in mid-2019 and is expected to be located in Mazar-e Sharif. TAAC-Air is exploring options to streamline the training timeline for pilots from entry level pilot training to mission qualified training. Night training also continues to be a training priority for this platform.
- **MD-530:** TAAC-Air said it continues to find efficient solutions for the MD-530 training pipeline to ensure that students delivered to the squadron are trained to the best standard possible. Following issues raised last quarter, they are currently exploring options to expand the pilot training pipeline, including options to give contractors that provide training support more flexibility to train students. This would reduce the strain on the already limited Afghan trainer force. As with the UH-60 platform, TAAC-Air is also considering a third-country option to expand and streamline the pilot and aircrew training pipeline for the MD-530.

# An Uncertain Afghan Air Force – SIGAR Reporting: 7/2019

The AAF increased its flight hours this quarter and readiness decreased for four of its six airframes for which readiness metrics are tracked. According to TAAC-Air, the AAF's average monthly flight hours this quarter (March through May 2019) increased by 14% compared to the last reporting period (December 2018 through March 2019). The AAF flew 9,874 hours from April 1 through June 30, 2019, an average of roughly 3,292 hours per month. USFOR-A said the AAF's flight-hours data include all hours flown by all aircraft, whether for operations, maintenance, training, or navigation. The Mi-17 flew the most hours, averaging around 770 hours per month, followed closely by the UH-60 (765 hours), and the MD-530 (724 hours).

The AAF has a history of overusing its oldest and most familiar aircraft, the Russian-made Mi-17. Of the six AAF airframes for which operational data is tracked, only the Mi-17 continued to exceed its recommended flight hours this quarter. The Mi-17's average of 770 hours per month was over its recommended flying time of 650 hours per month.

This quarter, of the AAF's six airframes for which readiness metrics are tracked, four (the Mi-17, MD-530, C-130, and A-29) saw decreases in their readiness, which TAAC-Air tracks using task-availability rates. Despite these decreases in task availability rates, only one of six AAF airframe types failed to meet its task-availability benchmark this quarter, an improvement over last quarter. According to TAAC-Air, for the second consecutive reporting period, the MD-530 failed to meet its task-availability benchmark: the airframe has a 75% benchmark and its average task availability this quarter fell to 63.2%. As mentioned, two MD-530s were taken out of service this quarter due to hard landings, which affects the task availability for the air-frame because fewer aircraft were available and ready for tasking.

AFGHAN AVIATION SUMMARY, AS OF JUNE 2019						
Aircraft	Total	Usable	Quarter Change	Command Pilots	Co-Pilots	Other Aircrew
A-29	12	12	1	19	0	1
Mi-17	45	26	3	29	25	0
UH-60	40	39	4	22	31	63
MD-530	43	39	(2)	39	27	0
C-130	4	3	(1)	8	3	13
AC-208	10	10	5	2	2	2
C-208	25	24	0	27	23	7

Note: Only qualified pilots and aircrew are listed in this table. "Pilots" include command pilots and instructor pilots. "Other Aircrew" includes loadmasters, flight engineers, and sensor management officers and vary by airframe. These figures do not include the aircraft or personnel for the Special Mission Wing, which are classified. "Quarter Change" refers to the change in usable aircraft.

Source: TAAC-Air, response to SIGAR data call, 3/20/2019 and 6/21/2019; TAAC-Air, response to SIGAR vetting, 4/11/2019 and 7/12/2019; SIGAR, analysis of TAAC-Air-provided data, 7/2019.

ANDSF personnel going absent without leave (AWOL) in the United States while in training has been an issue U.S. advisors have identified over the last several quarters. This quarter, DOD provided SIGAR with the following information about which ANDSF personnel went AWOL during their U.S.- based training.

January–December 2018: • 34AAF

• 5ANA

January–July 1, 2019:

5AAF

1ANA

1ANP

2 MOI civilian personnel

Most of the ANDSF personnel reported to have gone AWOL since January 2018 have been AAF personnel. SIGAR reported TAAC-Air's decision last quarter to discontinue most of the pilot training courses taking place in the United States after over 40% of the AAF students enrolled in the U.S.-based AC-208/C-208 training went AWOL. Those courses were pulled back to Afghanistan so the AAF trainees that did not go AWOL could complete their training.

Source: OUSD-P, response to SIGAR vetting, 7/17/2019, 7/14/2019 and 4/11/2019; TAAC-Air, response to SIGAR data call 3/21/2019.

## DoD on Progress in the Afghan Air Force, July 4, 2019

	Type of Aircraft	Current Inventory	In Country & Available or in Short-term MX <sup>29</sup>	Number of Qualified Aircrew (Pilots and Co-Pilots)
Fixed Wing	C-130	4	3	11
	C-208	24	23	45
	AC-208	10	10	5
	A-29	19	12 <sup>30</sup>	18
Rotary Wing	Mi-17	47	22 <sup>31</sup>	48
	MD-530	30	29	66
	UH-60A+	28	27	29
	UH-60+FFF	0	0	0
	Mi-35 <sup>32</sup>	(4 <sup>33</sup> )	0	0
	Cheetal	N/A	N/A	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>222</b>

The AAF serves as the primary air enabler for the ANA ground forces by providing aerial fires and lift support to ground forces across Afghanistan. The AAF headquarters is in Kabul and provides command and control of 18 detachments and 3 wings: the Kabul Air Wing, the Kandahar Air Wing, and the Shindand Air Wing.

The AAF continues to show steady improvement in pilot skill, ground crew proficiency, and air-to-ground integration (AGI). The AAF can independently plan for and provide air assets for logistics, resupply, humanitarian relief efforts, return of human remains, MEDEVAC, casualty evacuation (CASEVAC),<sup>28</sup> non-traditional ISR, air interdiction, close air attack, armed over watch, and aerial escort missions.

The AAF improved fighting capabilities over the last year, including now-routine laser-guided bombs delivered by A-29s. The AAF achieved a significant milestone with the first night A-29 strike in December 2018. Advisors also noted that the Afghan crews have made significant progress in collateral damage estimate ability and have shown impressive restraint and ability to minimize civilian casualties. The AAF C-208 pilots are now capable of airdropping essential supplies to isolated ANDSF units.

TAA at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of the Afghan Air Force primarily occurs in three locations: Kabul, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif. NAC-A and TAAC-Air TAA the AAF at the ministerial, AAF headquarters, wing, group, and squadron levels. The co-location of TAAC-Air and the AAF headquarters at Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) allows for strong coordination and regular interaction between advisors and AAF personnel. Additionally, the AAF Commander is now attending the weekly security meeting with COMRS, considerably increasing and improving synchronization of RS and MoD activities and objectives.

Training pipelines for the AAF continue to meet growth targets. However, the lack of qualified candidates with the necessary technical skills to complete training presents a challenge and identifying suitable candidates with English skills remains difficult. Following desertion issues at CONUS AAF training locations, DoD has steadily shifted elements of training to OCONUS locations. Those programs and pipelines continue to mature, but advisors note no noticeable difference in training quality and outputs and advisors visit and observe training at these sites quarterly for quality assurance. These OCONUS training efforts allow Afghan training sites to focus on mission qualification and combat skills proficiency training, although reallocation of aircraft for training purposes presents a persistent challenge of priorities against resources. TAAC-Air advisors continue to engage with AAF leadership to increase training efficiency.

Persistent TAA of the AAF's targeting process increased the quantity and impact of AAF targeting packages, but target package quality remains inconsistent. Issues like outdated imagery, clear target descriptions, and stale targets without enemy activity contribute to target package quality issues. However, whereas AAF Headquarters could not build a targeting package for independent AAF offensive operations merely four years ago, today, AAF can create, staff, validate, and execute target packages from all ANA Corps. Advisors noted improvement in the overall process and enterprise of strike packages during the last six months. Out of all target packages submitted, the percentage of successful missions flown improved by roughly 20 percent during the past year. In fact, the targeting process and A-29 capabilities are outpacing the current written doctrine. TAA efforts have shifted to recommendations and improvements for writing updated targeting doctrine. This doctrine will include definitions and descriptions of the deliberate targeting process, dynamic targeting process and approvals, and time-sensitive targeting.

# **Military Casualties**

**Afghan Data are Classified, but U.S. and Resolute Support Force Cuts have Reduced US and Allied Casualties to a Minimum**

# Military Casualties

As the SIGAR, LIG, and OSD reporting in this section note, the cuts in U.S. and allied forces since 2014, the shift of most Resolute Support and U.S. military to a train and advise role or direct support of elite Afghan ground forces, and reliance on airpower to provide ground support, has reduced total U.S. and allied casualties to a minimum. Most casualties are also now wounded, rather than killed.

The story is very different for Afghan forces, but the totals are classified, along with the extent to which high casualty levels have led to cuts in Afghan Army, Police, and local forces due to absences and desertions. As is the case with official reporting on Afghan Government vs. Taliban control and influence, and reporting on the fighting and the course of the war, this lack of reporting and classification seems intended largely to disguise the lack of any real progress in defeating the Taliban at best, and a slow decline from stalemate towards defeat at worst.

It is exceedingly doubtful that either the Afghan forces or Taliban are unaware of the basic facts and the trends involved. Media and outside observer reporting indicates that this may be a major reason why the ANA is losing personnel in spite of the lack of alternative jobs – although the elimination of ghost soldiers due to better personnel accounting and pay systems may also be a factor.

As is noted throughout the following sections of this analysis, over-classification, manipulation of the data, and steady cutbacks in unclassified reporting bear a striking and unfortunate resemblance to the “Five O'clock Follies” in public reporting in Vietnam.

They also bear a resemblance to the Vietnam era’s reluctance to accept the level of “leaks” and threat penetration of host country command and intelligence networks that makes such data effectively transparent despite classification and has the net impact on the ANSF of making the government seem to be afraid or lying in its public statements. Effective strategic communications do not consist of labeling yourself as a liar.

# LIG on Afghan Forces, U.S. and Coalition Casualties – March 2019

## **AFGHAN SECURITY PERSONNEL CASUALTIES**

USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that the number of ANDSF casualties during the period December 2018 to February 2019 was approximately 31 percent higher than the same period one year ago. The number of casualties during defensive operations increased by 45 percent while the number of casualties during offensive operations increased by 21 percent. Almost half of the ANDSF casualties during this 3-month period were inflicted during checkpoint security operations.

USFOR-A classified ANDSF casualty and attrition rates at the request of the Afghan government. However, Afghan political leaders occasionally release some information about ANDSF casualties to the media. In January 2019, President Ghani stated that 45,000 ANDSF members had been killed since he took office in 2014.

## **U.S. AND COALITION FORCES CASUALTIES**

Four U.S. military personnel died because of combat injuries during the quarter. The DoD announced that a Soldier died of wounds sustained on January 13 in Badghis province; a Soldier died on January 22 as a result of small arms fire in Uruzgan province; and two Soldiers died as a result of wounds sustained in Kunduz province on March 22.

Resolute Support did not report any casualties among its non–U.S. partner forces during the quarter.

# **SIGAR: Resolute Support Estimates of U.S., Allied, and ANSF Casualties: July 2019**

## **U.S. Force Casualties**

According to DOD, five U.S. military personnel were killed and 35 were wounded in action (WIA) in Afghanistan this reporting period (April 17 to July 15, 2019). As of July 15, 2019, a total of 72 U.S. military personnel have died in Afghanistan (53 from hostilities and 19 in non-hostile circumstances) and 427 military personnel were WIA since the start of Operation Freedom's Sentinel on January 1, 2015. Since the beginning of U.S. operations in Afghanistan in October 2001, 2,419 U.S. military personnel have died (1,898 from hostilities and 521 in non-hostile circumstances) and 20,530 have been WIA.

## **Insider Attacks on U.S. and Coalition Forces**

USFOR-A reported that there was one confirmed insider attack on U.S. and Coalition forces this quarter (data through May 31, 2019) that wounded two military personnel. There were no reported insider attacks from roughly the same period in 2018 (January 1 to May 16, 2018), but there were two such attacks during the same period in 2017 that wounded three personnel.

## **ANSF Casualties – Data Classified**

USFOR-A continued to classify most ANDSF casualty data this quarter at the request of the Afghan government. SIGAR's questions about ANDSF casualties can be found in Appendix E of this report. Detailed information about ANDSF casualties is reported in the classified annex of this report. SIGAR also reports USFOR-A's estimates of insurgent casualties in the classified annex.

RS provided a general, unclassified assessment of ANDSF casualties this quarter. Though RS reported that effective (casualty producing) enemy-initiated attacks declined by about 7% this reporting period compared to the same period last year, RS also said that ANDSF casualties "are the same this quarter [March through May 2019] as they were in the same quarter one year ago."

DOD also reported in June on ANDSF casualty trends from December 2018 through May 2019. According to DOD, the majority of ANDSF casualties continue to be the result of direct-fire attacks, with IED attacks and mine strikes contributing to overall casualties at a much lower level. While the number of ANDSF casualties incurred from conducting local patrols was at the same level as the same period last year, those suffered while conducting checkpoint operations were 7% higher than the same reporting period last year, and casualties incurred during offensive operations has increased by 17% over the same period.

# NYT on Afghan Forces Casualties – August 2019

## AFGHAN SECURITY PERSONNEL CASUALTIES

Afghanistan's minister of defense, Asadullah Khalid, said that since taking command in December he had worked to shift regular forces out of their defensive posture... "Their mind-set has changed from defensive to offensive," Mr. Khalid said in an interview at the defense ministry in Kabul.... "Let's be clear: These bases are not for us to just stay there and sleep there. They are going out on the offense."

But Mr. Khalid also said that some regular forces had sustained high casualty rates this year during Taliban attacks on checkpoints and bases, in areas where the militants were not threatened by government offensives. "We are trying to reverse that situation," he said.

Only about three percent of the 2,300 deaths in the casualty reports compiled by the Times this year occurred during offensive combat operations carried out by regular forces. Among those were troops killed in Taliban ambushes after being sent to reinforce [besieged bases or checkpoints](#).

Roughly 10 percent of the deaths occurred in other actions, away from bases and checkpoints. They were attributed to roadside bombs; attacks on convoys; snipers; insider attacks; friendly fire; and ambushes of soldiers or police who were on food runs, driving to work, in their homes, in bazaars, at weddings, in mosques or in clinics.

# US Casualty Data as of August 12, 2019

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM U.S. CASUALTY STATUS <sup>3, 4</sup>					
OEF U.S. Military Casualties	Total Deaths	KIA	Non-Hostile	Pending	WIA
Afghanistan Only <sup>3</sup>	2,216	1,833	383	0	20,057
Other Locations <sup>4</sup>	131	11	120	0	39
OEF U.S. DOD Civilian Casualties	4	2	2	0	
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>2,351</b>	<b>1,846</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,096</b>

<sup>3</sup> OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (Afghanistan only) includes casualties that occurred between Oct. 7, 2001, and Dec. 31, 2014, in Afghanistan only.

<sup>4</sup> OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (Other Locations), includes casualties that occurred between Oct. 7, 2001, and Dec. 31, 2014, in Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Yemen. Wounded in action cases in this category include those without a casualty country listed.

OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL U.S. CASUALTY STATUS <sup>6</sup>					
	Total Deaths	KIA	Non-Hostile	Pending	WIA
OFS U.S. Military Casualties	75	55	20	0	428
OFS U.S. DOD Civilian Casualties	2	2	0	0	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>428</b>

OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL includes casualties that occurred in Afghanistan after Dec. 31, 2014.

There were 6 killed, 5 KIA's, 1 non-Hostile death, and 131 WIAs between June 6 and August 9, 2019.

**Estimates of Military Balance  
and the Size of the Threat  
Show Little or No Progress  
in Defeating the Taliban**

# Estimates of Military Balance and the Size of Threats

## Show Little or No Progress - I

The following charts in this section provide summary assessments of the Taliban threat from three different U.S. official reports on the war. They include official reporting by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), by the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR), and the Lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations (LIG).

Unlike the metrics and the maps in the sections that follow, these assessment broadly agree in judging the seriousness of the Taliban threat, as well as the threat posed by other groups and terrorist elements like ISIS-K. They do not indicate that either the Taliban or Afghan government force are winning, and later sections show that key metrics assessing the control and influence by each side are no longer being issued, and that the official metrics that are being issued have little value or relevance.

It should be noted, however, that the reports do differ in many other respects, particularly in their assessments of the progress being made in developing effective Afghan Security forces, and in creating effective political leadership and stability, effective and honest governance, and the economic conditions that can create loyalty to the government and help encourage and then sustain national stability.

All three reports touch upon serious issue with training, effective leadership, and corruption in the Afghan national security forces (ANSF), but only the SIGAR report warns that past reporting may have seriously exaggerated total personnel levels. SIGAR estimates (p. 78) a 22% drop in the ANP, and 8% drop in the ANA between 4/2018 and 5/2019.

The OSD report no longer provides a meaningful assessment of the civil aspects of the war. Early versions addressed them in some detail. The LIG report does cover some aspects but in limited depth. SIGAR provides more detail on U.S. aid programs, but does not address many of the economic issues affecting popular support and stability raised by the UN, World Bank, and IMF. The SIGAR report is also the only report that highlights the lack of Afghan compliance with the new levels of “conditionality” established as part of the change in strategy initiated by the Trump Administration.

None of the reports attempt to assess the possible impacts of a peace settlement or a U.S. withdrawal, or estimate any timeframe in which the Afghan forces or government could stand on their own without major U.S military support and military and civil aid.

All three touch upon the level of direct land combat support that Afghan forces now receive, and the impact of the reforms in security assistance that have strengthened the role of U.S. advice and assistance on the land combat or Kandak level. Only the SIGAR July 31, 2019 Report to Congress describes these differences in detail:

According to DOD, as of June 2019, approximately 14,000 U.S. military personnel were serving as part of the U.S. Operation Freedom’s Sentinel mission in Afghanistan, the same number reported for over a year. An additional 10,648 U.S. citizens who serve as contractors are also in Afghanistan as of July 2019. Of the 14,000 U.S. military personnel, 8,475 are assigned to the NATO RS mission to train, advise, and assist Afghan security forces, unchanged since last quarter. The remaining U.S. military personnel serve in support roles, train the Afghan special forces, or conduct air and counterterror operations.

As of June 2019, the RS mission included 8,673 military personnel from NATO allies and non-NATO partner nations, bringing the current total of RS military personnel to 17,148 (a 114-person increase since last quarter). The United States continues to contribute the most troops to the RS mission, followed by Germany (1,300 personnel) and the United Kingdom (1,100).

DOD reported in June that General Austin Scott Miller, Commander of RS and USFOR-A, rolled out a new operational design for the U.S. and NATO mission in Afghanistan over the last six months. The new design reportedly streamlines U.S. operations in the country by synchronizing U.S. counterterrorism capabilities with increased ANDSF operations and focused RS Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) efforts to the “point of need.” DOD said this model has “restored the Coalition’s tactical initiative and put heavy pressure on the Taliban . . . to generate strong incentives for them to engage in meaningful negotiations with the U.S. and Afghan governments.” DOD also said the new operational design and current U.S. military footprint are the “most efficient use of small numbers and resources to generate combat power and battlefield effects since the opening year of the war in Afghanistan.” DOD reiterated that the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan is conditions-based, with commanders on the ground continually evaluating conditions and making recommendations on appropriate force levels.

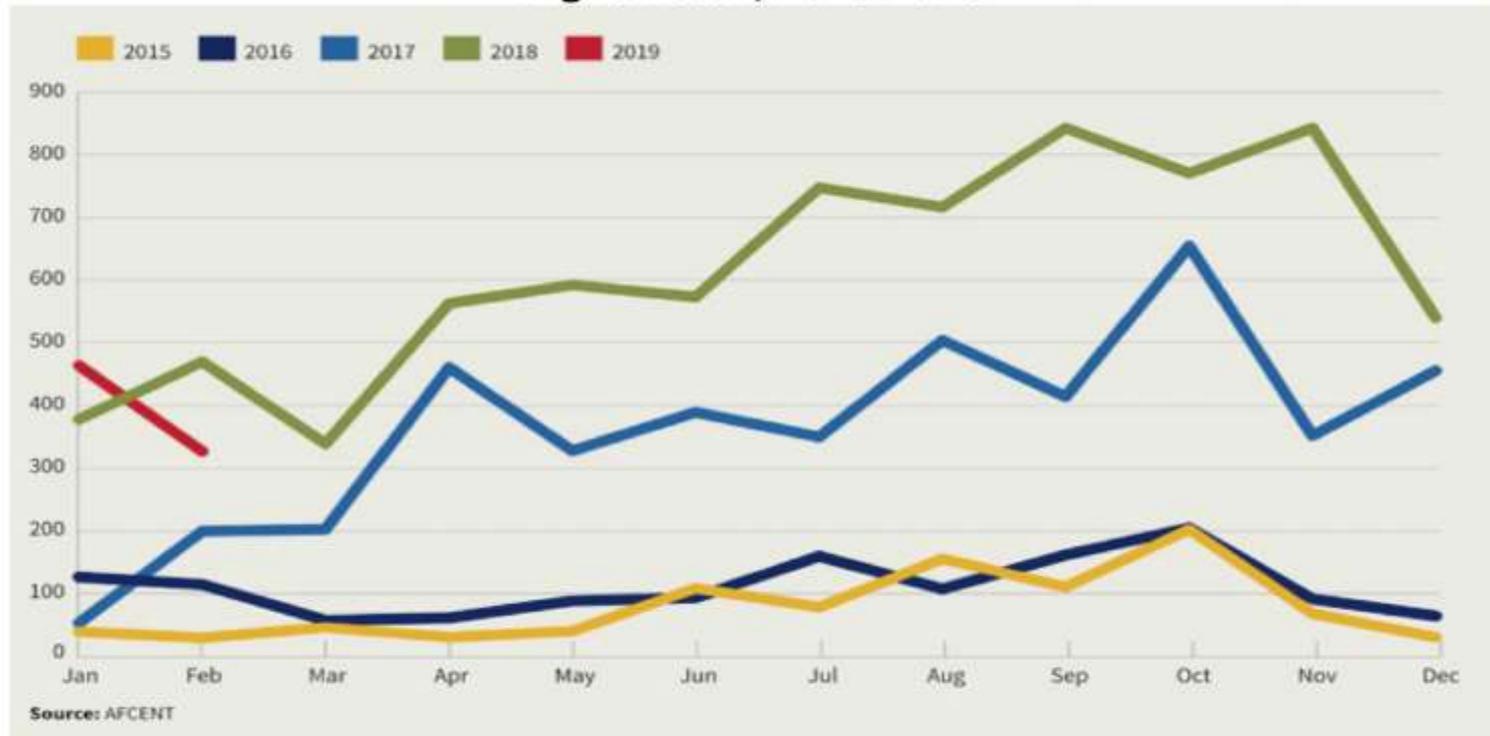
# Estimates of Military Balance and the Size of Threats

## Show Little or No Progress - II

SIGAR does, however, indicate that the advances in support of the ANA may be offset by problems in the organization and effectiveness of the Ministry of Information and ANP (p. 77).

Only the LIG report stresses the fact that the Afghan Air Force still has only token effectiveness, and that the ANSF only is able to consistently defeat or recover from Taliban attacks because of the major increases in U.S. combat air support since 2015.

### Airpower Replaces Ground Power: Weapons Released by U.S. Aircraft in Afghanistan, 2015-2019



U.S. and Afghan airstrikes continue to be a critical component of unilateral and joint operations against the Taliban and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria–Khorasan (ISIS-K). As noted in the previous Lead IG quarterly report, General Miller ended his predecessor’s air campaign targeting sources of Taliban revenue, particularly narcotics processing facilities.<sup>64</sup> USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that General Miller directed this change “to maximize impact on the Taliban in an attempt to force them to the negotiation table.” USFOR-A added that while there are no current operations targeting Taliban financing, coalition and ANDSF forces may have destroyed some narcotics processing facilities while targeting Taliban leadership.

## DoD 1225 Reporting on Taliban and Extremist Threat: July, 2019

Terrorist and insurgent groups continue to challenge Afghan, U.S., and Coalition forces. During this reporting period, ISIS-K made territorial gains in eastern Afghanistan. Regionally the group continues to evade, counter, and resist sustained CT pressure. While ISIS-K remains operationally limited to South and Central Asia, the group harbors intentions to attack international targets. Al-Qa'ida (AQ) and Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) routinely support, train, work, and operate with Taliban fighters and commanders. AQ maintains an enduring interest in attacking U.S. forces and Western targets. Even if a successful political settlement with the Taliban emerges from ongoing talks, AQ, ISIS-K, and some unknown number of Taliban hardliners will constitute a substantial threat to the Afghan government and its citizens, as well as to the United States and its Coalition partners. This enduring terrorist threat will require the United States, the international community, and the ANDSF to maintain a robust CT capability for the foreseeable future.

Despite elevated levels of violence and heavy losses, ANDSF recruitment and retention outpaced attrition for the first time in several reporting periods. The ANDSF increased its offensive operations and reduced or consolidated static checkpoints. The Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) curbed the misuse of forces in defensive positions, met growth milestones, and increased the number of independent, offensive operations. Finally, the Afghan government instituted a number of leadership changes that are helping move the ANDSF towards becoming a more professional force. However, the ANDSF will continue to require sustained TAA and financial support to overcome shortfalls. The ANDSF struggles to maintain, account for, and distribute equipment and material throughout the country, properly manage facilities, and adhere to strict training and reset cycles. While the ANDSF can secure population centers, provide security for elections, and control major ground lines of communication, the conventional Afghan security forces require persistent TAA, and the ASSF needs fires, lift, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) support to maintain peak combat effectiveness. |

## DoD 1225 Reporting on Taliban and Extremist Threat: July, 2019

Collectively, terrorist and insurgent groups continue to present a formidable challenge to Afghan, U.S., and Coalition forces. The presence of more than 20 terrorist organizations in the region creates the largest concentration of terrorist and extremist organizations in the world.

### The Taliban

During this reporting period, the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network (HQN), has continued to conduct operations. On April 12, 2019, the Taliban announced the start of their spring offensive, naming the campaign Operation Fath (Arabic for “Victory”). The Taliban is conducting a nationwide insurgency in Afghanistan in pursuit of the following goals: the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, establishment of a government with Islamic principles, and international political recognition. The Taliban is attempting to use its battlefield efforts to strengthen its negotiating position with the United States. Throughout the winter, the Taliban conducted attacks against ANDSF and Coalition Forces, including a high-profile attack and a complex attack. Recent peace negotiations have not halted the Taliban’s military operations and asymmetric attacks. During the reporting period, Pakistani military operations had no observable impact on Taliban and HQN battlefield activities or military capabilities.

The Haqqani Network continues to be integral to the Taliban’s effort to pressure the Afghan Government in Kabul and eastern Afghanistan. According to press reporting and public Taliban release statements, since Sirajuddin Haqqani’s installment as Deputy Leader of the Taliban in 2015, he has likely increased the Haqqani Network’s influence within the Taliban organization, as well as in areas outside of HQN’s normal operating region: Paktika, Paktiya, and Khost Provinces in eastern Afghanistan.

The Taliban has demonstrated an increasing capability to threaten district centers, attack well defended military installations, and attack compounds with a Coalition presence. During this reporting cycle, however, more than 50 percent of Taliban attacks against the ANDSF targeted isolated checkpoints and outposts. The Taliban maintains control in some rural areas that lack effective Afghan Government representation, seeking to exploit ANDSF weaknesses and the reduced international military presence. The Taliban continues to maintain its ability to conduct high-profile asymmetric attacks. The early March 2019 attack on the 215 Maiwand Corps at Camp Shorab in Helmand Province killed 23 soldiers at the cost of 20 Taliban fighters. This attack penetrated a heavily defended base, suggesting that the Taliban has enough confidence of success to commit considerable resources towards high-profile assaults against heavily defended military installations.

## SIGAR: Key Security Issues and Events: July, 2019 - I

Fighting between the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and the Taliban has increased in recent months as the parties to the conflict engaged in a series of peace talks, according to the Department of Defense (DOD) and Resolute Support (RS), the U.S.-led NATO mission in Afghanistan.

DOD reported that, with U.S. and Coalition support, the ANDSF “increasingly targeted the Taliban with military pressure through- out the winter and into the spring to convince the Taliban that they cannot achieve their objectives by prolonging the conflict, and to set the conditions for a negotiated settlement.” ...The increase in offensive operations was primarily driven by Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) missions focused on disrupting the Taliban’s freedom of movement and defending “key terrain,” such as major population centers, critical infrastructure, entry points into Afghanistan, and communication lines between population centers.

The Taliban also increased the number of its overall as well as “effective” (casualty-producing) attacks against the ANDSF and Coalition this quarter. According to RS, from March 1–May 31, 2019, enemy-initiated attacks (EIA) increased by 9% and effective enemy-initiated attacks (EEIA) increased by 17% compared to the preceding three months. However, this period’s EIA and EEIA fell somewhat compared to the same reporting period last year (March 1–May 31, 2018). DOD said that while “Taliban fighting capacity also suffered [from December 2018 to May 2019], the Taliban retain safe havens and recruiting pools in areas not targetable by ANDSF.”

DOD continued to note that the primary goal of the U.S. military strategy in Afghanistan is to support ongoing peace talks occurring between the parties to the conflict, and that violence typically spikes around these talks when the parties seek to increase their negotiating leverage...U.S. officials met in early May and late June/early July in Doha, Qatar, for a series of talks with the Taliban. At the July intra-Afghan talks that followed, Afghan government officials in an unofficial capacity met with Taliban representatives along with other Afghans...

Two of the most deadly security incidents this quarter occurred while these talks were under way. The first was a series of Afghan and NATO airstrikes on May 6 in Farah Province that reportedly killed 150 Taliban militants, wounded 40, and destroyed 68 narcotics labs; the second was a July 1 Taliban car bomb targeting an Afghan government facility in Kabul City that killed at least 40 people and wounded 116 others (including 51 children)...

## SIGAR: Key Security Issues and Events: July, 2019 - II

U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad called the latest round of talks between the U.S. and Taliban representatives “the most productive session to date.” He said the intra-Afghan dialogue that took place subsequently was “a critical milestone in the Afghan peace process,” but that “there [was] still important work left to be done before we have an agreement.”... For a full account of recent peace talks between the parties to the conflict, see pages 102–104 of the Governance section.

The human toll of the conflict continues to concern the international community as well as the Afghan government. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) issued statements this quarter listing several incidents in which dozens of civilians were killed during the month of Ramadan and afterwards, and urged the parties to the conflict to do more to protect Afghan civilians...Afghan National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib also said on June 18 that at least 50 people per day die “in the fight against terrorism” in the country...Though effective attacks against the ANDSF may have declined since the same period last year, RS reports that “casualty rates for the ANDSF are the same this quarter as they were in the same quarter one year ago.”

ANDSF personnel strength figures reported this quarter declined considerably compared to last quarter. Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) said this was due to the ANDSF switching their reporting of personnel strength to the number of personnel enrolled in the Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS) rather than the number reported on-hand by ANDSF components. This means that only those ANDSF personnel who have been biometrically validated in APPS are included in strength figures. The change was part of an effort by the United States and its partners to reduce opportunities for corrupt ANDSF officials to report “ghost” (nonexistent) soldiers and police on personnel rolls in order to pocket the salaries. CSTC-A said there are 180,869 Afghan National Army (ANA) and 91,596 Afghan National Police (ANP) personnel enrolled and accounted for in APPS as of May 25, 2019. This is roughly 10,000 ANA fewer and 25,000 ANP fewer than the numbers reported to SIGAR last quarter...This quarter’s strength of 272,465 puts the ANDSF at 77.4%, and 79,535 personnel short, of its goal strength of 352,000...

When asked about the gulf between last quarter’s Afghan-reported strength numbers and this quarter’s APPS validated ones, CSTC-A said that it “does not expect that the APPS reported data will ever equal the amount that was self-reported [by the Afghans]” and that it “cannot categorize the excess individuals as ‘ghost’ personnel, because it is not known why the Afghan reported numbers are higher”...SIGAR’s Investigations Directorate is investigating the matter, and is contributing to efforts by SIGAR’s Audits Directorate, CSTC-A, and the Afghan Attorney General’s office to identify and address measures to reduce and/or eliminate payments for nonexistent police officers.

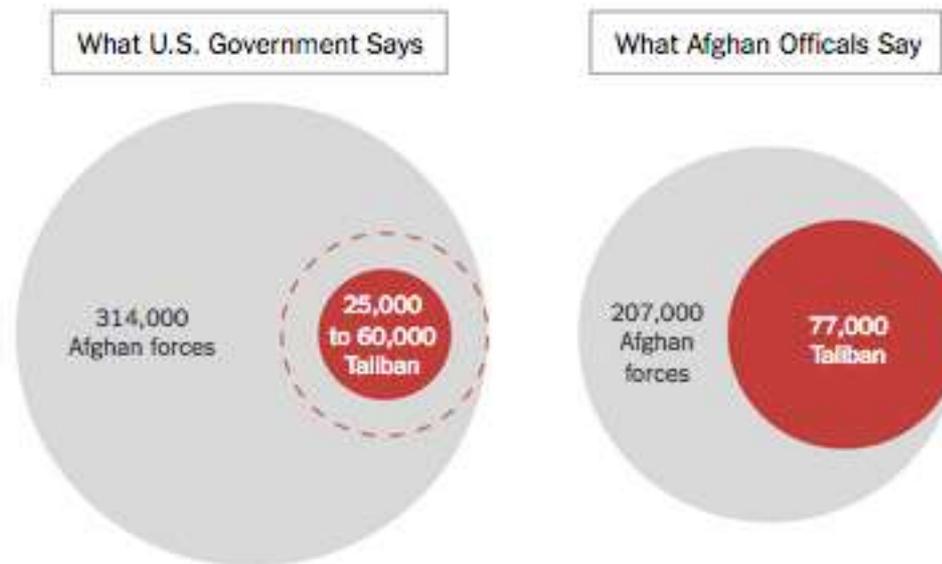
Source: SIGAR, *Report to the U.S. Congress*, July 30, 2019, pp. 63-65.

# CIA Assessment of Taliban, June 2019

The Taliban remains a serious challenge for the Afghan Government in almost every province. The Taliban still considers itself the rightful government of Afghanistan, and it remains a capable and confident insurgent force fighting for the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Afghanistan, establishment of sharia law, and rewriting of the Afghan constitution.

In 2019, negotiations between the US and the Taliban in Doha entered their highest level yet, building on momentum that began in late 2018. Underlying the negotiations is the unsettled state of Afghan politics, and prospects for a sustainable political settlement remain unclear.

# NYT: Differing Estimates of Relative Afghan and Taliban Force Strength: May 2018



By The New York Times | Sources: Lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations; SIGAR; Fatiullah Qaisari and Shayestobaz Nasiri, members of the Defense Committee of the Afghan Parliament

The American military [says](#) the Afghan government effectively “controls or influences” 56 percent of the country. But that assessment relies on statistical sleight of hand. In many districts, the Afghan government controls only the district headquarters and military barracks, while the Taliban control the rest.

On paper, Afghan security forces outnumber the Taliban by 10 to 1, or even more. But some Afghan officials estimate that a third of their soldiers and police officers are “ghosts” who have left or deserted without being removed from payrolls. Many others are poorly trained and unqualified.

The Afghan government says it killed 13,600 insurgents and arrested 2,000 more last year — nearly half the estimated 25,000 to 35,000 Taliban fighters an official United States [report](#) said were active in the country in 2017. But in January, United States officials [said](#) insurgents numbered at least 60,000, and Afghan officials recently [estimated](#) the Taliban’s strength at more than 77,000.

## Lead IG Estimate of Taliban Forces: March 2019

USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that it estimated the Taliban has 20,000 to 30,000 fighters in Afghanistan. An additional 10,000-25,000 fighters periodically join the Taliban for attacks, though only a portion of them are fighting at any given time. USFOR-A derived this estimate through multiple open source assessment, and told the DoD OIG that it made this assessment with “low confidence.” Weakly defended Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) checkpoints continued to be frequent targets for Taliban attacks, often resulting in casualties on both sides. USFOR-A said that the high number of checkpoints as a major vulnerability for Afghan forces. Despite promises to reduce the number of checkpoints, the ANDSF still maintains hundreds of checkpoints on key transit routes throughout Afghanistan. Local leaders often insist that the checkpoints should remain. Checkpoints can bolster the appearance of security and are also a source of illegal income for local commanders, according to USFOR-A. Almost half of ANDSF casualties during the quarter occurred at checkpoints.

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In addition to small-scale attacks on checkpoints, the Taliban mounted several larger attacks against the ANDSF during the quarter, including “high-profile attacks” that involved an improvised explosive device (IED). On January 21, the Taliban attacked a National Directorate of Security (NDS) training facility in Wardak province. Provincial officials said that at least 45 people were killed in the attack, and as many as 70 were wounded. On February 16, the Taliban attacked an Afghan Border Force base in Kandahar, killing all 32 personnel posted there. On March 23, Taliban fighters launched a coordinated attack on ANDSF positions in Helmand province, killing at least 40 personnel. Also in March, Taliban fighters ambushed a convoy carrying First Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostum in Balkh province, killing one of Dostum’s security guards. Dostum was unhurt.

The NDS attack was an example of the Taliban’s commonly observed multi-phase strategy to conduct attacks on government facilities. USFOR-A told the DoD OIG the Taliban stole an ANDSF High Mobility Multipurpose Vehicle (HMMWV or “Humvee”) and converted it into a vehicle-borne IED. On the morning of the attack, they detonated the explosive-laden vehicle near the NDS compound. Two armed fighters, posing as ANDSF soldiers, then attempted to enter the facility amidst the chaos caused by the explosion, and were later killed. The ANDSF later discovered and neutralized a second explosive-laden vehicle near the facility that was intended to support the initial attack

...USFOR-A assessed that the Taliban “likely lacks the capability to challenge government control” of Maimanah. However, as was the case with the Farah and Ghazni attacks, the high-profile attacks that the Taliban mounts against Maimanah and neighboring transit routes can have a positive impact on their efforts, as they provide valuable propaganda opportunities and undermine public confidence in Afghan security forces. Further information on the Taliban threat to regional capitals is provided in the classified appendix to this report.

## LIG: Taliban Continues Attacks Despite Peace Talks – April 2019

Afghan media reported this quarter that a Taliban leader surrendered to the Afghan government in Jowzjan province. According to a USFOR-A estimate, 217 Taliban fighters have surrendered since 2018, a small number when compared to the Taliban's overall estimated force size of up to 50,000 full-time and temporary fighters. Many other surrenders were reported by the media but were subsequently disproven. USFOR-A said that the reasons for these surrenders are varied, including military operations against the Taliban, lack of supplies, and financial incentives for the families of those who surrender. Overall, USFOR-A said, these surrenders have had "little to no effect on the ANDSF and USFOR-A operations

As U.S. and Taliban representatives met in Doha, Taliban fighters continued their campaign of violence during the quarter, conducting daily attacks against Afghan government personnel, security forces, and civilians. U.S. Forces–Afghanistan (USFOR-A) told the DoD OIG that the Taliban uses these attacks to undermine public opinion of the Afghan government, exacerbate concerns about a potential withdrawal of international forces, and improve Taliban leverage in the negotiations. Taliban attacks continued through the 2018-2019 winter, following a trend in recent years to sustain attacks during the period between the group's declared fighting seasons.

## LIG: U.S. Forces Target Taliban Leaders to Sustain Taliban Engagement in Peace Talks: April 2019

Under General Miller's command, the United States has been on targeting Taliban leadership. USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that "consistent military pressure placed on Taliban senior leadership by Coalition and Afghan forces will potentially sustain Taliban intent to engage in talks." USFOR-A said that this strategy also limits the willingness of Taliban leaders and their fighters to gather and plan attacks in some areas.

USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that these operations "demonstrated the ability to continue to pressure the enemy to keep them at the negotiation table." USFOR-A reported that coalition and ANDSF operations "likely are causing the Taliban to shift tactics throughout the country." In addition, NATO Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan (NSOCC-A) said that the Taliban has been using more defensive tactics, such as IED emplacement, during the quarter. However, it is unclear how much of a factor the strikes against Taliban leaders affect the Taliban's decision to continue participation in the peace talks.

USFOR-A routinely operates with the ANDSF as they target Taliban fighters and their leaders. An incident this quarter, however, highlighted the impact of miscommunication among allied forces. In March, U.S. forces conducting ground operations in Uruzgan province reportedly encountered friendly fire from Afghan soldiers at a checkpoint. U.S. forces, unable to ascertain that Afghan security forces were mistakenly shooting at them, could not de-escalate the confrontation and called in a self-defense airstrike. The strike killed five Afghan soldiers.

# LIG - Taliban Threat to Provincial Capitals Remains: April 2019

Map of Faryab and Badghis Provinces



The Taliban remained active in areas on the periphery of several provincial capitals during the quarter. The Taliban did not stage a major attack against a provincial capital, as it did when it attacked the capitals of Farah and Ghazni provinces in 2018. However, USFOR-A's assessment that the Taliban's intent to conduct more attacks against provincial centers remains unchanged, in part because the Taliban benefits from the media attention the attacks generate.

Taliban activity in Afghanistan's northwestern provinces during the quarter illustrates how the group exerts security pressure on provincial capitals. As noted in the previous Lead IG quarterly report, two districts in Faryab province experienced increasing Taliban control between July and October 2018, according to a Resolute Support assessment.

During this quarter, the Taliban continued to attack ANDSF positions along the portion of Highway 1 that passes through Faryab and Badghis provinces. USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that the Taliban maintains influence in much of Faryab and seeks to isolate Maimanah, the provincial capital. The ANDSF has been challenging the Taliban in Faryab, particularly in Qaisar, Dowlatabad, and Almar districts, but has suffered some widely-publicized defeats. On February 13, the Taliban attacked Almar district, killing several soldiers and attacking soldiers sent from Maimanah to reinforce them. On March 11, the Taliban attacked a rural outpost in Murghab district of neighboring Badghis province, killing 28 soldiers and reportedly capturing more than 150 others as they fled across the border to Turkmenistan.

USFOR-A assessed that the Taliban "likely lacks the capability to challenge government control" of Maimanah. However, as was the case with the Farah and Ghazni attacks, the high-profile attacks that the Taliban mounts against Maimanah and neighboring transit routes can have a positive impact on their efforts, as they provide valuable propaganda opportunities and undermine public confidence in Afghan security.

**Estimates of Levels of Government  
and Threat Control and Influence Get  
Steadily Worse and Then Are  
Cancelled or Classified**

# Military Balance, Patterns of Combat Activity, and Levels of Control and Influence

Virtually every piece of data on Afghanistan and the Afghan War has been uncertain since the beginning of the U.S. intervention, and the apparent precision of many reports disguises the fact that they often lack reliable inputs or that the data are different or conflict from source to source. Even estimates of basic data like total population, poverty, unemployment, life expectancy, infant mortality, and education levels are notoriously uncertain.

The estimates of Government versus Taliban control of Afghan Districts and its population have always been a key source of controversy. ISAF and the Resolute Support Command have issued over-optimistic estimates for years, and ones where apparent Government control of a small part of a district like its Capital could disguise strong Taliban or other insurgent influence in most of that district. The same has been true of the estimates of "contested" districts, where Resolute Support issued low-end estimates that many outside experts questioned.

These command estimates became more uncertain and controversial after 2014, when U.S. forces in the field were cut back and U.S. access to much of the country became limited. However, Resolute Support did produce less favorable estimates over time. By early 2018, even the official estimates reflected a stalemate with trends that slightly favored the Taliban, although no one could assess the level of relative uncertainty in the official versus outside estimates.

By the end of 2018, most estimates indicated that the situation had further deteriorated, although the various estimates still differed. The metrics in this section show that Lead Inspector General (LIG) of the Department of Defense stated in its February 2019 report (p.17) that full Afghan Government "control" dropped from 75 to 74 districts (18%) out of a total of 407 between Jul 2018 and October 2018, and that Government "influence" dropped from 151 to 145 districts (36%). At the same time, Government control over the total population stayed constant at 34% of the population, although Government influence over the population dropped from 31% to 29%.

In contrast, the LIG reported that Taliban "control" rose from 10 to 12 districts, although its "influence" dropped from 39 to 38 districts and its mix of control and influence over the population remained constant at 11%. The LIG also reported that the number of "contested" districts where neither side dominated rose from 132 to 138, and the percentage of the total population that was contested rose from 24% to 26%. Put differently, this meant a total of 188 districts were contested or under Taliban control and influence by late October 2018, and 37% of the population.

Another official U.S. source, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) used a similar set of figures in the report that it issued at the end of January (pp. 71-72). This estimate did, however, put the October 2018 numbers in perspective. It stated that the Government "control" and "influence" over the Districts had dropped

by more than 18% since SIGAR first began receiving such reports from the Resolute Support Command in November 2015. It also stated that the number of contested districts had risen by nearly 13% and the number under insurgent control or influence had risen by 5%.

The end result was that all official reporting on the level of Taliban vs. government was cancelled. SIGAR reported in the first Quarter of 2019 that Resolute Support had stopped making such estimates. Some have since suggested that the command may have cancelled the reports because these estimates provided a level of bad news that it did not want to publicize. It is not clear that this is the case. What is clear is that Resolute Support has stopped making such estimates, and there *now is no meaningful official estimate of progress in the war since late 2018*.

Moreover, one of the most respected outside sources — the *Long War Journal* — that made independent estimates had long produced less favorable results. It continued to make its own estimates, and the estimate on the *Long War Journal* web page on August 8, 2019 indicated that the Taliban now controlled 66 out of 397 (407?) Districts (17%). It estimated that a total of 191 Districts were disputed (48%), and that the now government controlled 140 Districts (35%). The *LWJ* also estimated that the Taliban now controlled 3.7 million Afghans out of a total of 33 million (11%). The control of 13.5 million (41%) was contested, and the Government controlled 15.8 million (48%) (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/mapping-taliban-control-in-afghanistan>)

Put differently, the *Long War Journal* estimated that the Taliban "contested" or controlled 52% of the total population, versus Resolute Support's previous estimate that it had an "influence" over only 26%. This higher level of Taliban success (and Afghan government weakness) is one that many reporters and outside analysts feel may be more correct. However, there is no way to establish the facts since the *Long War Journal* uses a different methodology from Resolute Support, and "contested" does not have the same meaning as "influence."

In short, there now are no official metrics that begin to provide a reliable way to know who is "winning," or the relative level of "stalemate." This gap in reporting is further compounded by the fact that other official estimates of progress — like Enemy Initiated Attacks do not show the level of government control or influence. As the following metrics show, The SIGAR quarterly report for July 2019 makes clear that the actual role of the central government may be weak to negligible in many supposedly government controlled or disputed Districts — not only because the Taliban or other extremist forces control much of the countryside and have checkpoints on roads, but because some warlord, power broker, narcotrafficker, or other corrupt official is effectively in charge.

These uncertainties are not minor considerations in a war for "hearts and minds," and in a country whose security problems are compounded by critical civil problems, and by a level of governance and political leadership that the World Bank and Transparency International estimate is one of the worst and most corrupt in the world. They make it almost impossible to assess the prospects for a real peace or for success if the U.S. continues to provide funds and forces for the war.

# SIGAR on Cancellation of Key Reporting on Afghan Government and Insurgent Control and Influence

This quarter, NATO's Resolute Support (RS) train-advise-assist mission in Afghanistan formally notified SIGAR that it has discontinued producing one of its most widely cited Afghan security metrics: district, population, and territorial control data. The command said they no longer saw decision-making value in these data.<sup>129</sup> The latest data from the few remaining publicly available measures of the security situation in Afghanistan—enemy-initiated attacks, general ANDSF casualty trends, and security incidents—show that Afghanistan experienced heightened insecurity over the winter months.

According to Resolute Support (RS), enemy-initiated attacks rose considerably: the monthly average attacks from November 2018 through January 2019 was up 19% compared to the monthly average over the last reporting period (August 16 to October 31, 2018).<sup>130</sup> USFOR-A said that from December 1, 2018, through February 28, 2019, “the number of ANDSF casualties were approximately 31% higher during this three-month period when compared to the same period one year prior.”<sup>131</sup> The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported 2,234 security-related incidents in Afghanistan from December 1, 2018–February 28, 2019, a 39% increase compared to same period the year before.<sup>132</sup> These trends are notable considering that violence has typically waned during the winter months in Afghanistan over the last several years.<sup>133</sup>

These data align with the U.S. intelligence community's most recent public assessment that “Afghan forces generally have secured cities and other government strongholds, but the Taliban has increased large-scale attacks, and Afghan security suffers from a large number of forces being tied down in defensive missions, mobility shortfalls, and a lack of reliable forces to hold recaptured territory.”<sup>134</sup> Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats projected in late January that in 2019 “neither the Afghan government nor the Taliban will be able to gain a strategic advantage in the Afghan war in the coming year, even if Coalition support remains at current levels.”<sup>135</sup> General Votel echoed this statement in March. When pressed whether current conditions in Afghanistan merit a withdrawal of U.S. forces, General Votel said “The political conditions . . . right now don't merit that.”<sup>136</sup>

## ANDSF Data Discontinued

USFOR-A discontinued the following data this quarter:

- District-stability assessments (district, population, and territorial control data)

## Population, District, and Territorial Control

This quarter, RS formally notified SIGAR that it is no longer producing its district-level stability assessment of Afghan government and insurgent control and influence, expressed in a count of the districts, the total estimated population of the district, and the total estimated area of the districts. According to RS, they determined the district-stability assessments were “of limited decision-making value to the [RS] Commander.” RS added that there is currently no other product or forum through which district-level control data is communicated to the command.<sup>137</sup> The last district stability data RS produced was for its October 22, 2018, assessment; SIGAR reported on that assessment in its January 2019 *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*.

In mid-January, DOD told SIGAR that the assessments “are not indicative of effectiveness of the South Asia strategy or of progress toward security and stability in Afghanistan, particularly in the wake of the appointment of U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad.” They reiterated that there is some “uncertainty in the models that produce [the district-stability data] and the assessments that underlie them are to a degree subjective.” DOD said that it is “more important to instead focus on the principal goal of the strategy of concluding the war in Afghanistan on terms favorable to Afghanistan and the United States.”<sup>138</sup>

SIGAR recognized and reported the limitations of the district-stability assessment, including its increasing level of subjectivity.<sup>139</sup> However, senior RS officials had previously cited its importance in public statements. For example, in November 2017, the RS commander said that improving population control in Afghanistan (to 80% by the end of 2019) was one of his strategic priorities.<sup>140</sup> Additionally, RS told SIGAR in May 2017 that the district-control assessments were being “methodologically improved” by making them more subjective, basing them on RS regional commanders’ informed opinions about the control status of districts within their area of responsibility.<sup>141</sup> Despite its limitations, the control data was the only unclassified metric provided by RS that consistently tracked changes to the security situation on the ground. While the data did not on its own indicate the success or failure of the South Asia strategy, it did contribute to an overall understanding of the situation in the country.

As SIGAR has reported, RS's control data from May 2017 to October 2018 showed a stagnant security environment in Afghanistan. Addressing the stagnation, RS said in late January that “one necessary condition [for a political resolution] is the perception by both sides that the conflict is in a military stalemate . . . little variation in district stability data support multiple years of assessments that the conflict is in a stalemate.”<sup>142</sup>

# Lead IG Commentary on Cancellation of Control and Influence Reporting

When President Trump announced his “conditions-based” South Asia strategy in August 2017, members of Congress asked top defense officials: how should the American public measure progress under the strategy? Since then, Resolute Support and the U.S. military has produced several types of data that measure aspects of the OFS mission, many of which are included in this report.

This quarter, the DoD OIG learned that Resolute Support had discontinued two of those measures, the District Stability Assessment and the ANDSF workstrand tracker. These changes represent a shift in recent months toward qualitative measures of progress, which may better reflect the current status of the conflict but may also undermine the American public’s understanding of progress toward U.S. goals in Afghanistan.

...The District Stability Assessment was a measure of an elemental component of the conflict in Afghanistan: control of territory and the people who live there. Using this measure and others, General John Nicholson, the commander of USFOR-A and the Resolute Support mission from 2016 to 2018, tracked progress toward the goal established by President Ghani to have 80 percent of Afghanistan’s population living in areas under Afghan government control or influence. The DoD’s Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)) later said that the District Stability Assessment was “not indicative of progress toward security and stability in Afghanistan,” in part due to the subjectivity of information used to make the assessment. Furthermore, a Lead IG analysis questioned the analytical foundation of the 80 percent goal. This quarter, USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that Resolute Support stopped producing the district control assessment because it was no longer of operational use to General Miller.

The ANDSF workstrand tracker measured Afghan security forces’ progress towards goals of the U.S.-Afghan Compact. The Compact is a list of more than 1,200 activities related to security, reconciliation, rule of law, and other areas of government performance. The tracker summarized these activities into a few dozen lines of efforts (“workstrands”) and measured Afghan government activity toward an undefined goal of becoming “sustainable.” Resolute Support plans to replace the tracker with a new tool that is more “manageable,” and better aligned with Resolute Support assessment priorities.<sup>96</sup> The DoD, per Section 1211 of the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, is exploring methods to better assess, monitor, and evaluate security cooperation programs in Afghanistan.

The District Stability Assessment, the workstrand tracker, and other data included in this report, such as enemy-initiated attacks and civilian casualties, are far from perfect measures of what is actually happening in Afghanistan. These measures rely on information inputs that can be incorrect, inconsistent, or subjective. This is especially true with data that is originally gathered by the ANDSF. Despite these weaknesses, these measures applied a consistent methodology over time and reveal important trends, such as two years of no change—a stalemate—in the District Stability Assessment and uneven progress across “workstrands” on the tracker.

...Population and district control measure Taliban and Afghan control of territory and, importantly, how many Afghan citizens are affected by that control. Resolute Support reported that it ceased production of its District Stability Assessment in October 2018 because it “was of limited decision-making value” to General Miller. Resolute Support has released this data to the public nearly every quarter since 2015. The most recent Resolute Support District assessment in October 2018 found that 63 percent of Afghan citizens lived in areas under government control or influence.

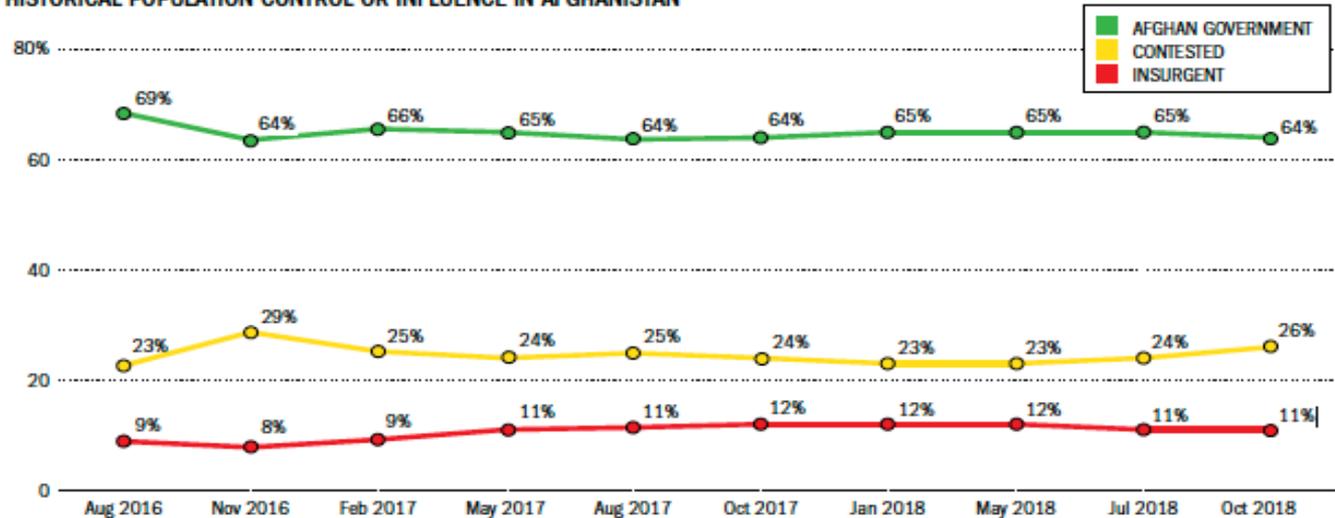
Control of Afghanistan’s districts—and the number of citizens who live in them—has been one of the most commonly cited measures of security in Afghanistan. Both the U.S. Government and independent analysts produce assessments of district control. These assessments use different methodologies and, as a result, produce conflicting assessments of which districts are under Taliban control, under Afghan government control, or contested. For example, the Long War Journal’s July 2018 assessment of district control found that 48 percent of Afghans lived in areas under Afghan government control. The U.S. intelligence community continues to produce their own district control assessments, one of which is provided in the classified appendix to this report.

The reasons for discontinuing or classifying data about U.S. military operations in Afghanistan vary. Military leaders may choose to change quantitative measures or rely on more qualitative assessments of progress to address unreliability in their data, to execute new strategies that are not addressed by existing data, or simply because that is their decision-making style. Some of the data is classified or not releasable to the public because it was originally produced and classified by the Afghan government (such as ANDSF casualty data).

**SHIFT TOWARD QUALITATIVE MEASURES** Since Ambassador Khalilzad began talks with the Taliban in October 2018, U.S. officials have said that progress toward reconciliation is the most important metric of the conflict in Afghanistan. General Miller has said that military pressure on the Taliban is designed to support the ongoing peace talks. U.S. military and diplomatic leaders said that Taliban participation in multiple rounds of talks since October 2018 and the initial “agreement in draft” are indications that the strategy is working. Progress toward reconciliation is an inherently non-linear and non-quantifiable metric, and the talks could break down at any time, particularly if the Afghan government does not join the talks. Since most U.S. intelligence about Taliban intentions is not shared with the public, it is unclear how U.S. military pressure on Taliban leaders factors into the Taliban’s decision to continue participation in the peace talks. The DoD OUSD(P) told the DoD OIG that “the real measure of success will be a lagging one and qualitative: do the terms of a political settlement ensure our national interest in preventing terrorist attacks on the homeland?” Until a political settlement is reached, if at all, the American public and their representatives in Congress may have less information about how ongoing military and diplomatic activities are bringing the United States closer to that goal. The Lead IG agencies will continue to request and analyze available data the progress of the overseas contingency operation.

# Resolute Support-LIG: Population and District Control and Influence: 8/16-10/18

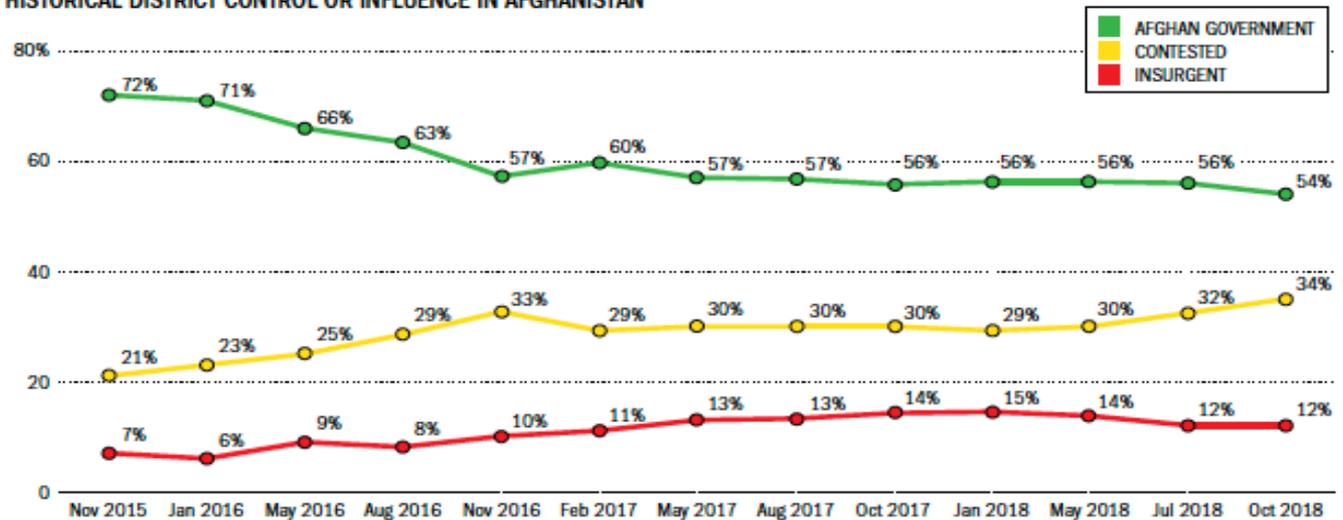
**HISTORICAL POPULATION CONTROL OR INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN**



Note: Component numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding. Afghan government and insurgent figures include control and influence.

Source: RS, response to SIGAR data call, 8/28/2016, 11/15/2016, 2/20/2017, 5/15/2017, 8/28/2017, 10/15/2017, 3/22/2018, 6/22/2018, 9/19/2018, and 12/20/2018; RS, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/16/2018.

**HISTORICAL DISTRICT CONTROL OR INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN**



Note: Component numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding. Afghan government and insurgent figures include control and influence.

Source: RS, response to SIGAR data call, 11/27/2015, 1/29/2016, 5/28/2016, 8/28/2016, 11/15/2016, 2/20/2017, 5/15/2017, 8/28/2017, 10/15/2017, 3/22/2018, 6/22/2018, 9/19/2018, and 12/20/2018; RS, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/16/2018.

Source: Adapted from Lead Inspector General, OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL, LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, OCTOBER 1, 2018–DECEMBER 31, 2018, p. 17.

# Resolute Support-LIG: District Stability Assessment 2018 - I

## Resolute Support District Stability Assessment, July and October 2018

	Population		Districts	
	July 2018	October 2018	July 2018	October 2018
<b>Afghan Government Influence</b>	31%	29%	151	145
<b>Afghan Government Control</b>	34%	34%	75	74
<b>Total Afghan Government Control or Influence</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>Total Contested</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Taliban Influence</b>	10%	9%	39	38
<b>Taliban Control</b>	2%	2%	10	12
<b>Total Taliban Control or Influence</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>50</b>

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Source: USFOR-A

The most recent Resolute Support District Stability Assessment, conducted in October 2018, found that the percentage of Afghan citizens who live in areas under government control or influence decreased slightly compared to the previous quarter. As shown in Table 3, 63 percent of Afghan citizens were assessed to be living in areas under government control or influence in October, compared to 65 percent in July. The net total of districts assessed as contested increased by six districts, and the net total of districts assessed as under Taliban control or influence increased by one district. The provinces with the greatest number of Afghans living under insurgent influence or control were Faryab, Kunduz, and Helmand.

In late 2017, USFOR-A and the Afghan government stated that a major objective of the South Asia strategy and Afghan Road Map was to increase security to the point that 80 percent of the Afghan population lived in areas under government control or influence by the end of 2019. A previous Lead IG quarterly report questioned the analytical foundation for that goal. The DoD stated this quarter that district and population control “are not indicative of the effectiveness of the South Asia strategy.” The DoD also attributed the lack of large changes in district and population control to the “uncertainty in the models that produce them.”

## SIGAR: District Stability Assessment as of October 22, 2018 - II

GOVERNMENT AND INSURGENT CONTROL WITHIN AFGHANISTAN AS OF OCTOBER 2018						
Control Status	Districts		Population		Territory	
	Number	%	In Millions	%	Sq Km	%
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>						
Control	74	18%	11.3	34%	104,000	16%
Influence	145	36%	9.9	30%	258,000	40%
<b>CONTESTED</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>171,000</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>INSURGENT</b>						
Control	12	3%	0.6	2%	40,000	6%
Influence	38	9%	3.0	9%	71,000	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>644,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Sq Km = square kilometers. Component numbers may not add to 100 because of rounding. Territory figures have been rounded by RS.

Source: RS, response to SIGAR data call, 12/20/2018; RS, response to SIGAR vetting, 10/11/2018.

Since SIGAR began receiving district-control data in November 2015, Afghan government control and influence over its districts has declined by more than 18 percentage points; contested districts have increased by about 13 points; and insurgent control or influence has risen by about five points.<sup>111</sup> A historical record of district control is shown in Figure 3.31.

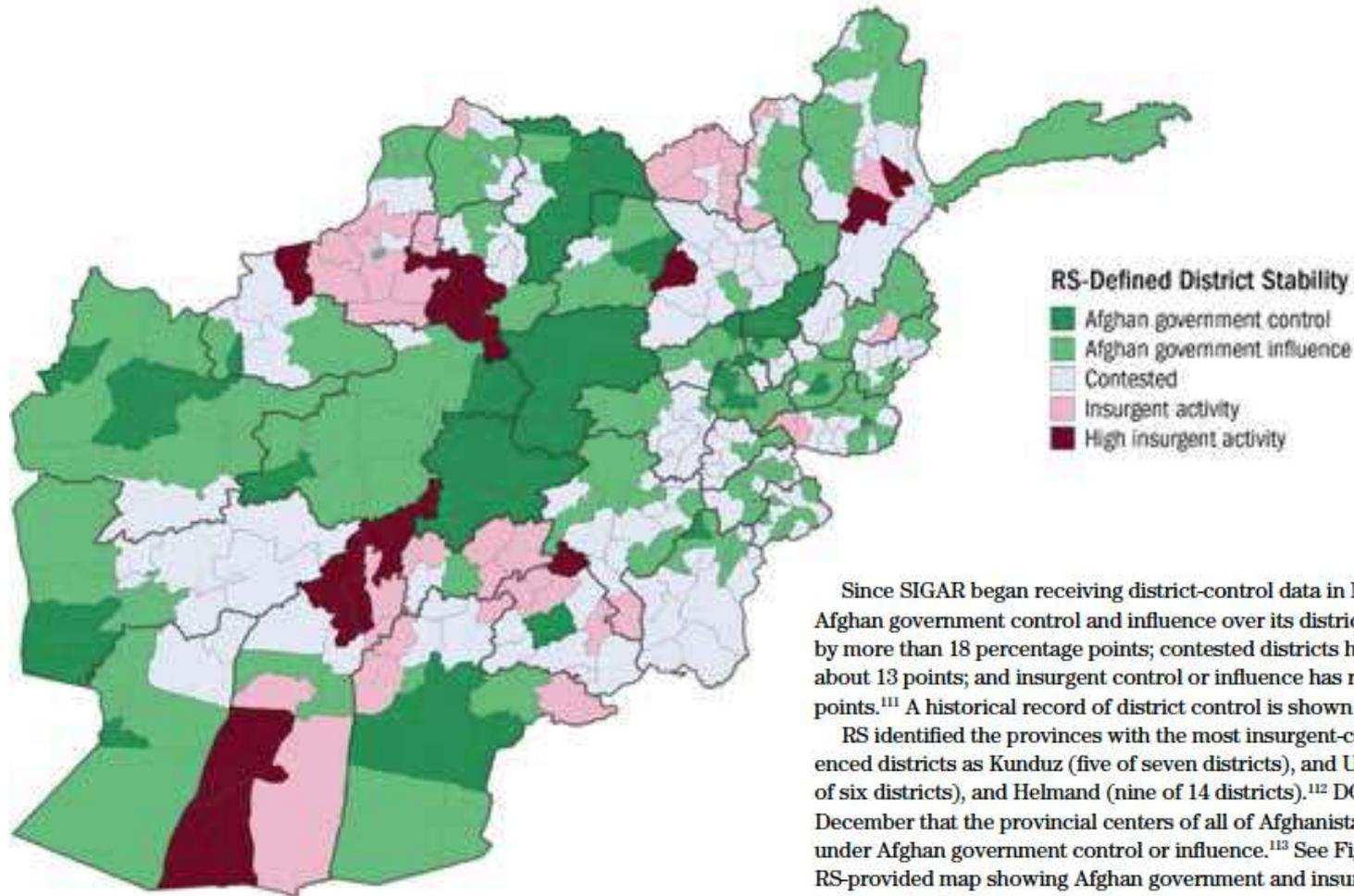
RS identified the provinces with the most insurgent-controlled or -influenced districts as Kunduz (five of seven districts), and Uruzgan (four of six districts), and Helmand (nine of 14 districts).<sup>112</sup> DOD reported in December that the provincial centers of all of Afghanistan's provinces are under Afghan government control or influence.<sup>113</sup> See Figure 3.32, for an RS-provided map showing Afghan government and insurgent control or influence by district.

As seen in Table 3.3 on the next page, RS reported that the Afghan government controlled or influenced 360,000 square kilometers (56.1%) of Afghanistan's total land area of roughly 644,000 square kilometers, down less than half a percentage point since last quarter. The insurgency controlled or influenced 111,000 square kilometers (17.3%) of the total land area, also down by roughly half a percentage point since last quarter. The remaining 171,000 square kilometers (26.6%) was contested by the government and insurgents, a one percentage-point increase since last quarter.<sup>114</sup>

Source: SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update, January 30, 2019, pp. 71-72.

# SIGAR: District Stability Assessment as of October 22, 2018 - I

## STABILITY LEVEL OF AFGHANISTAN'S 407 DISTRICTS AS OF OCTOBER 22, 2018



Since SIGAR began receiving district-control data in November 2015, Afghan government control and influence over its districts has declined by more than 18 percentage points; contested districts have increased by about 13 points; and insurgent control or influence has risen by about five points.<sup>111</sup> A historical record of district control is shown in Figure 3.31.

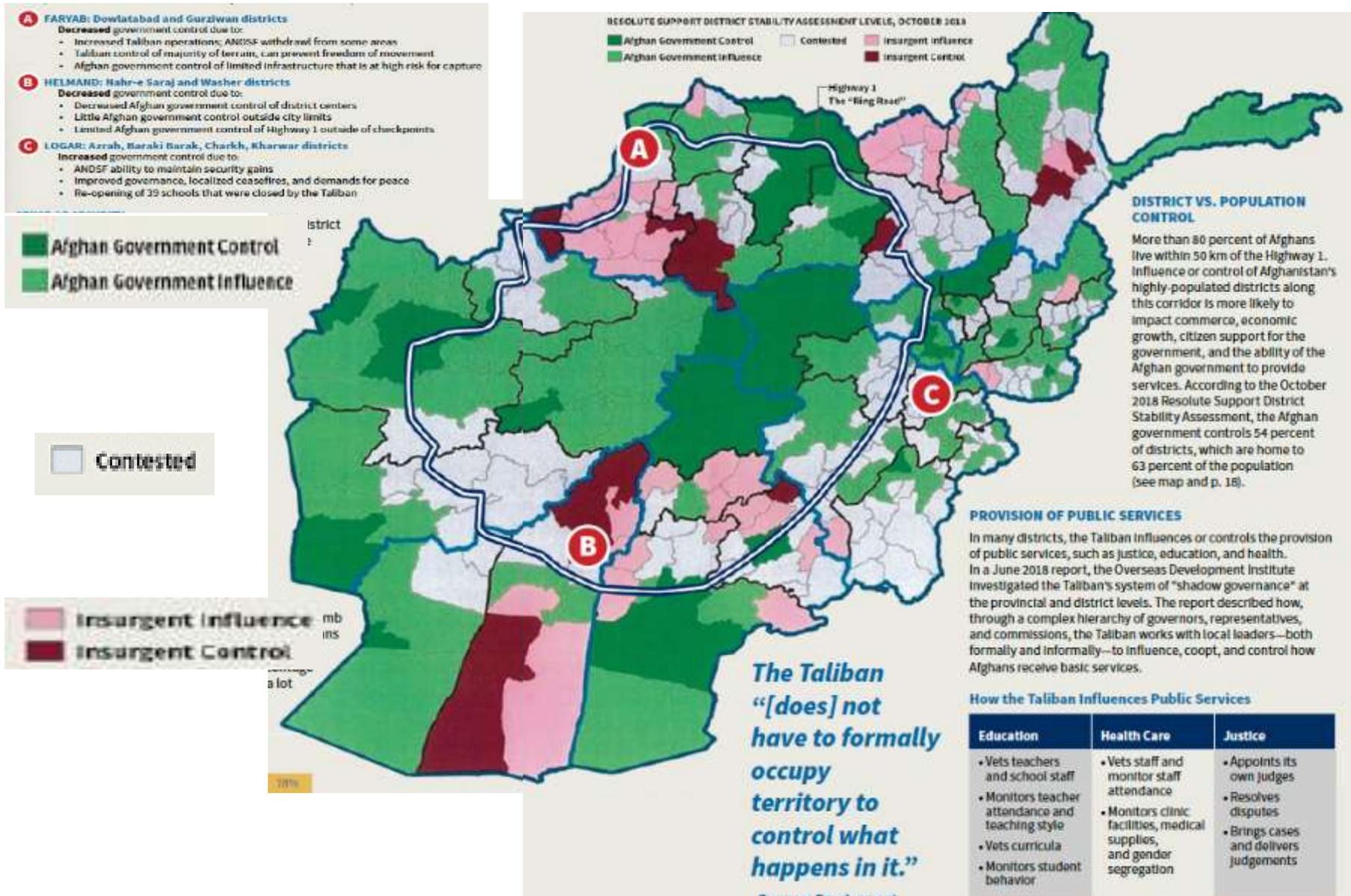
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Note: A district is assigned its district-stability level based on the overall trend of land-area/population control of each district as a whole.

Source: RS, response to SIGAR data call, 12/20/2018.

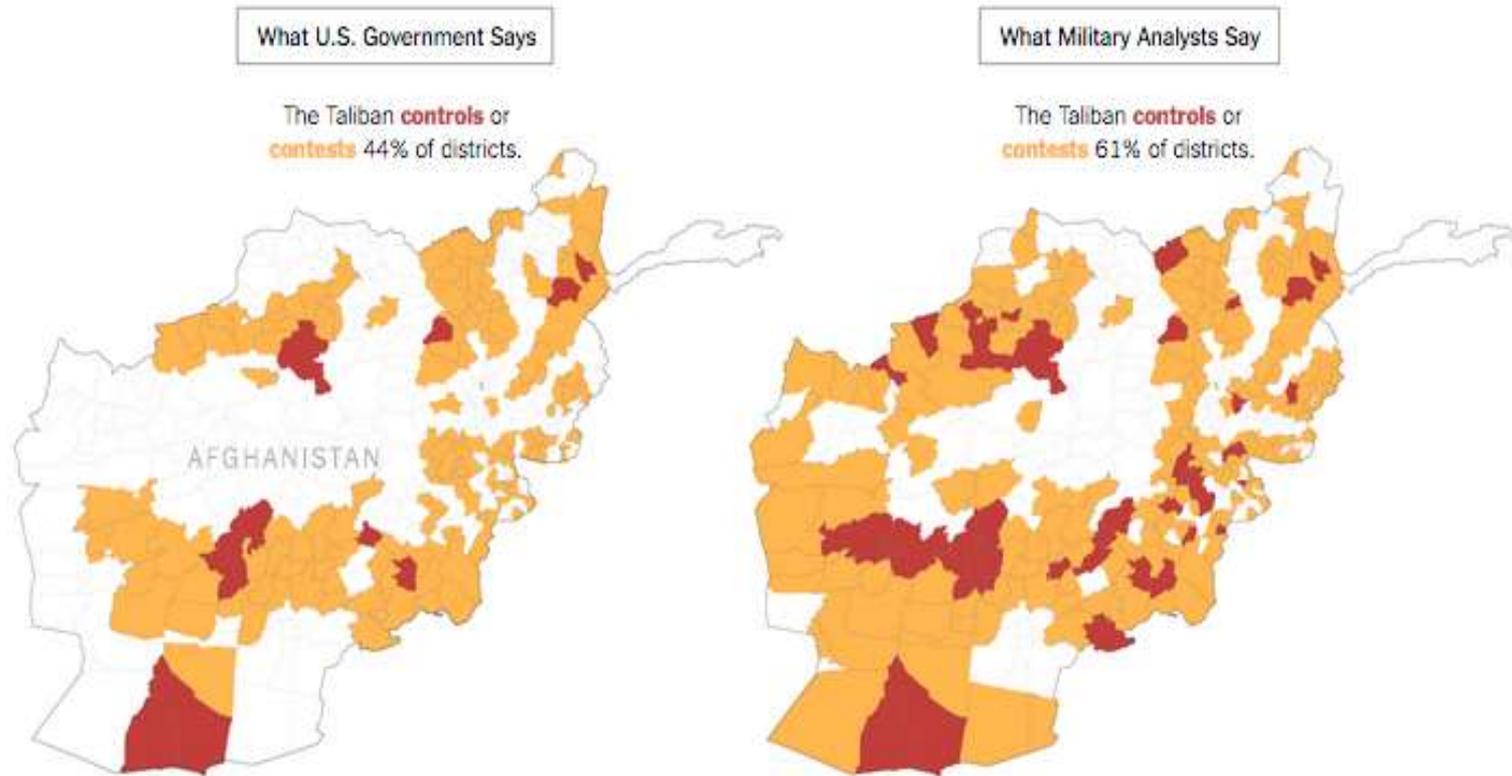
Source: SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update, January 30, 2019, p. 71.

# Resolute Support - LIG: District Stability Assessment 2018 - II



Source: Adapted from Lead Inspector General, OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL, LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS. OCTOBER 1, 2018–DECEMBER 31, 2018, pp. 22-23.

# SIGAR versus Long War Journal Estimates of Taliban Control: May 2018



By The New York Times | Sources: Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (U.S. government data); FDO's The Long War Journal (analysts' data)  
Notes: U.S. government data is as of May 15, 2018, and analysts' data is as of May 16, 2018. District boundaries are as-of 2014.

Notes: U.S. government data is as of May 15, 2018, and analysts' data is as of May 16, 2018. District boundaries are as of 2014

Source: ROD NORDLAND, ASH NGU and FAHIM ABED , How the U.S. Government Misleads the Public on Afghanistan, New York Times By SEPT. 8, 2018.

# Long War Journal on Estimates of Taliban Control - January 2019

## [Analysis: US military downplays district control as Taliban gains ground in Afghanistan](#)

BY [BILL ROGGIO](#) | January 31, 2019 | [@billroggio](#)

The Taliban has continued to make incremental gains in Afghanistan's provinces despite an uptick in US airstrikes during the past year. The US military downplayed the Taliban's gains, stating that this is "not indicative of effectiveness of the South Asia strategy or progress toward security and stability in Afghanistan." However, the last commander of US forces said less than two years ago that regaining control of 80 percent of Afghanistan's territory was crucial to defeating the Taliban.

The Taliban has increased its control or influence by seven districts, or 1.7 percent, since the summer, according to a report by the Special Investigator General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR). Taliban control of population has also increased by 1.7 percent between July and Oct. 2018.

SIGAR receives its data directly from Resolute Support, NATO's mission in Afghanistan, and the US Department of Defense. According to Resolute Support, the Afghan government controls or influences 219 of Afghanistan's 407 districts (53.8 percent), and insurgents (the Taliban) control or influence another 12.3 percent. The remaining 33.9 percent are contested.

FDD's *Long War Journal*, which has tracked the status of Afghanistan's districts since 2014, believes the security situation in Afghanistan and the status of the districts is worse than is being reported by Resolute Support.

*LWJ* assesses that the Afghan government controls 35.1 percent of Afghanistan's 407 districts, and the Taliban controls another 13.0 percent. The remaining 49.6 percent are contested, while seven districts (or 1.7%) cannot be accurately assessed at this time.

A major difference in Resolute Support and *LWJ*'s methodologies is that *LWJ* does not assess "influence," as influence is merely a measure of control. *LWJ* believes that Resolute Support uses influence to skew the data and provide a rosier picture of the security situation to prop up the Afghan government. On multiple occasions, *LWJ* has detected Resolute Support gaming the status of districts.

As the Taliban gains ground in Afghanistan, the Afghan National Security Defense Forces continues to shrink. According to SIGAR, the ANSDF "decreased by 3,635 personnel since last quarter and is at the lowest it has been since the RS [Resolute Support] mission began in January 2015."

The Taliban has also gained ground despite a marked uptick in US airstrikes. The US military "dropped 6,823 munitions in the first 11 months of 2018," according to SIGAR. "This year's figure was already 56% higher than the total number of munitions released in 2017 (4,361), and is more than five times the total in 2016."

### **Resolute Support says district control is not important. Last Resolute Support commander said it was.**

Resolute Support is now downplaying the importance of government control of Afghanistan's districts. According to SIGAR:

*"When providing district and population control data this quarter, DOD and RS reported for the first time that this data is "not indicative of effectiveness of the South Asia strategy or progress toward security and stability in Afghanistan." DOD and RS also reiterated that there is "some uncertainty in models that produce [the data]" and subjectivity in the assessments that underlie it."*

Yet, General John Nicholson, Resolute Support's last commander, said in Nov. 2017 that the goal of regaining control of 80 percent of Afghanistan's territory was crucial to defeating the Taliban. "This we believe is the critical mass necessary to drive the enemy to irrelevance, meaning they're living in these remote outlying areas, or they reconcile, or they die," Nicholson said, [according to Reuters](#).

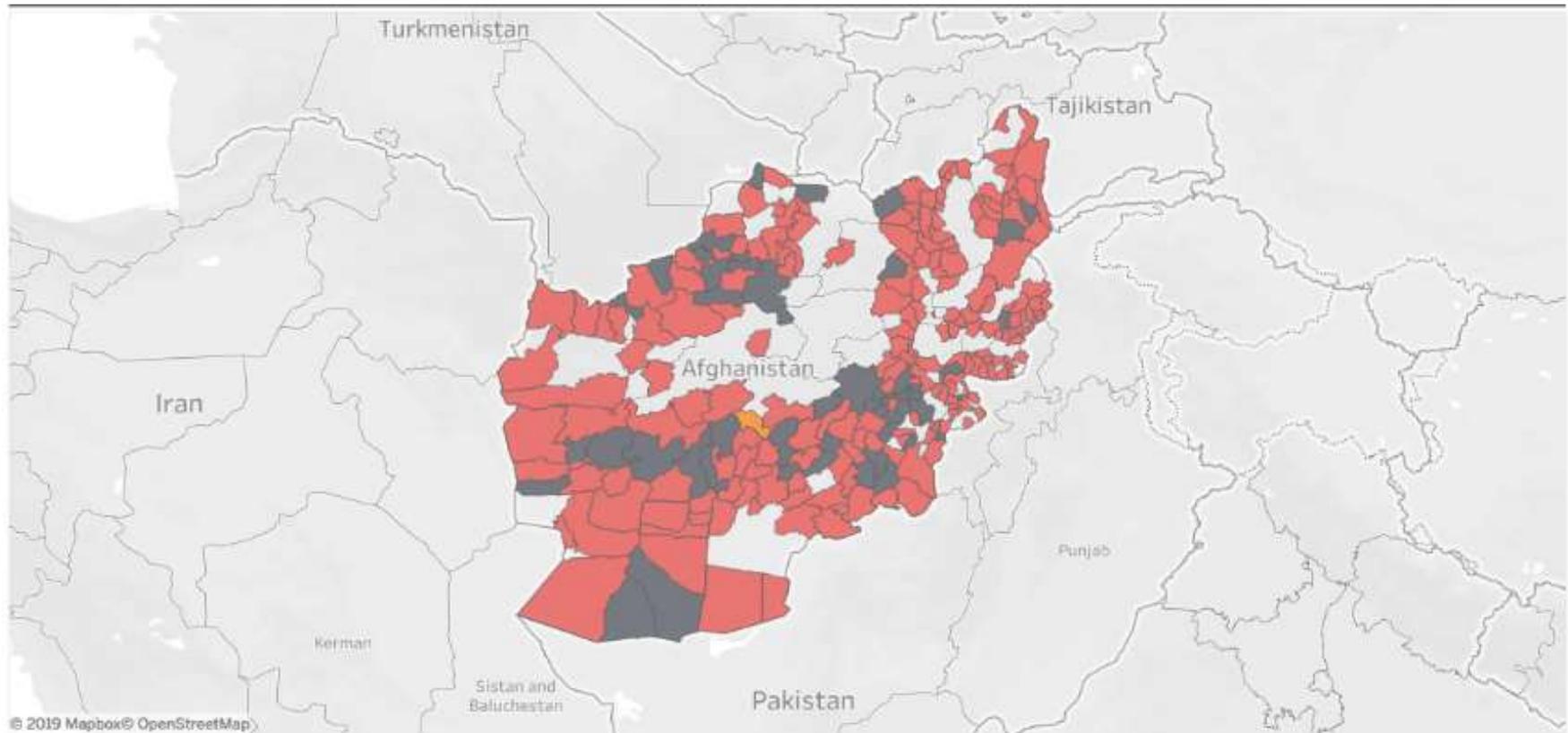
Resolute Support's attempt to downplay the importance of Taliban control is contrary to everything known about counterinsurgency. In Afghanistan, the Taliban has been adept at using areas under its control to further its goal of retaking control of the country. In areas the Taliban controls or contests, it raises taxes, produces opium, and recruits, indoctrinates, and trains fighters. It also uses these areas to stage attacks on districts, towns, and cities under government control.

This is not the first time that Resolute Support and the US military have downplayed the Taliban's control of Afghan districts. In 2016, after SIGAR noted that the Taliban was slowly gaining ground, Nicholson said that "the enemy is primarily in more rural areas that have less impact on the future of the country."

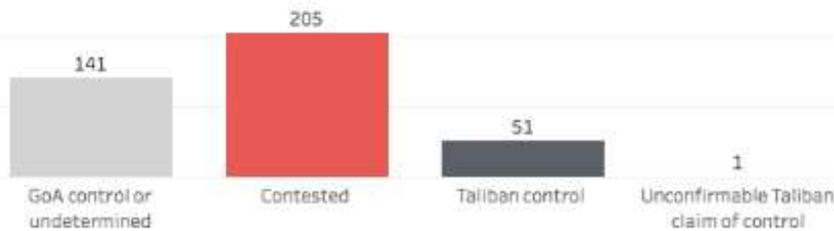
More than two years later, the Taliban continues to use these "rural areas that have less impact on the future of the country" to make gains.

Source: <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2019/01/analysis-us-military-downplays-district-control-as-taliban-gains-ground-in-afghanistan.php>.

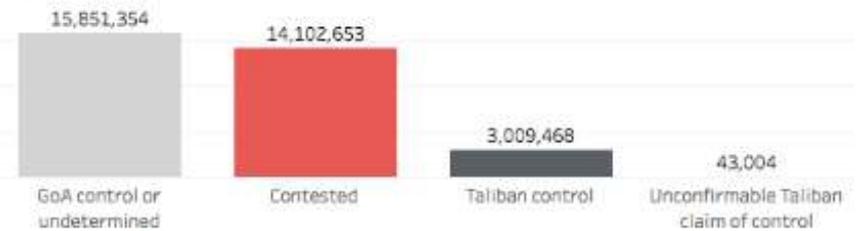
# Long War Journal Estimate of Taliban Control in April 2019



Districts



Population



Source: Mapping Taliban Control in Afghanistan, Created by Bill Roggio & Alexandra Gutowski, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/mapping-taliban-control-in-afghanistan>. See this *Long War Journal* site for full description of methodology.

# Tolo News Estimate of Taliban Control in July 4, 2019

## LWJ: Afghan Government Unable to Administer 64 Districts – July 4, 2019

The Afghan government is unable to administer 64 districts from the district centers, according to a recent survey. The 64 districts, which are located in 19 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, are either being administered remotely, or the district centers have been moved due to heavy fighting with the Taliban. The data track with an ongoing analysis of the security situation in Afghanistan's districts by *FDD's Long War Journal*.

The fact that a district cannot be administered from its district center is a clear indication that the government cannot control the district.

The information was gathered by *TOLONews*, which conducted a survey of the district governors. The names of 20 of the 64 districts which cannot be administered from its center were identified.

According to the survey, Faryab province takes the lead, with 9 of its 15 districts out of government control. Unfortunately the report did not name the 9 districts. However, this closely tracks with *LWJ's* analysis: 5 districts are Taliban controlled and 6 are contested.

Ghazni is next, with 8 districts outside of government control. Again the report did not name the districts. *LWJ's* analysis indicates that 11 of Ghazni's 19 district are Taliban controlled and the remaining 8 are contested. Note that *The New York Times* first reported on this phenomena in Ghazni; in Aug. 2017 it noted that 7 districts were being governed from Ghazni City. [Also see *LWJ* report, [Resolute Support obscures status of 7 Ghazni districts as 3 more fall to Taliban.](#)]

Helmand and Farah are next, with 7 districts each that cannot be administered properly. Again, the districts were not named in the report. *LWJ's* reporting indicates that 6 of Helmand's 13 districts are Taliban controlled, and the other 7 are contested; and 4 of Farah's 11 districts are Taliban controlled, and 6 more are contested.

The *TOLONews* report named 20 districts that are out of government control: 4 in Kandahar, 4 in Paktika, 4 in Kunduz, 3 in Baghlan, and 3 in Zabul. *LWJ* updated the status of 13 of these 20 districts from contested to Taliban controlled based on the data.

Again, the survey tracks closely to *LWJ's* analysis of the security situation in Afghanistan's districts. The new information puts *LWJ's* numbers at 63 districts under Taliban control, 1 district unconfirmed Taliban controlled, and 193 district contested. This means that nearly 16 percent of Afghanistan's districts are Taliban controlled, and 47 percent are contested.

Resolute Support Mission, NATO's command in Afghanistan, and the US military ceased reporting on the security situation in Afghanistan's districts in the fall of 2018. The two organizations claimed that the reporting was not indicative of progress in Afghanistan, and said that so-called peace talks with the Taliban was the real measure of success. However, the military's own reporting showed a slow but sure deterioration of security in Afghanistan's districts, which countered its narrative of success.

# SIGAR on Lack of Effective Afghan Governance – July 2019 - I

## NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

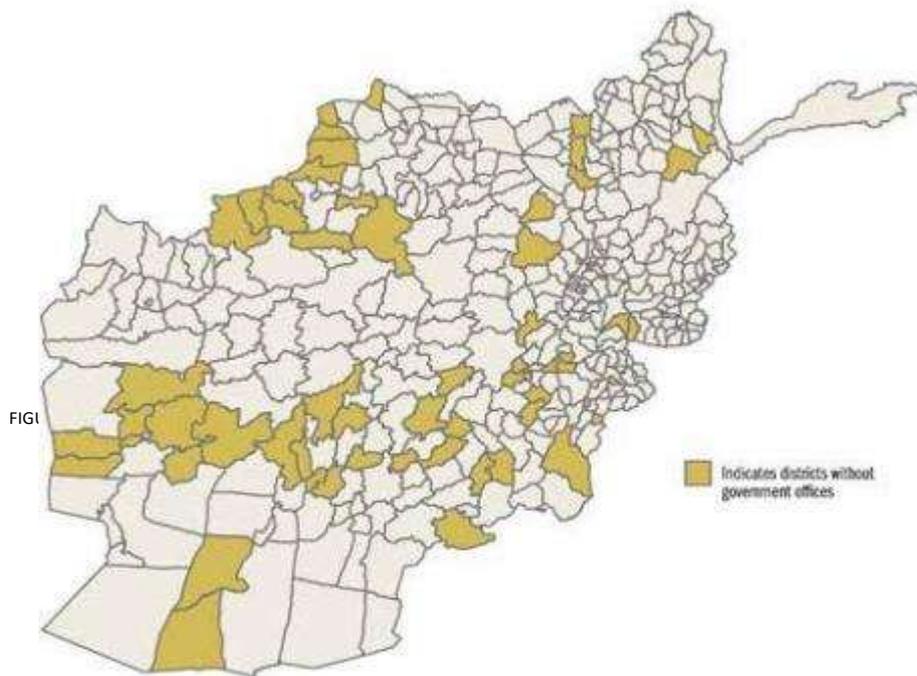
President Ghani inaugurated the first new parliament since 2011 (minus representatives from Kabul and Ghazni Provinces) on April 26, 2019.<sup>320</sup> The elections took place in October 2018, but the Afghan election-management bodies did not finalize the results for Kabul Province until May 14, more than six months later. The parliamentarians from Kabul Province were sworn in on May 15. State reports that a dispute over the selection of the new speaker of the lower house and other administrative positions has prevented parliament from passing any legislation since it reconvened.

Parliament's recent internal dysfunction may coincide with a broader marginalization of the institution vis a vis the executive branch. For example, in 2018, President Ghani issued 34 legislative acts by decree under emergency powers, while both houses of parliament only passed 14 laws.

In another example of the legislative branch's weakness, the UN reported also this quarter that the Afghan government, effective October 2018, suspended the salaries of parliamentarians who failed to declare their assets per the terms of the anticorruption law that President Ghani enacted by presidential legislative decree. (According to the UN, the salary suspension was followed by a "remarkable" increase in asset declarations by parliamentarians, showing the importance of political will for anticorruption reforms.) For 2018, at least, the executive branch appears to have taken the lead in developing the laws it then executes.

# SIGAR on Lack of Effective Afghan Governance – July 2019 - II

MEDIA REPORT: DISTRICTS WITHOUT AFGHAN CIVIL GOVERNMENT OFFICES



Note: This district map was adapted from the 5/29/2018 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) "Afghanistan administrative level 0-2 and UNAMA region boundary polygons, lines, and points" shapefile that included 399 districts. SIGAR used ArcGIS Pro 2.3 for this analysis and all layers were project to UTM 42N. Because of changing district boundaries, the following districts are not exact matches for the TOLONews list: Qala-e-Kah District, Farah Province; Shindand District, Herat Province; Khan Abad District, Kunduz Province; and Gomal District, Fardkha Province. Source: SIGAR, email communications with TOLONews, 7/2/2019, 7/3/2019.

## SUBNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

This quarter, the Afghan news organization TOLONews conducted an investigation on the presence of Afghan government institutions at the district level. In June, TOLONews interviewed local officials, members of parliament and provincial councils, and, in some cases, visited selected districts. TOLONews found that in 64 out of 364 official and 11 unofficial districts, the Afghan government's civil offices either were working outside the district (for example, a district administrator worked out of a location such as the province capital) or were no longer functional. Figure 3.39 shows the districts TOLONews reported with no Afghan government civil offices.

According to TOLONews, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) confirmed that in approximately 20 of these districts, the Afghan government had no government presence (civil and security) at all. SIGAR has not independently verified this information but the latter findings do conform to other information provided to SIGAR.

# SIGAR on SERVICE DELIVERY IN TALIBAN-CONTROLLED OR INFLUENCED AREAS – July 2019 - I

The Taliban have not ruled Afghanistan since 2001, but they still exert a heavy influence on the Afghan government's delivery of public services in many parts of the country. The Taliban seldom provide services themselves, but they reportedly can co-opt, modify, or choose to facilitate or hinder Afghan government services.

These observations—troubling given the Afghan government's need to improve perceptions of its legitimacy and effectiveness—emerge from studies conducted in the past two years by the Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and the World Bank. Although SIGAR has not independently verified these studies, they highlight a rarely acknowledged aspect of service delivery in Afghanistan: bargains with insurgents are often a necessary compromise when operating in areas they control or influence. The ODI study described the situation in 2018:

Aid agencies, the [Afghan] government and the international community seem worryingly unaware of [the growing Taliban efforts to control and influence service delivery], deeply unprepared and reluctant to engage with the Taliban, despite their growing influence on the ground, including over aid and government programs.

These studies have largely sought to describe the Taliban's role in service delivery rather than examine its political consequences. However, some analysts argue that the Taliban's approach is part of a larger governing strategy. According to the scholar Antonio Giustozzi, some Taliban leaders seem to believe involvement in service delivery can be a source of political legitimacy for them. Since the group has few resources to dedicate to providing services themselves, it is more efficient, according to Giustozzi, for the movement to "hijack" Afghan government-provided services.

Since December 2018, AAN and USIP have issued a series of case studies on life in Taliban-controlled or influenced districts. This research relied on semi-structured interviews with key informants from districts under varying levels of insurgent influence. As shown in Table 3.23, there was a pattern to the Taliban's activities across districts. The Taliban were reported to monitor schools, prohibit some school subjects such as science, promote others such as Islamic studies, restrict polio campaigns from going door-to-door but instead to operate from the village mosque, and run commissions that would register nongovernmental service providers.

As one USIP author summarized, service delivery in Taliban-controlled and -influenced areas is a "hybrid of state- and nongovernmental organization-provided services, operating according to Taliban rules." The Taliban have been both disrupters and advocates or facilitators of services. For example, the Taliban regularly threaten cell phone

# **SIGAR on SERVICE DELIVERY IN TALIBAN-CONTROLLED OR INFLUENCED AREAS – July 2019 - II**

providers to stop service at night. Conversely, the Taliban have threatened to attack Afghan government electrical infrastructure to force the government to provide electricity to villages under their control.

In multiple districts, the Taliban reportedly co-opted government services, taxing service providers, monitoring services, and presenting candidates for government jobs. These actions by the Taliban’s “shadow state” are parallel to, but in many ways parasitically dependent on, the formal Afghan government. In some cases, the Taliban appeared to advance community interests. For example, respondents in Andar District in Ghazni Province reported that the Taliban removed nonexistent or “ghost” teachers from the Afghan government’s roster. In other cases, the Taliban reportedly benefited from corruption. In Nad Ali District, Helmand Province, respondents said the Taliban collected ghost-teacher salaries.

The UK’s ODI and the World Bank published research in 2017 and 2018, respectively, showing that development programming can continue (in some cases, rather successfully) in Taliban-controlled or-influenced areas through bargains with insurgents. ODI, relying on interviews with 162 individuals, reported that the Taliban co-opted government- and aid agency- provided goods and services in areas under their control. The report says that Afghan government service delivery ministries have struck deals with local Taliban and that most provincial or district-level government health and education officials interviewed for the report said they were in direct contact with their Taliban counterparts.

Similarly, an Afghan government official interviewed for the recent AAN/ USIP study of Dasht-e Archi District, Kunduz Province described how the responsibilities for school monitoring were divided between the government and the Taliban, depending on which group controlled the areas in which the school resided.

The World Bank wrote that where the Taliban was relatively reliant upon local support, agreements with local elites emerged to support delivery of government-funded health and education services. The World Bank found that after launching attacks on schools in 2006–2008, the group has since changed to attempting to influence state schools through local-level negotiations with Ministry of Education officials. Some Taliban were thus bargaining about co-opting rather than closing schools.

While the AAN/USIP, ODI, and World Bank studies offered similar descriptions of Taliban involvement in service delivery, only the ODI study drew strong conclusions on the consequences for Taliban governance. The World Bank demurred on a critical question, writing that their study did not address “the question of whether or how service

# SIGAR on SERVICE DELIVERY IN TALIBAN-CONTROLLED OR INFLUENCED AREAS – July 2019 - III

delivery may contribute to, or undermine, state-building, peace-building, or conditions of fragility,” as they saw improving the delivery of services as a worthy goal in its own right. However, ODI argued that the bargains around service delivery were indicative of a coherent Taliban governing strategy. According to ODI, the Taliban’s involvement in service delivery allows the group to exert influence beyond the areas under its direct control in furtherance of its goal to impose its rule.

Role		Ancar District, Ghazni Province	Hakumat-e Nad Ali District, Helmand Province	Obeh District, Herat Province	Dasht-e Archi District, Kunduz Province	Achin District, Nangarhar Province*
<b>Education</b>	Supervise/monitor schools	X	X	X	X	X
	Censor school books/subjects	X	X	X	X	X
	Involved in selecting teachers/monitoring teacher performance	X		X	X	X
<b>Health</b>	Health facilities agree to treat Taliban fighters	X	X	X	X	X
	Monitor health centers	X			X	X
	Post guards at health facilities	X				
	Involved in health staffing		X			
<b>Revenue collection</b>	Restrict or influence vaccinations	X	X	X		X
	Tax businesses/population	X	X	X	X	X
	Tax service providers	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Communications</b>	Restrict cell phone services	X	X	X	X	X
	Restrict television and/or radio (though often ignored)		X	X	X	X
<b>Justice</b>	Operate Taliban courts	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Administration</b>	Appoint resident shadow governor	X		X	X	
	Service-related shadow directors or registration of service providers	X	X	X	X	X
	Organize locals for small projects	X				X

Note: \*According to the Afghanistan Analysts Network, the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) is presently the principal antigovernment armed group in this district and the Afghan government mostly controls the district. This graphic summarizes the Taliban’s approach to service delivery during their time of control between 2009 and 2015 rather than IS-K’s uniformly opposed approach to state service delivery. For example, IS-K is reported to have run its own health clinic during but were opposed to state-funded health services.

Source: Afghanistan Analysts Network, “One Land, Two Rules (1): Service delivery in insurgent-affected areas, an introduction,” 12/6/2018; Afghanistan Analysts Network, “One Land, Two Rules (2): Delivering public services in insurgency-affected Obeh district of Herat province,” 12/9/2018; Afghanistan Analysts Network, “One Land, Two Rules (3): Delivering public services in insurgency-affected Dasht-e Archi district in Kunduz province,” 2/26/2019; Afghanistan Analysts Network, “One Land, Two Rules (4): Delivering public services in embedded Achin district in Nangarhar province,” 3/25/2019; Afghanistan Analysts Network, “One Land, Two Rules (6): Delivering public services in insurgency-affected Nad Ali district of Helmand province,” 6/2/2019; Afghanistan Analysts Network, “One Land, Two Rules (7): Delivering public services in insurgency-affected Ancar district in Ghazni province,” 8/13/2019.

# Long War Journal Estimate of Taliban Control as of August 7, 2019



**Methodology:** The primary data and research behind this are based on open-source information, such as press reports and information provided by government agencies and the Taliban. This is a living map that LWJ frequently updates as verifiable research is conducted to support control changes. Any “Unconfirmed” district colored orange has some level of claim-of-control made by the Taliban, but either has not yet been—or can not be— independently verified by LWJ research. A “Contested” district may mean that the government may be in control of the district center, but little else, and the Taliban controls large areas or all of the areas outside of the district center. A “Controlled” district may mean the Taliban is openly administering a district, providing services and security, and also running the local courts. Beginning in Jan. 2018, LWJ incorporated district-level data provided by the Special Investigator General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, which is based on assessments by Resolute Support, NATO’s command in Afghanistan. Resolute Support/SIGAR has five assessment levels: insurgent controlled, insurgent influenced, contested, government influenced, and government controlled. LWJ does not maintain an “influenced” assessment for the districts, and simply has three assessment levels: insurgent controlled, contested, and government controlled.

LWJ considers the influenced assessment to equate to contested. The reasoning is that if the Taliban wield influence in, say 30% or 70% of a district, the end result is the same. Neither the government, nor the Taliban, fully control the district, and it is therefor contested.

LWJ uses the following methodology to reconcile SIGAR/Resolute Support’s information with LWJ’s data:

- If RS/SIGAR assessment of a district matches LWJ’s assessment, there are no changes.
- If RS/SIGAR identifies a district as Insurgent Controlled and LWJ identifies as contested, then LWJ assesses the district as Insurgent Controlled (based on review of available information).
- If RS/SIGAR identifies a district as Insurgent Influenced and LWJ determines it to be Contested, LWJ assesses the district as Contested.
- If RS/SIGAR identifies a district as Contested and LWJ has no determination, LWJ accepts RS/SIGAR’s assessment and identifies the district Contested.
- If RS/SIGAR identifies a district as GIRoA Influenced, and LWJ has information there is significant Taliban activity in the district (frequent attacks on police and military, attacks on the district center or military bases, closing schools, etc.), then LWJ assesses the district as Contested.
- If RS/SIGAR identified a district as GIRoA Influenced, and LWJ cannot see evidence of Taliban activity, LWJ assesses the district as GIRoA Controlled.

# **Estimates of Combat Activity as Largely Useless Indicators of the Trends in the War**

# Estimates of Combat Activity Have Very Limited Value and Are Currently Used to Disguise a Lack of Progress - I

Afghanistan is not a war against terrorism. While it is certainly ideologically driven, it is being fought as a classic counterinsurgency conflict in which the insurgents are seeking to win control of the government and the nation. While experts differ over the extent of Taliban influence and control, they do not differ over the fact that it has been able to rebuild itself as a major military force, and has been able to achieve a near stalemate with Afghan security forces in spite of the train and assist, direct land combat support, and massive increases in combat air support they have had from the U.S. and its allies in Resolute Support.

As noted in the previous section, this has been a major factor in the decision to cease issuing Resolute Support and official U.S. estimates of the relative control and influence of the government and the Taliban. They have substituted a different set of metrics called Enemy Initiated Attacks (EIAs) or Effective Enemy Attacks (EEAs). As SIGAR states in its July 31, 2019 report to Congress, "According to RS, enemy-initiated attacks are defined as all attacks (direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire, IED, and mine explosions, etc.) initiated by insurgents that are reported as [significant activities] (SIGACTs...Resolute Support labels an enemy-initiated attack as "effective" if it causes a casualty."

These EIA and EEA data can provide a crude illustration of the different levels of threat activity in given parts of Afghanistan, but they are not really relevant to assessing the course of the counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, and seem to be designed to deliberately fake or exaggerate Afghan government success. They combine trivial clashes and serious battles, and define casualties as measures of effectiveness rather than increases or losses of Taliban control. As a result, the patterns at best approach the status of statistical "noise," rather than show the patterns in the war.

Such EIA and EEA data are particularly useless as long as U.S. air and land combat support of Afghan forces can keep the Taliban from scoring lasting victories. The increase in combat air support since 2015, and the improved "forward deployed" focus of the train and assist mission in aiding actual Afghan combat units or Kandaks, has so far achieved this goal.

The Taliban are still fighting at levels where they can expand their influence and control in the countryside, but cannot achieve lasting defeats of government military forces in battles for District and Provincial capitals or Kabul. So far, the U.S. has been able to support elite elements of the Afghan Army with train and assist forces, land combat forces, and airpower, and either defend such centers or allow their recovery after temporary Taliban gains. As a result, the Taliban tends to severely restrict its number of direct open attacks on Afghan forces. It instead concentrates on winning influence and political-economic control over the population in the countryside, carrying out acts of terrorism and assassination in population centers, and accepting defeat in serious combat encounters after it has demonstrated that it does have significant combat power and has broadly intimidated the Afghan population and signaled that the U.S. has not scored any form of lasting gains or victory.

# Estimates of Combat Activity Have Very Limited Value and Are Currently Used to Disguise a Lack of Progress - II

Quite frankly, it is hard to believe that the analysts, commanders, and policymakers that prepare and use such EIA and EEA data do not realize this, and issuing it reflects directly on their professional integrity.

Other metrics further illustrate the extent to which the the EIA and EEA data do not provide a useful measure of the levels of violence. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) comes far closer to providing such indicators. ACLED is “a disaggregated conflict collection, analysis, and crisis-mapping project” funded by the State Department.

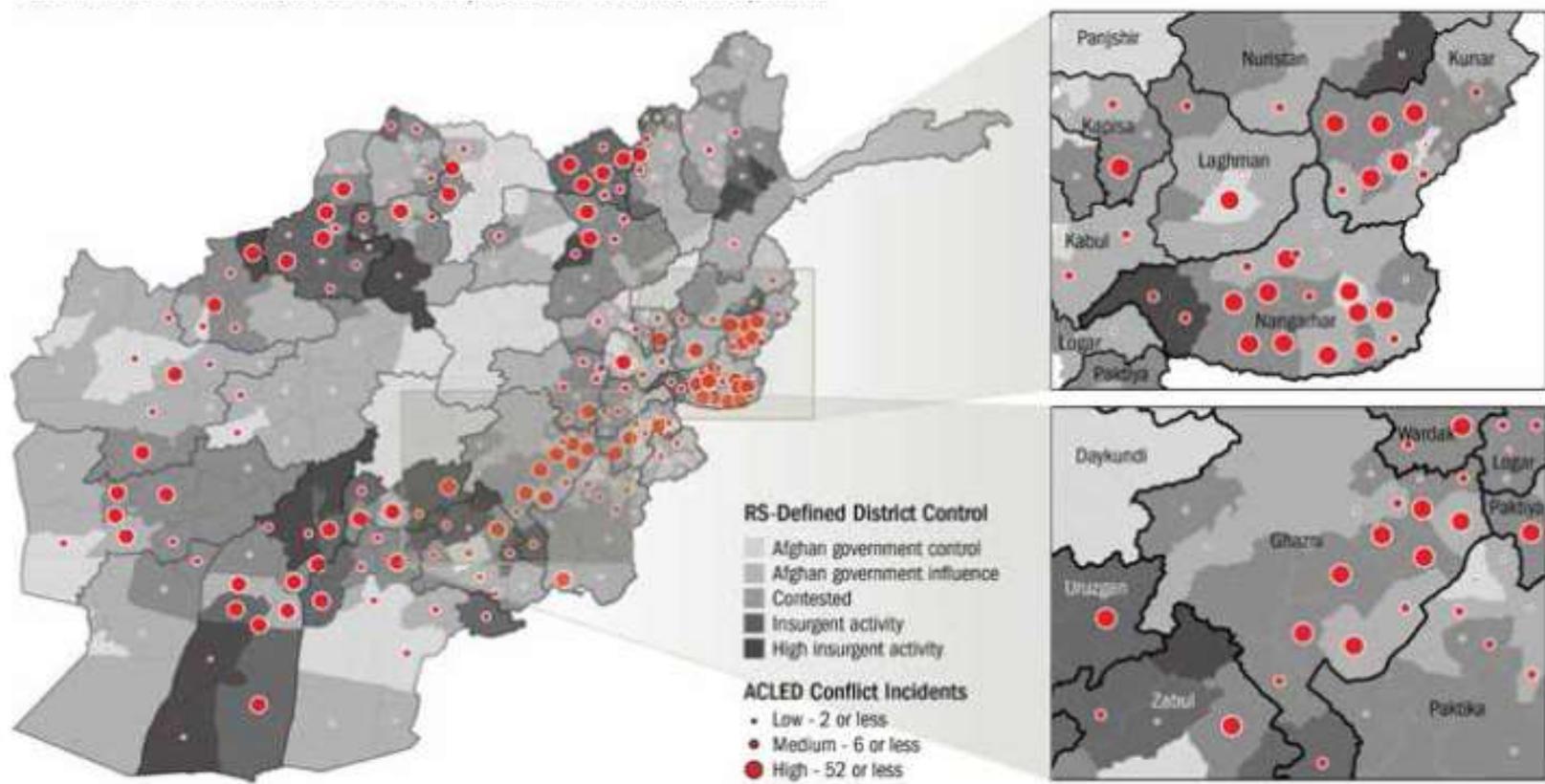
“The project collects the dates, actors, types of violence, locations, and fatalities of all political violence, protest, and select non-violent, politically important incidents across several regions, as reported from open, secondary sources. ACLED’s aim is to capture the modes, frequency, and intensity of political violence and opposition as it occurs. ACLED considers the event data it collects as falling into three categories and six subcategories: ‘violent events,’ including battles, explosions/remote violence, and violence against civilians; ‘demonstrations,’ including protests and riots; or ‘nonviolent actions,’ including strategic developments (agreements, arrests, or looting/property destruction).”

The charts and maps in this section provide a comparison of both recent EIA/EEA and ACLED data. The contrast is striking. SIGAR’s July 31, 2019 report states that, “This quarter’s EIA data shows that enemy attacks have increased over the last few months, following a violent winter, though this spring appears to be slightly less violent compared to spring 2018. **RS reported 6,445 enemy-initiated attacks this quarter (March 1–May 31, 2019). This period’s figures reflect a 9% increase compared to the preceding three months (December 1, 2018–February 28, 2019), but a 10% decrease compared to the EIA reported during the same period last year (March 1–May 31, 2018).**”

As the charts at the end of this section show, SIGAR also reports that, “ACLED recorded 2,801 incidents in Afghanistan this quarter (March 1– May 31, 2019). **This figure reflects a 66% increase in incidents compared to the same period in 2018 (1,691 incidents).** Unlike RS’s EIA and EEIA data, ACLED incidents include the violent and nonviolent activity of all the parties to the conflict, though violent activity made up 98% of the recorded incidents this quarter (battles, 72%; explosions/remote violence, 23%; violence against civilians, 3%). The data show that this significant year-on-year change was mainly driven by an increase in the number of battles recorded this quarter (2,026) versus 962 recorded during March–May 2018. USFOR-A said this is likely due to the increase in ANDSF operational tempo this quarter.

Elsewhere in the SIGAR report, however, SIGAR only counts 5 major actions by government forces between May and July 2019, and five actions by anti-government forces (SIGAR, July 31, 2019, p. 64). In a war for hearts and minds, the EIA and EEA data seem useless even as indicators of dead bodies.

# Resolute Support Estimate of Violent Incidents vs. District Control: August 1-October 31, 2018



Note: The district map was adapted from the 2012 Afghan Geodesy and Cartography Head Office (AGCHO) shapefile that included 399 districts. Adjustments, some approximate, were made to data for districts that were whole in AGCHO's 399-district set but that were split in RS's 407-district set. See R.L. Helms, District Lookup Tool, <https://arcg.is/1bCjGv>, accessed 10/14/2018, for differences amongst district sets. This 407-district set was used to aggregate RS-provided district control data and Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) incident data. SIGAR used ArcGIS Pro 2.2 for this analysis and all layers were projected to UTM 42N. ACLED data showing political conflict and protest data between 8/1/2018, and 10/31/2018 was used in order to match RS's district-control reporting period. ACLED data was sorted to the district-level by using a geo-precision code of 1 or 2 and incidents were summed. This left 1,658 district-level incidents for analysis. To create the map, incidents were categorized into three classes using the quantile method. The quantile method produces an equal number of observations per class to facilitate comparative analysis, but the interval of the class must therefore be variable.

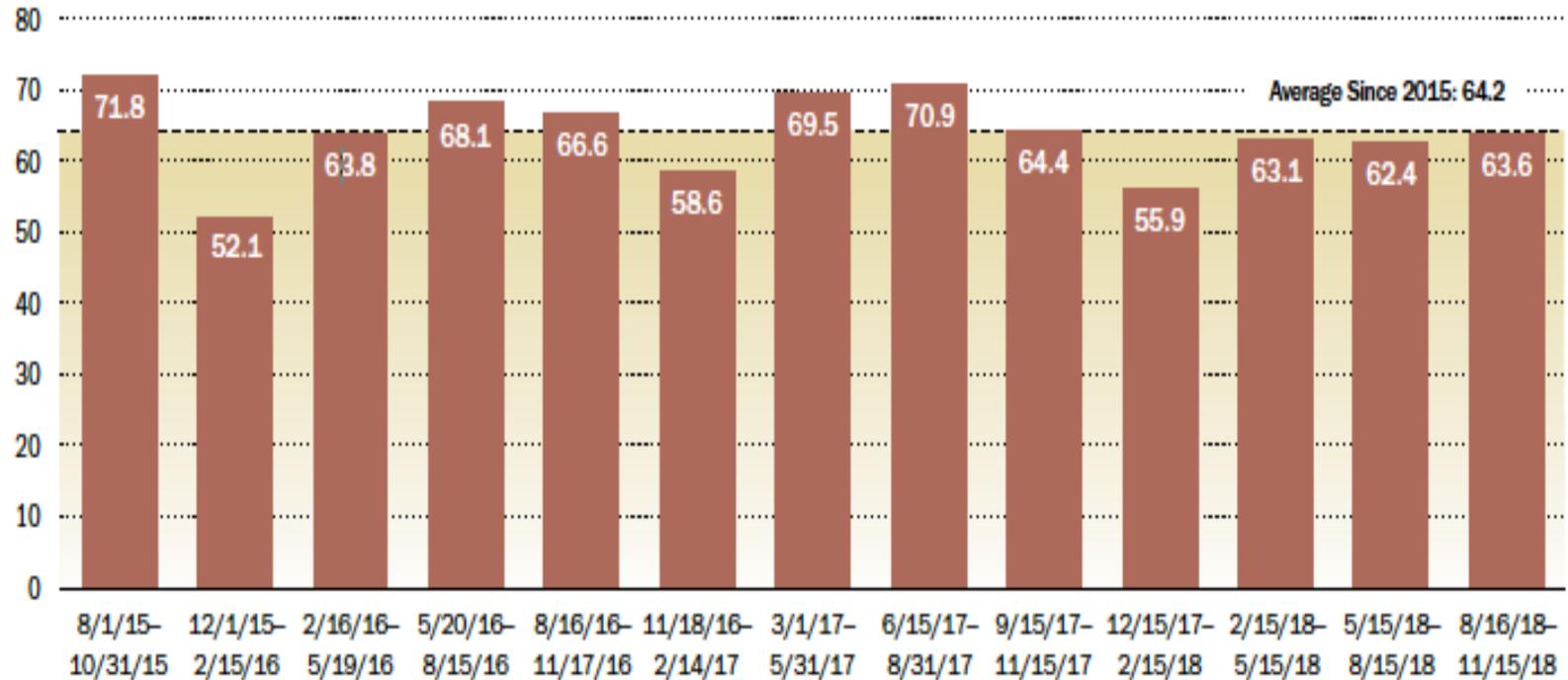
Source: RS, response to SIGAR data call, 12/20/2018; ACLED, South Asia 2016-Present dataset, 8/1/2018–10/31/2018, available online at <https://www.acleddata.com/>; SIGAR, analysis of ACLED- and RS-provided data, 1/2019.

Source: Source: SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update, January 30, 2019, p. 73.

# UN Estimate of Security Incidents: 2015-2018

## Incidents: 2016-2018: 1225 Report: 1/2019

AVERAGE DAILY SECURITY INCIDENTS BY UN REPORTING PERIOD, SINCE 2015



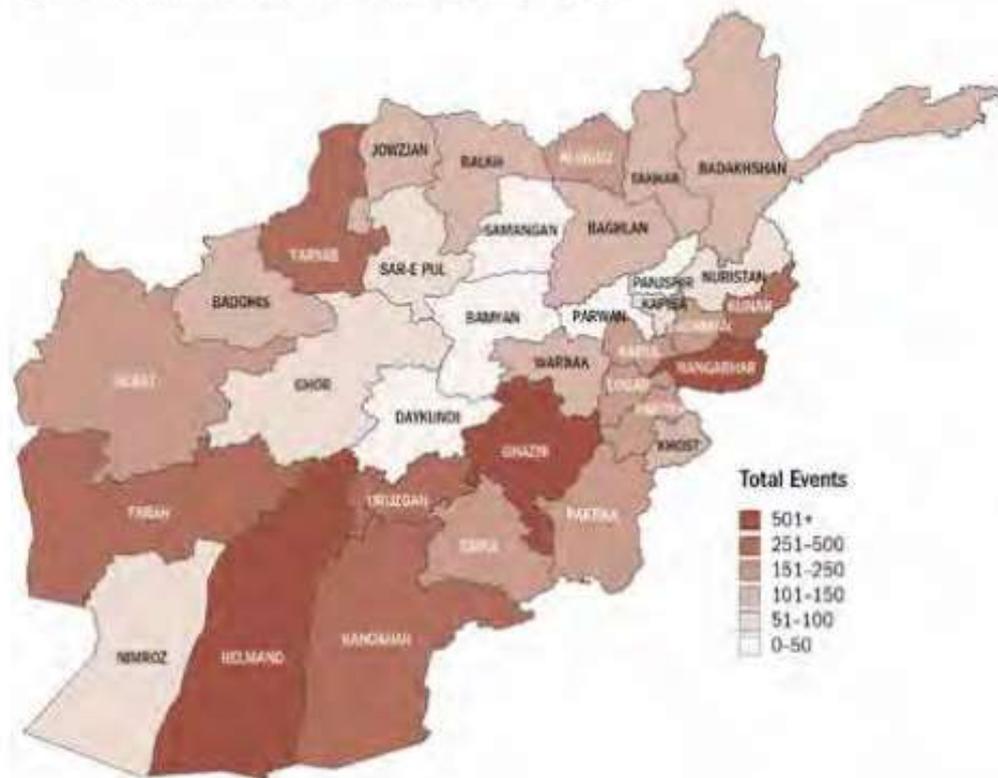
Note: UN reporting periods occasionally vary, leading to some gaps in data.

Source: UN, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, reports of the Secretary-General, 12/10/2015, p. 5; 3/7/2016, p. 6; 6/10/2016, p. 4; 9/7/2016, p. 5; 12/13/2016, p. 4; 3/3/2017, p. 4; 6/15/2017, p. 4; 9/15/2017, p. 4; 12/15/2017, p. 5; 2/27/2018, p. 5; 6/6/2018, p. 5; 9/10/2018, p. 5; 12/7/2019, p. 5; SIGAR, analysis of UN-provided data, 12/2018.

Source: Source: SIGAR, Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update, January 30, 2019, p. 75.

# ACLED Reported Security Related Events: 2018

ACLED-RECORDED SECURITY-RELATED EVENTS IN 2018



Source: ACLED, South Asia 2016–Present dataset, 1/1/2018–12/31/2018, available online at <https://www.acleddata.com/>; SIGAR, analysis of ACLED data, 4/2019.

Source: Excerpted from SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to Congress, Reconstruction Update*, April 30, 2019, pp. 76-77.

SIGAR also analyzes security incident data from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), which records district-level data of political violence and protest incidents across Afghanistan. For consistency with RS's enemy-initiated attacks data, SIGAR is presenting ACLED data at the provincial level this quarter (see Figure 3.32) and chose a date range for the data in alignment with RS's reporting period (January 1–December 31, 2018).

ACLED recorded 7,399 security-related events in Afghanistan in 2018, roughly the same as the 7,345 recorded in 2017. The three provinces with the most events were unchanged from 2017 to 2018: Nangarhar, Ghazni, and Helmand. The events occurring in these three provinces accounted for 35% of 2018's total events.<sup>108</sup> Eight of the top 10 provinces with the most ACLED-recorded security-related events in 2018 were also within the top 10 provinces where RS recorded the most enemy-initiated attacks in 2018 (Helmand, Faryab, Faryab, Uruzgan, Kandahar, Herat, Ghazni, and Nangarhar).<sup>111</sup>

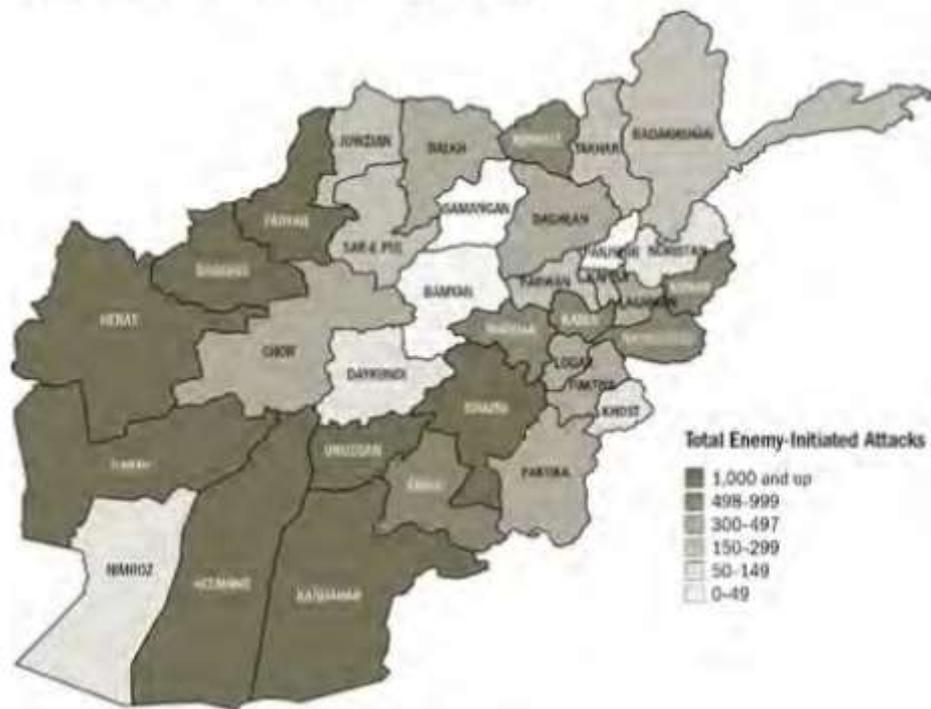
ACLED recorded 2,234 security-related events over the winter months (December 1, 2018–February 28, 2019), a roughly 39% increase compared to the 1,610 events reported during the same period one year prior.<sup>102</sup> The three provinces with the most security-related events were Helmand, Kandahar, and Nangarhar.<sup>103</sup> Much of the increase in events this reporting period compared to the same period the year before was due to increases in events reported in Kandahar and Helmand Provinces.<sup>104</sup>

### What is ACLED?

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is "a disaggregated conflict collection, analysis, and crisis-mapping project" funded by the State Department. The project collects the dates, actors, types of violence, locations, and fatalities of all political violence, protest, and select non-violent, politically important events across several regions, as reported from open, secondary sources. ACLED's aim is to capture the modes, frequency, and intensity of political violence and opposition as it occurs.

ACLED considers the event data it collects as falling into three categories "violent events," "demonstrations," or "nonviolent actions." Within these categories, ACLED codes their events as: (1) Battles, (2) Explosions/ Remote Violence, (3) Protests, (4) Riots, (5) Strategic Developments, and (6) Violence against Civilians.

# Resolute Support Estimate of Enemy Initiated Attacks: 2018



Source: RS, response to SIGAR data call, 4/1/2019; SIGAR, analysis of RS provided data, 4/2019.

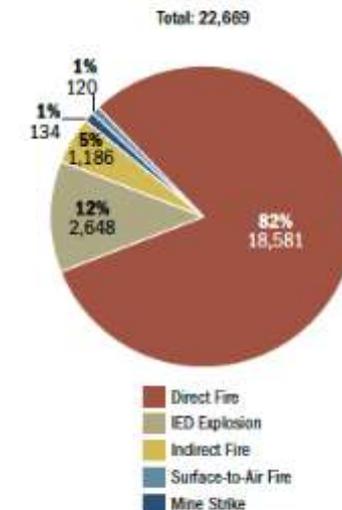
**IS-K Attacks Continue to Decrease**  
 The number of IS-K-claimed attacks decreased this quarter. According to ACLED, the group claimed three attacks in Afghanistan this quarter (October 2, 2018, to January 15, 2018) that killed 20 people, compared to 14 claimed attacks last quarter (July 16 to October 1, 2018) that killed 96 people. However, there were 74 attacks this quarter conducted by unidentified armed groups—some of which could have been IS-K—that killed 220 people. These unclaimed attacks included the major attack on a gathering of Sunni clerics in Kabul on November 20 that killed 55 people and wounded 94.

## Enemy-Initiated Attacks

According to RS, “enemy-initiated attacks are defined as all attacks (direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire, IED and mine explosions, etc.) initiated by insurgents that are reported as [significant activities] (SIGACTs).”<sup>144</sup> RS reported 22,669 enemy-initiated attacks (EIA) in Afghanistan in 2018, with 4,374 (19%) of them occurring in the last two months of the year (November 1 to December 31, 2018).<sup>145</sup> RS reported 6,245 EIA this quarter (November 1, 2018–January 31, 2019). This reporting period’s figures reflect an average of 2,082 EIA per month, a 19% increase in EIA compared to the average monthly EIA last reporting period (August 16 to October 31, 2018).<sup>146</sup>

As seen in Figure 3.30, most of the attacks in 2018, (13,828, or 61%), occurred in eight of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces: Badghis, Farah, Faryab, Glazni, Helmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Herat. Of these provinces, Helmand and Badghis experienced the greatest increase in EIA since October 31 (96% and 30%, respectively). The most violent province in terms of EIA shifted toward the end of the year, with the most EIA reported by far in Helmand (2,861), followed by Farah (1,801), and Badghis (1,798)

## ENEMY-INITIATED ATTACKS IN 2018 BY ATTACK TYPE



Source: RS, response to SIGAR data call, 4/1/2019.

Provinces. Last quarter’s data showed Farah with the most reported EIA, followed by Helmand and Faryab Provinces.<sup>147</sup>

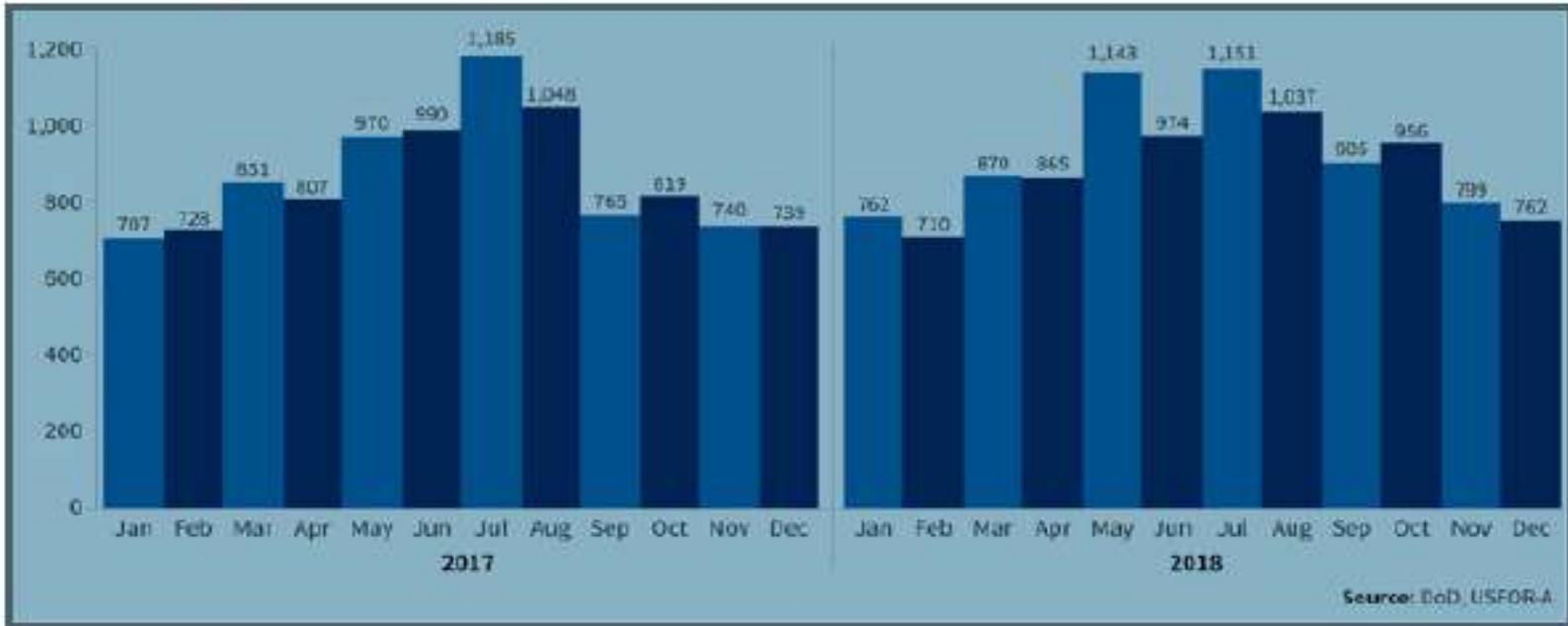
Figure 3.31 shows that the most common methods of attack for the EIA in 2018 were direct fire (82% of EIA), followed by IED explosions (12%), and indirect fire (5%).<sup>148</sup> SIGAR will continue to monitor EIA to track trends over time.

For the first time this quarter, SIGAR requested *effective enemy-initiated attacks* (EEIA) data from RS. Of the 22,669 EIA reported in 2018, RS said there were 10,900 EEIA, meaning about 48% of total EIA resulted in ANDSF, Coalition, or civilian casualties. RS recorded 2,384 EEIA this reporting period (November 1, 2018–January 31, 2019), about 38% of total EIA for the same period.<sup>149</sup> DOD has previously offered the caveat that ANDSF units do not always report insurgent attacks that do not result in casualties. As such, the number of EIA could be higher than what RS has reported, which would also impact the percentage of EEIA to EIA.<sup>150</sup>

Each type of incident data presented here has advantages and limitations: RS reported enemy-initiated attack data comes from an official source, but is only available unclassified at the provincial level and does not include U.S. and ANDSF initiated attacks on the enemy; Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project’s (ACLED) events data can be disaggregated to the district level, to a variety of security incident types, and to all the parties to the conflict, but depends entirely on media reporting of security-related events.

# Resolute Support: Effective Enemy Attacks: 2016-2018

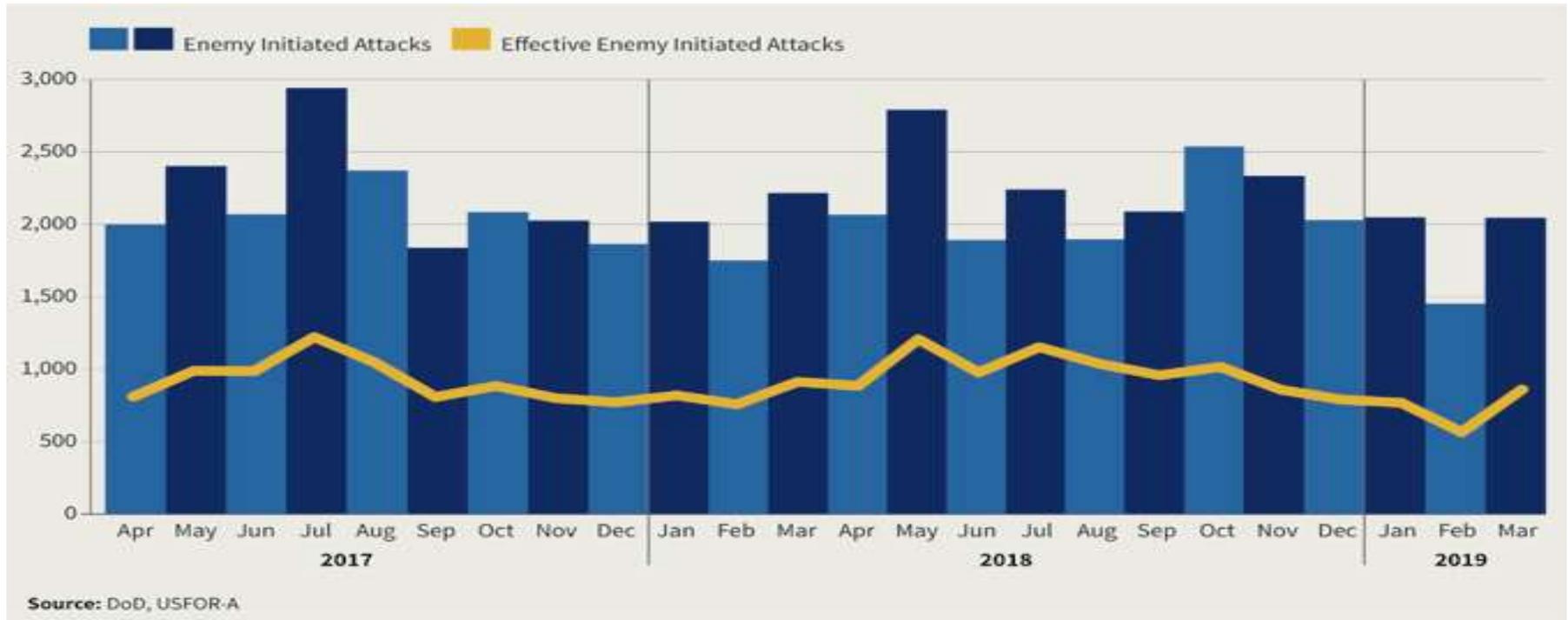
Effective Enemy-Initiated Attacks, 2017-2018



Resolute Support labels an enemy-initiated attack as “effective” if it causes a casualty. USFOR-A reported that there were 2,517 effective enemy-initiated attacks in Afghanistan between October and December. This represents a decline in enemy initiated attacks compared to the July to September period (3,093), but a nearly 10 percent increase compared to the same period in 2017 (2,298). During 2018, approximately 49 percent of reported enemy-initiated attacks (10,955 out of 22,495 attacks) were effective. However, the ANDSF often does not report attacks that do not result in casualties, so the actual percentage of enemy-initiated attacks that were effective may be lower.

Source: Lead Inspector General, OPERATION FREEDOM’S SENTINEL, LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS OCTOBER 1, 2018–DECEMBER 31, 2018, p. 17.

# Lead IG Analysis of Enemy Initiated Attacks: April 2017-March 2019



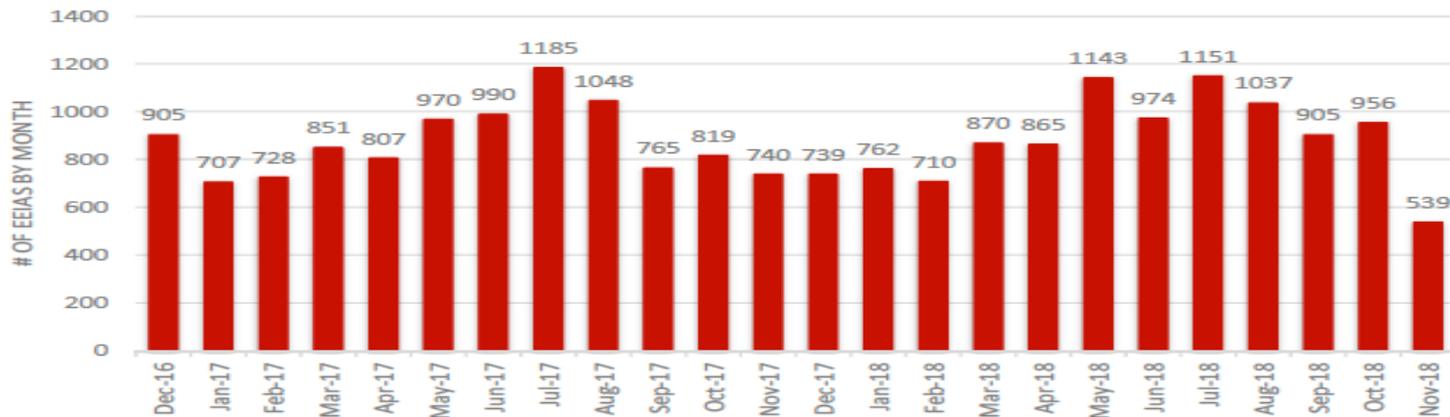
Measures of violence provide some insight into the intensity, type, and perpetrators of conflict. Resolute Support collects data on “enemy-initiated attacks” in Afghanistan, which it defines as attacks by the Taliban, ISIS-K, or other enemy groups. Resolute Support labels an enemy-initiated attack as “effective” if it results in a casualty (killed or wounded). Resolute Support reported 5,547 enemy-initiated attacks during the quarter, of which 2,202 (40 percent) were effective, as shown in Figure 3. The number of enemy-initiated attacks during the quarter was 20 percent fewer than last quarter and 7 percent fewer than the same period one year ago. The number of effective enemy-initiated attacks was 7 percent fewer than last quarter and 11 percent fewer than the same period last year.

The majority of enemy-initiated attacks (84 percent) and effective enemy-initiated attacks (76 percent) were the result of direct fire. IEDs were the second most frequent type of enemy-initiated attack (7 percent), accounting for 14 percent of attacks that were labeled effective.

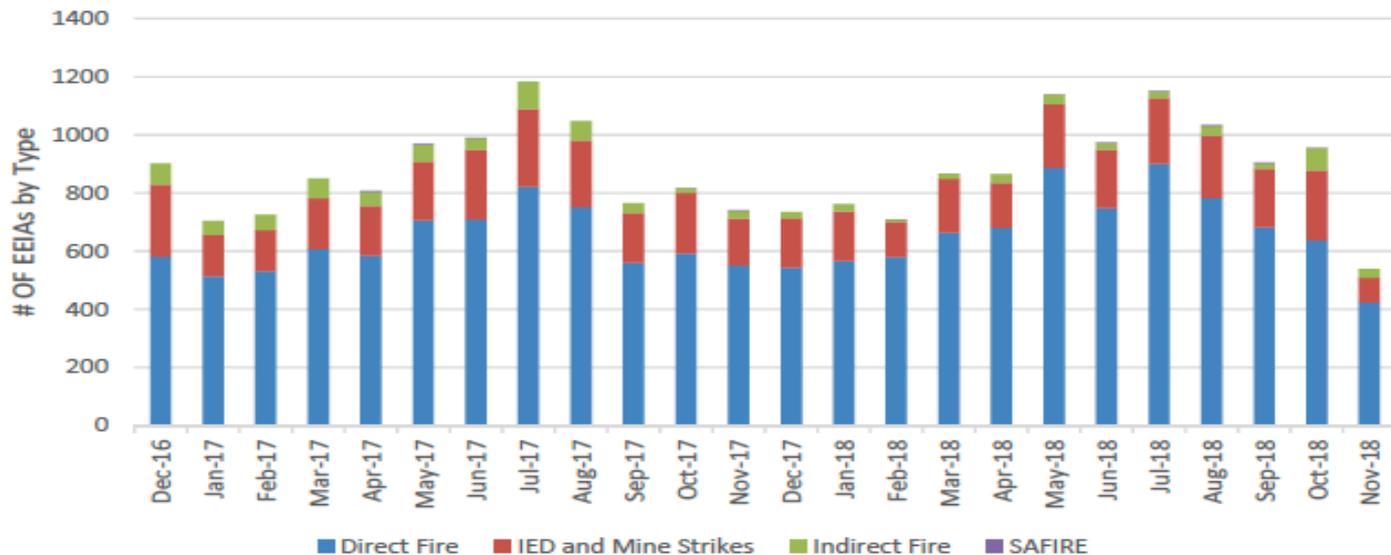
The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) collects and reports data on “security incidents” in Afghanistan. In contrast to the Resolute Support “enemy-initiated attacks,” the UNAMA reports of “security incidents” include violence initiated by Afghan and international forces (such as airstrikes), in addition to attacks by the Taliban, ISIS-K, and other violent organizations. UNAMA reported that during the period November 16, 2018 to February 7, 2019, it recorded 4,420 security incidents. This represents an 8 percent decrease from a similar period the previous year. As with prior quarters, armed clashes accounted for the majority of security incidents. UNAMA noted that suicide attacks decreased by 61 percent compared to one year ago. UNAMA suggested that this decrease may be a result of successful ANDSF operations in Kabul and Nangarhar province.

# Effective Enemy Attacks: 2016-2018: 1225 Report – 12/2018

## Effective Enemy Initiated Attacks by Month



## Effective Enemy Initiated Attacks by Type



Source: **Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan**; December 2018, Report to Congress In Accordance With Section 1225 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (P.L. 113-291), as amended, pp. 30-31.

# DoD Reporting on Security Trends: June 2019

From December 1, 2018, to May 15, 2019, the total number of effective enemy-initiated attacks was 4,312 and the monthly average was 784. By comparison, the total number of effective enemy initiated attacks during the same time last year (December 1, 2017 to May 15, 2018) was 4,795 and the monthly average was 872.

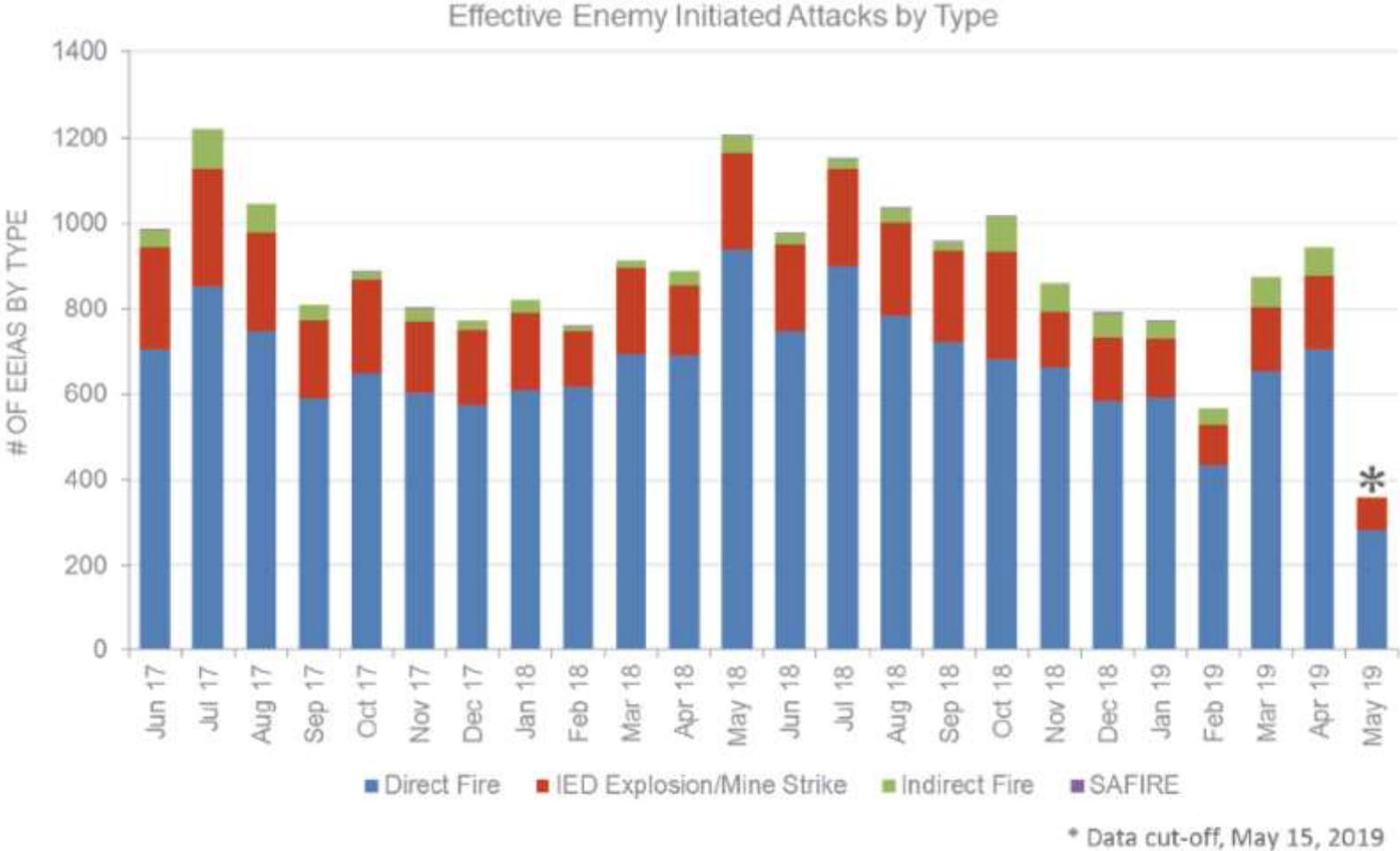
The Coalition relies largely on ANDSF reporting for all metrics, including effective enemy initiated attacks, 13 which are a subset of all security incidents. Direct fire attacks against minimally manned Afghan outposts and checkpoints remain by far the largest source of effective enemy-initiated attacks, followed by IED attacks and mine strikes)... Consistent with trends during the last several years, indirect fire and surface-to-air fire remain the least frequent sources of effective enemy-initiated attacks. The number of IED attacks and mine strikes has remained relatively steady during the last 18 months.

The number of ANDSF casualties suffered while conducting local patrols was at the same level as the same period last year. The number of ANDSF casualties suffered while conducting checkpoint operations were seven percent higher than the same reporting period last year. The number of casualties incurred during offensive operations has increased by 17 percent over the same period.

The majority of ANDSF casualties continue to be the result of direct fire attacks; IED attacks and mine strikes contribute to overall casualties but at a much lower level.

(Since ANDSF units often do not report insurgent attacks that do not result in casualties, the number of effective enemy-initiated attacks is the most representative metric of overall security conditions rather than the total number of reported security incidents. Security incidents comprise all enemy action, including enemy-initiated direct fire and indirect fire, such as mortar, rocket, and artillery; surface-to-air fire (SAFIRE) and explosive hazard events, including executed attacks (IED explosion, mine strike); and potential or attempted attacks (IEDs or mines found and cleared, premature IED detonations, and IED turn-ins). Security incidents do not include friendly action (e.g., direct fire and indirect fire initiated by friendly forces))

# DoD Reporting on Security Trends: June 2017-May 2019



Department of Defense, Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2019, Report to Congress In Accordance With Section 1225 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (P.L. 113-291), as amended, June 2019, pp. 23-24.

# Effective Enemy Attacks: SIGAR – 1/2019-3/2019 - I

RS-REPORTED EFFECTIVE ENEMY-INITIATED ATTACKS IN 2019



EIA RANKING AND PROPORTION

EIA Ranking	Province	Percent EEIA
1	Helmand	24%
2	Badghis	29
3	Faryab	30
4	Herat	41
5	Farah	45
6	Kandahar	68
7	Ghazni	54
8	Balkh	55
9	Kunduz	50
10	Baghlan	46
11	Zabul	65
12	Nangarhar	58
13	Uruzgan	64
14	Kabul	64
15	Laghman	58
16	Wardak	54
17	Logar	50
18	Ghor	52
19	Kunar	42
20	Paktiya	58
21	Kapisa	63
22	Takhar	51
23	Sar-e Pul	42
24	Jowzjan	46
25	Paktika	54
26	Parwan	48
27	Badakhshan	46
28	Nimroz	57
29	Khost	66
30	Samangan	48
31	Nuristan	47
32	Daykundi	55
33	Bamyan	0
34	Panjshir	0

Note: The date range of the data is January 1–May 31, 2019. The total EEIA for that period was 4,319.

Source: RS, response to SIGAR vetting, 7/23/2019; SIGAR analysis of RS-provided data, 7/2019.

Note: The date range of the data is January 1–May 31, 2019. The total EIA for that period was 10,298 and EEIA was 4,319.

Source: RS, response to SIGAR vetting, 7/23/2019; SIGAR analysis of RS-provided data, 7/2019.

Source: SIGAR, *Report to the United States Congress*, July 31, 2019, p. 67.

# Effective Enemy Attacks: : SIGAR – 1/2019-3/2019 - II

...RS-reported enemy-initiated attack (EIA) data comes from an official source, but is only available unclassified at the provincial level and does not include Afghan and Coalition-initiated attacks on the enemy.

...RS offered new caveats about EIA data this quarter. First, it said the figures are based on Afghan operational reporting, which is often delayed. RS said it “currently measure[s] a reporting lag of 15 days to capture 85% of all reported incidents.” The data thus become more comprehensive over time. Second, RS said that while it “cannot confirm the accuracy and completeness of this data, we maintain that it can be used to substantiate broad inferences and trends over time. Currently we assume . . . SIGACTs [Significant Activities] in general to be about 10% inaccurate.” RS recommends using EEIA data to compare enemy activity between provinces and EIA data to analyze enemy activity over time and also within specific provinces or regions.

DOD uses EEIA data in its official reporting to analyze security trends. Both DOD and RS view EEIA data to be a more reliable indicator of security trends compared to EIA or overall SIGACTs. They say this is because ANDSF units do not always report insurgent attacks that do not result in casualties. The number of EIA could thus be higher than what RS has reported, which would also impact the percentage of EEIA to EIA.

According to RS, “enemy-initiated attacks are defined as all attacks (direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire, IED, and mine explosions, etc.) initiated by insurgents that are reported as [significant activities] (SIGACTs).”

*This quarter’s EIA data shows that enemy attacks have increased over the last few months, following a violent winter, though this spring appears to be slightly less violent compared to spring 2018. RS reported 6,445 enemy-initiated attacks this quarter (March 1–May 31, 2019). This period’s figures reflect a 9% increase compared to the preceding three months (December 1, 2018–February 28, 2019), but a 10% decrease compared to the EIA reported during the same period last year (March 1–May 31, 2018).*

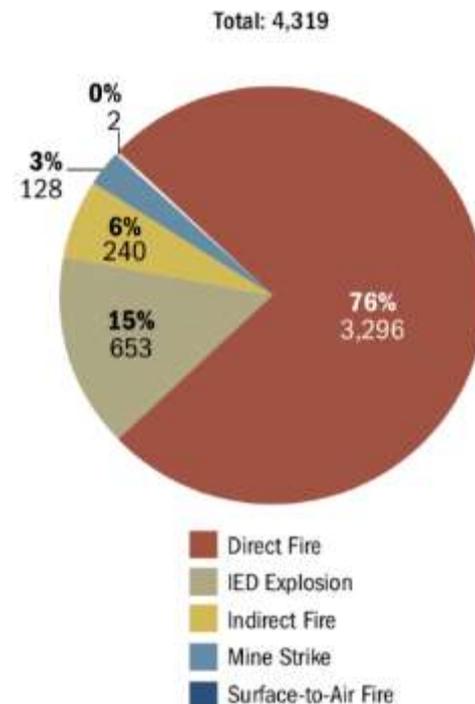
When looking at the geographic distribution of EIA thus far in 2019 (January–May), more than half (52%) occurred in just five of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces: Helmand, Badghis, Faryab, Herat, and Farah. Of these provinces, the most EIA reported by far were in Helmand (2,788), followed by Badghis (808) and Faryab (657). The most common methods of EIA in 2019 have been direct fire (84%), followed by IED explosions (8%), and indirect fire (5%). Similar trends for 2018 were reported last quarter.

*Of the 6,445 EIA reported this quarter (March 1–May 31, 2019), roughly 43% (2,801) were considered “effective” enemy-initiated attacks (EEIA) that resulted in ANDSF, Coalition, or civilian casualties. The number of EEIA this period reflects a 17% increase compared to the preceding three months (December 1, 2018–February 28, 2019), but a 7% decrease compared to the same period last year (March 1–May 31, 2018).*

The geographic distribution of the most deadly attacks in the first five months of the year has been slightly different from EIA. As seen in Figure 3.31, Helmand Province had the most EEIA, followed by Kandahar and Badghis Provinces, which placed sixth and second (of 34 provinces) for the most EIA respectively. Table 3.6 shows that the provinces with the highest proportion of EEIA were in many cases not the provinces with the most total EEIA or EIA: in Kandahar, 68% of EIA were EEIA, followed by Khost (66%), and Zabul (65%).

Source: SIGAR, *Report to the United States Congress*, July 31, 2019, pp. 66-67.

**EFFECTIVE ENEMY-INITIATED ATTACKS BY ATTACK TYPE**

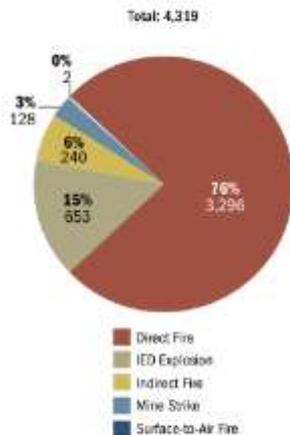


Note: The date range of the data is January 1–May 31, 2019. The total EEIA for that period was 4,319.

Source: RS, response to SIGAR vetting, 7/23/2019; SIGAR analysis of RS-provided data, 7/2019.

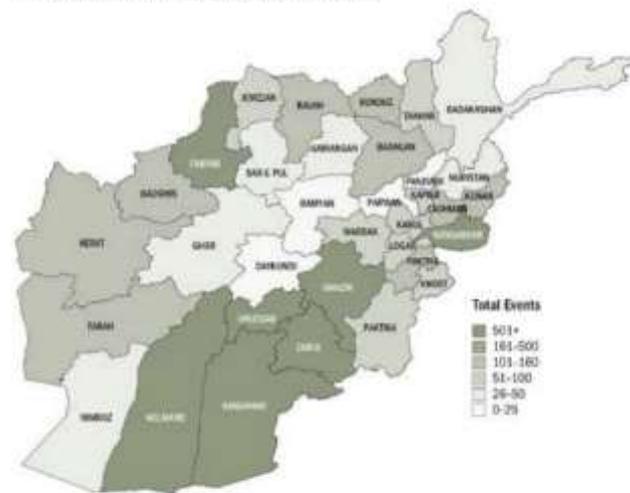
# ACLED-Recorded Incidents Increase: March 1 – May 31, 2019 - I

EFFECTIVE ENEMY-INITIATED ATTACKS BY ATTACK TYPE



Note: The date range of the data is January 1–May 31, 2019. The total EIA for that period was 4,319.  
Source: RS, response to SIGAR writing, 7/23/2019; SIGAR analysis of RS-provided data, 7/2019.

ACLED-RECORDED INCIDENTS: JANUARY-MAY 2019



Source: ACLED, South Asia 2019 Present dataset, 1/1/2019–5/31/2019, available online at <https://www.acled.org>; SIGAR, analysis of ACLED data, 7/2019.

...Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) event data can be disaggregated to the district level, to a variety of security incident types, and to all the parties to the conflict, but depends entirely on media reporting of political and security-related incidents.

...The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is “a disaggregated conflict collection, analysis, and crisis-mapping project” funded by the State Department. The project collects the dates, actors, types of violence, locations, and fatalities of all political violence, protest, and select non-violent, politically important incidents across several regions, as reported from open, secondary sources. ACLED’s aim is to capture the modes, frequency, and intensity of political violence and opposition as it occurs.

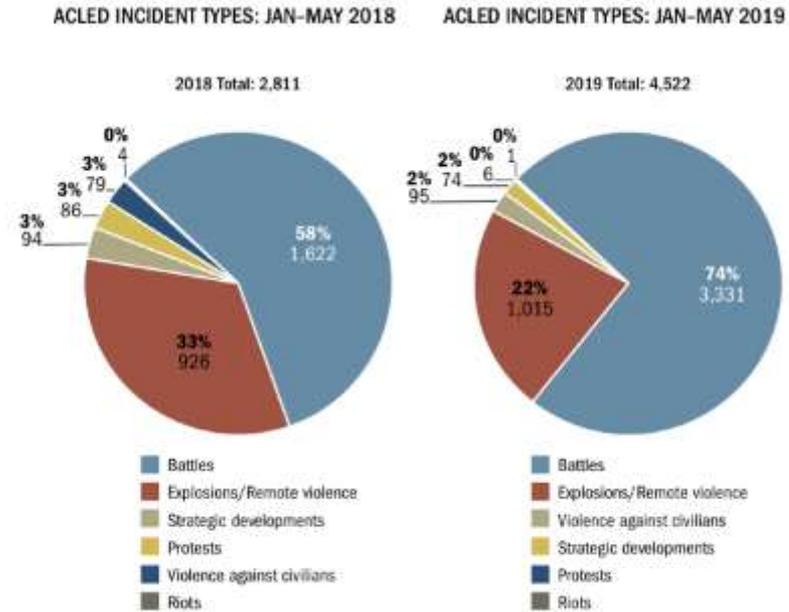
ACLED considers the event data it collects as falling into three categories and six subcategories: “violent events,” including battles, explosions/remote violence, and violence against civilians; “demonstrations,” including protests and riots; or “nonviolent actions,” including strategic developments (agreements, arrests, or looting/property destruction).

...According to RS, “enemy-initiated attacks are defined as all attacks (direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire, IED, and mine explosions, etc.) initiated by insurgents that are reported as [significant activities] (SIGACTs).”

This quarter’s EIA data shows that enemy attacks have increased over the last few months, following a violent winter, though this spring appears to be slightly less violent compared to spring 2018. RS reported 6,445 enemy-initiated attacks this quarter (March 1–May 31, 2019). This period’s figures reflect a 9% increase compared to the preceding three months (December 1, 2018–February 28, 2019), but a 10% decrease compared to the EIA reported during the same period last year (March 1–May 31, 2018).

When looking at the geographic distribution of EIA thus far in 2019 (January–May), more than half (52%) occurred in just five of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces: Helmand, Badghis, Faryab, Herat, and Farah. Of these Figure 3.32 shows that the most common methods of EEIA in 2019 have been direct fire (76%), followed by IED explosions (15%), and indirect fire (6%), roughly in line with the 2018 trends reported last quarter.

# ACLED-Recorded Incidents Increase: March 1–May 31, 2019 - II



Source: ACLED, South Asia 2016 Present dataset, 1/1/2019–5/31/2019 and 1/1/2018–5/31/2019, available online at <https://www.acledata.com>; SIGAR, analysis of ACLED data, 7/2019.

## ACLED-Recorded Incidents Increase

SIGAR analyzes incident data from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), which records district-level data of political violence and protest incidents across Afghanistan. For consistency with RS’s enemy-initiated attacks data, SIGAR presents its analysis of ACLED’s data aggregated to the provincial level and chooses the date range for the data in alignment with RS’s reporting period (March 1–May 31, 2019).

ACLED recorded 2,801 incidents in Afghanistan this quarter (March 1– May 31, 2019). This figure reflects a 66% increase in incidents compared to the same period in 2018 (1,691 incidents). Unlike RS’s EIA and EEIA data, ACLED incidents include the violent and nonviolent activity of all the parties to the conflict, though violent activity made up 98% of the recorded incidents this quarter (battles, 72%; explosions/remote violence, 23%; violence against civilians, 3%). The data show that this significant year-on-year change was mainly driven by an increase in the number of battles recorded this quarter (2,026) versus 962 recorded during March–May 2018. USFOR-A said this is likely due to the increase in ANDSF operational tempo this quarter.

When examining the provincial breakdown of ACLED-recorded incidents thus far in 2019, the three provinces with the most incidents shifted slightly compared to the same period in 2018. In 2019 (through May 31), Helmand Province has had the most incidents (603), followed by Kandahar (460) and Ghazni (3); the same period last year saw Nangarhar with the most incidents (490), then Helmand (248) and Ghazni (245). RS’s enemy-initiated attacks and ACLED’s incident data only slightly align in that they show Helmand and Kandahar as having the most EEIA and incidents, respectively, from January through May 2019. Seen in Figure 3.33, ACLED-recorded incidents are concentrated in a several key provinces: the incidents occurring in the top 10 most violent provinces accounted for 62% of this year’s total incidents.

Figure 3.34 shows that of all the ACLED-recorded incidents from January 1 through May 2019, battles account for the vast majority (about 74%), followed by explosions and remote violence (22%). This is a shift from the same period last year, when battles made up about 58% of recorded events, and explosions and remote violence 33%.

**Civilian Casualty Trends Show Limited Growth in Total Deaths, but Growing Differences in Resolute Support and UNAMA Assessments of the Impact of ANSF and Coalition Attacks on Civilians**

# Casualty Trends

The metrics in this section reflect serious differences between UN and largely US sources. The UN and the Resolute Support Command have long differed in making estimates of civilian casualties. Most of the recent differences come from higher UN estimates of the casualties caused by Coalition and Afghan air attacks, and attacks by ANA land forces, than those issued by the Resolute Support Command, Afghan government, and U.S. official sources.

Resolute Support Command argues that it is careful to minimize civilian losses when it uses airpower, and civilian deaths are very low. The UN argues that they rose sharply in 2018 and have been rising steadily since 2014.

Part of the differences in each side's estimates comes from the fact that the UN relies heavily on on-the-ground interviews. Resolute Support argues that many of those who make claims about civilian casualties are exaggerating them because they support the Taliban or ISIS, or in search of compensation.

Some of the Resolute Support claims that the Taliban does manipulate such accounts to exaggerate civilian losses, and understate its presence in the target area seem to be valid. However, UN and other claims that the U.S and Afghan government may be under-reporting civilian casualties and issue cannot be dismissed. An independent analysis of US air attacks on narcotics targets published in April 2019 tended to support the UN estimates. It argued that civilian casualties were substantially higher than Resolute Support admitted, although this BBC analysis also relied heavily on eye-witness accounts after the event.

At the same time, war is war. Forces cannot fight in areas occupied by civilians without inflicting civilian casualties and some of the UN demands seem to ignore the realities and uncertainties in close combat, the "fog over war" in air operations with even the most advanced IS&R systems, and the fact an enemy that uses human shields and propagandizes every casualty has to be fought on real world terms. They also seem to ignore the fact that acting decisively may sometimes trade short term casualties for much higher casualties if the failure to use force prolongs the battle.

Moreover, both sets of estimates do not show a major rise in casualty levels after 2015, and the overall levels of civilian casualties are surprisingly low in comparison with comparable civilian casualty estimates in Iraq and Syria and in other similar wars. This may reflect the fact that combat in Afghanistan is generally more sporadic and localized. The Afghan War has certainly been a long one, but the U.S. has made a major effort to avoid civilian casualties, the Taliban has so far focused on winning influence and control over the population, and the number of major battles in civilian areas has been limited.

# Resolute Support on RS vs. UNAMA Casualty Estimates: April 2018 - I

International forces in Afghanistan aim for zero civilian casualties, applying that standard to all stages of operations. One civilian death is one too many, and General John Nicholson, Commander of Resolute Support, and United States Forces- Afghanistan, has said “We go to extraordinary lengths to avoid civilian casualties, and we wave off strikes if we identify civilians.”

Since 2009 the United Nations mission in Afghanistan, UNAMA, has investigated reports of civilian casualties in Afghanistan. Their work to highlight war’s effect on normal life, and in particular to improve protection for women and children, is tireless and rightly highly regarded. The downward trend recorded in their annual figures for 2017 – the first move down since 2012 – is welcome, especially amid a campaign when insurgents have specifically targeted civilians on a scale never before seen in Afghanistan.

Investigating every civilian death is no less thorough inside the Resolute Support Mission. Using a different methodology than UNAMA, the trend of casualties recorded by the RS Civilian Casualty Mitigation Team (CCMT) is in the opposite direction to that found by UNAMA. While UNAMA found that civilian casualties caused by the conflict fell 9 percent to 10,428 in 2017, RS recorded a rise to 8,319, perhaps explained by more accurate reporting by Afghan forces who, with better training, have become more aware of the effect of the war on the civilian population.

In assessing what accounts for the difference in these figures, there is no doubt who causes most civilian casualties in Afghanistan – insurgents whose hypocrisy was laid bare as they turned to Afghan civilians as their prime target in 2017 after they failed to gain ground against superior Afghan forces. RS investigators calculate that 88 percent of Afghan civilians killed and injured in 2017 were victims of the Taliban, IS-K and other insurgent groups. UNAMA assessed the proportion at 65 percent.

In other areas there were even bigger differences in assessing those killed and injured. In 2017, RS recorded no civilian casualties from international forces on the ground, and 51 from the air – 19 killed and 32 injured. RS assessed another 69 casualties (33 dead and 36 injured) were caused by the Afghan Air Force. UNAMA attributed 246 casualties to international military air strikes (154 deaths and 92 injured), and 309 casualties to the Afghan Air Force, with a further 76 casualties from air strikes attributed to unknown pro-government forces.

So how can these discrepancies be explained?

Both UNAMA and RS have experienced teams who examine every allegation. One explanation lies in different sources that are available to either UNAMA or RS. In the case of ground attacks, the RS team collect and assess operational planning data, and upon completion of operations potential civilian casualties are assessed, with some reported immediately by units involved. For air strikes, RS know whether a plane or unmanned aerial vehicle was involved. Everything is recorded and stored, including gun-tapes from Afghan planes and helicopters, which now carry out most air strikes.

The RS investigation team assess that in several of the cases where casualties were alleged to be from air strikes, no aerial platforms were nearby at the time, and reported explosions may have resulted from concealed IEDs or insurgents firing rockets and mortars. In other cases, RS investigators have access to surveillance information that gives them confidence that civilians were not present at the scene of a strike.

For example, on November 19, 2017, in the air campaign under new US authorities striking Taliban revenue streams, a suspected drug lab was struck in northern Helmand. UNAMA relayed information to RS alleging that nine civilians from the same family were killed in the strike. They shared detailed information about three women, two boys and four girls – including a one-year-old. This claim of nine dead was included in the UNAMA report, but not counted by RS. RS investigations disproved the allegation as surveillance of the house over a significant period of time showed no sign of the presence of a family. Local government officials said that no civilians were killed.

While RS shares evidence with UNAMA to enhance understanding, UNAMA investigations rely primarily instead on eyewitness accounts, requiring at least three independent sources per incident. UNAMA proactively search for sources of different genders and from different ethnic groups, evaluating them for credibility. But at times are unable to conduct onsite investigations owing to security constraints, and in order to protect privacy will not share eyewitness identity, which means their accounts are difficult to corroborate.

Excerpted from Civilian Casualties, [www.rs.nato/int.media-center/backgrounders](http://www.rs.nato/int.media-center/backgrounders), April 2018.

# Resolute Support on RS vs. UNAMA Casualty Estimates: April 2018 - II

This difference in methodology is only one explanation for disparate findings. Of the 99 separate allegations of civilian casualties by international military forces passed to RS by UNAMA, only three air strikes were proved to be confirmed civilian casualty cases to the satisfaction of the RS investigation board.

Another discrepancy results from different definitions for 'civilian' and for 'casualty'. Legal advisers on both sides assess civilians differently. For UNAMA the definition is wide, giving legal protection to people who might be considered combatants under other interpretations of international humanitarian law. And in defining 'casualties', UNAMA includes those treated at the scene who return home, while a casualty to RS is someone whose injuries involved treatment at a medical facility.

## **Improved protection for civilians in Afghan military operations**

Increasingly Afghan forces, in the air and on the ground, are conducting the campaign without international support. They now have their own forward ground controllers to identify targets, and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) platforms to send accurate information to attack planes. On many occasions Afghan planes return to base without releasing their weapons rather than risking civilian lives (as indeed do the air platforms of international military forces).

UNAMA "acknowledged the significant measures undertaken by the Afghan national security forces to improve the protection of civilians in 2017, especially during ground fighting and related operations." As well as new policies, UNAMA noted "the adoption of practical measures on the battlefield, including relocation of security bases from civilian areas, and increased constraints on the use of mortars and other indirect fire weapons during ground fighting in civilian-populated areas."

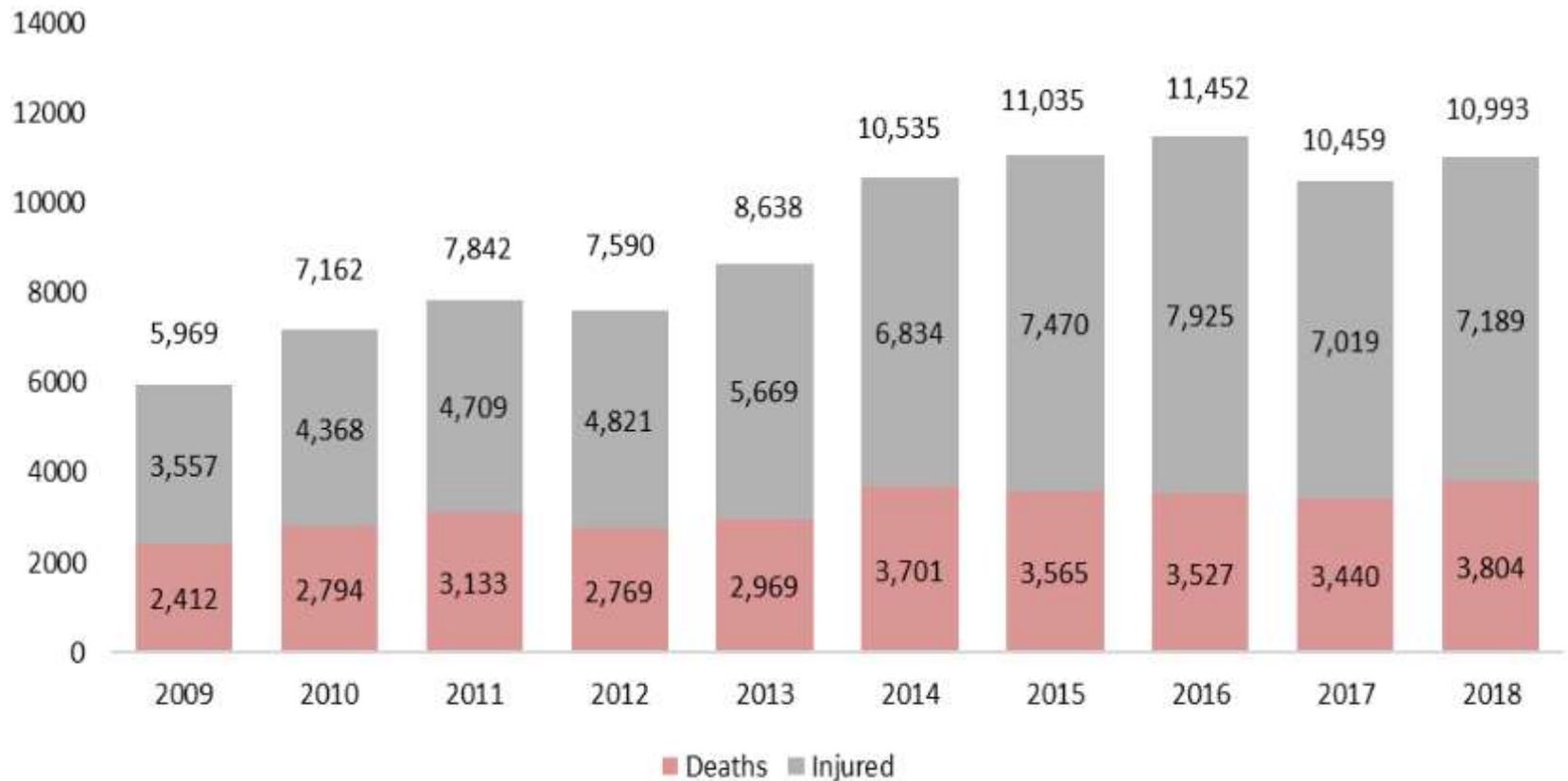
There were also indications that the "overall increase in air operations may have played a role in constraining and/or deterring large scale attacks against cities by anti-government elements." And this is in stark contrast to the way the enemy is increasingly prosecuting its campaign. Afghanistan's prime security concern is large-scale attacks by insurgents who indiscriminately pursue civilians in their homes, schools, hospitals, markets and places of worship, rather than carrying out their fight on the battlefield. Instead of seeking military targets, insurgents led a massacre of 150 civilians, with another 600 injured, while destroying the German Embassy in May 2017.

And already in 2018, the Taliban have stormed the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul with AK-47 assault rifles, killing 22 civilians. IS-K attacked Save the Children in Jalalabad, killing four people and wounding 22 at an organization whose primary aim is to help Afghan children have a better life and future. And in a commandeered ambulance, the Taliban again unleashed their fury upon innocent civilians on the streets of Kabul, killing 103 and injuring 235 more.

There was no dispute over who was responsible for these casualties.

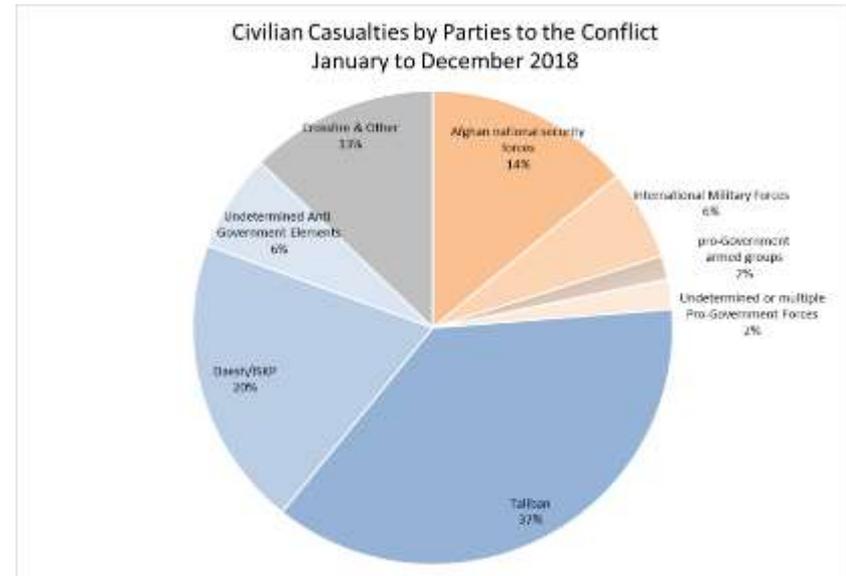
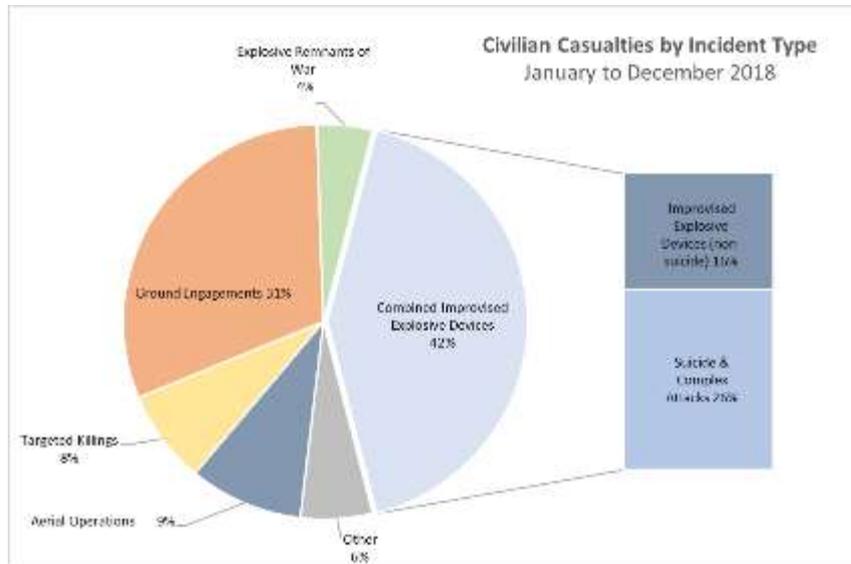
# UNAMA Estimates of Total Civilian Casualties: 2009-2018

## Total Civilian Deaths & Injured January to December 2009 - 2018



Source: UNAMA, Afghanistan: *Protection of Civilians in Armed Combat, Annual 2018*, 24.2.2019, p. 1

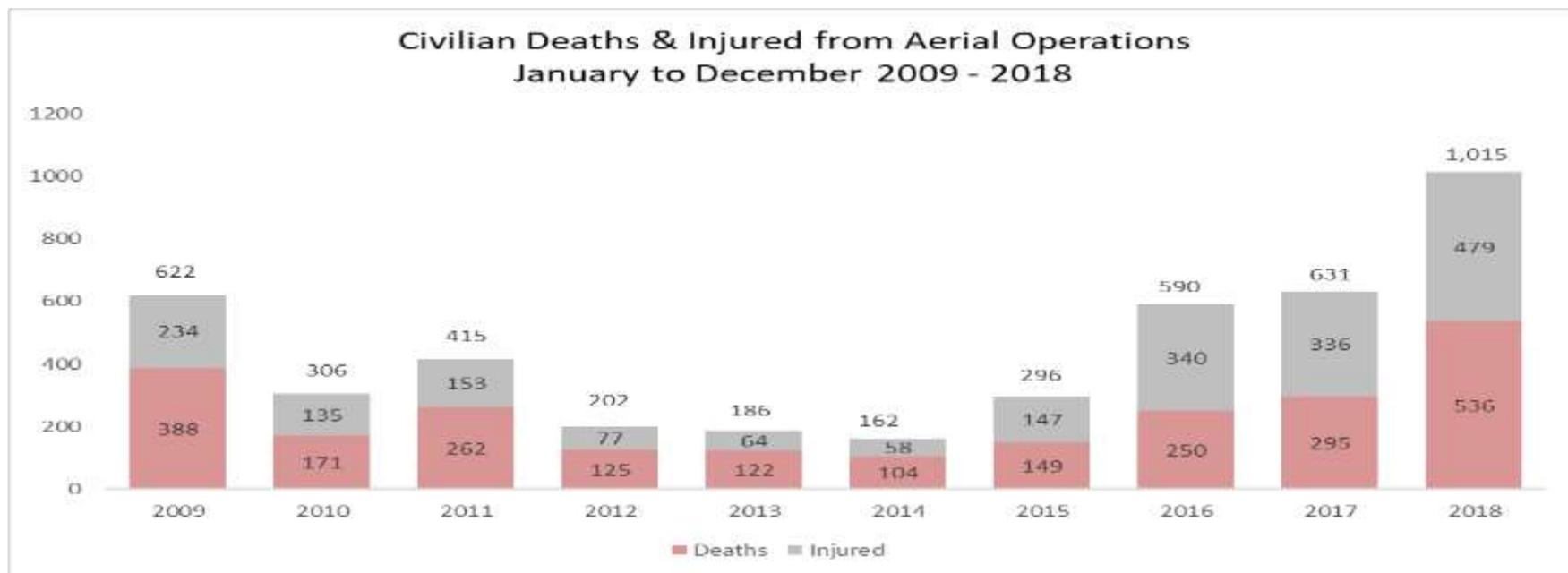
# UNAMA Estimates of Causes of Casualties: 2018



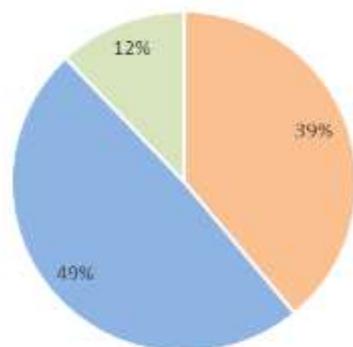
Responsible party (attributed by UNAMA) <sup>56</sup>	Civilians killed	Civilians injured	Total civilian casualties	Percent of overall civilian casualties
Taliban	1,348	2,724	4,072	37 per cent
Daesh/ISKP	681	1,500	2,181	20 per cent
AGE undetermined	196	482	678	6 per cent
Other/multiple	18	31	49	Less than 1 per cent

Responsible Party (Attributed by UNAMA)	Civilians killed	Civilians Injured	Total Civilian Casualties	Per cent of overall civilian casualties
Afghan national security forces	606	929	1535	14 per cent
Pro-government armed groups	99	81	180	2 per cent
International military forces	406	268	674	6 per cent
Undetermined Pro-Government Forces / multiple Pro-Government Forces	74	149	223	2 per cent

# UNAMA Estimates of Aerial Casualties in 2018

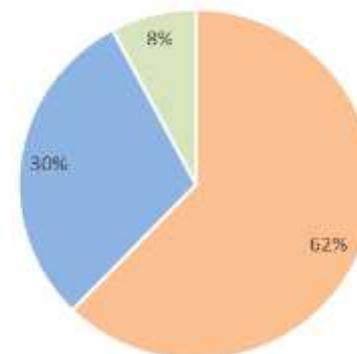


Civilian Casualties by Aerial Operations and Perpetrators  
January to December 2017



IMF Afghan Air Force PGF undetermined

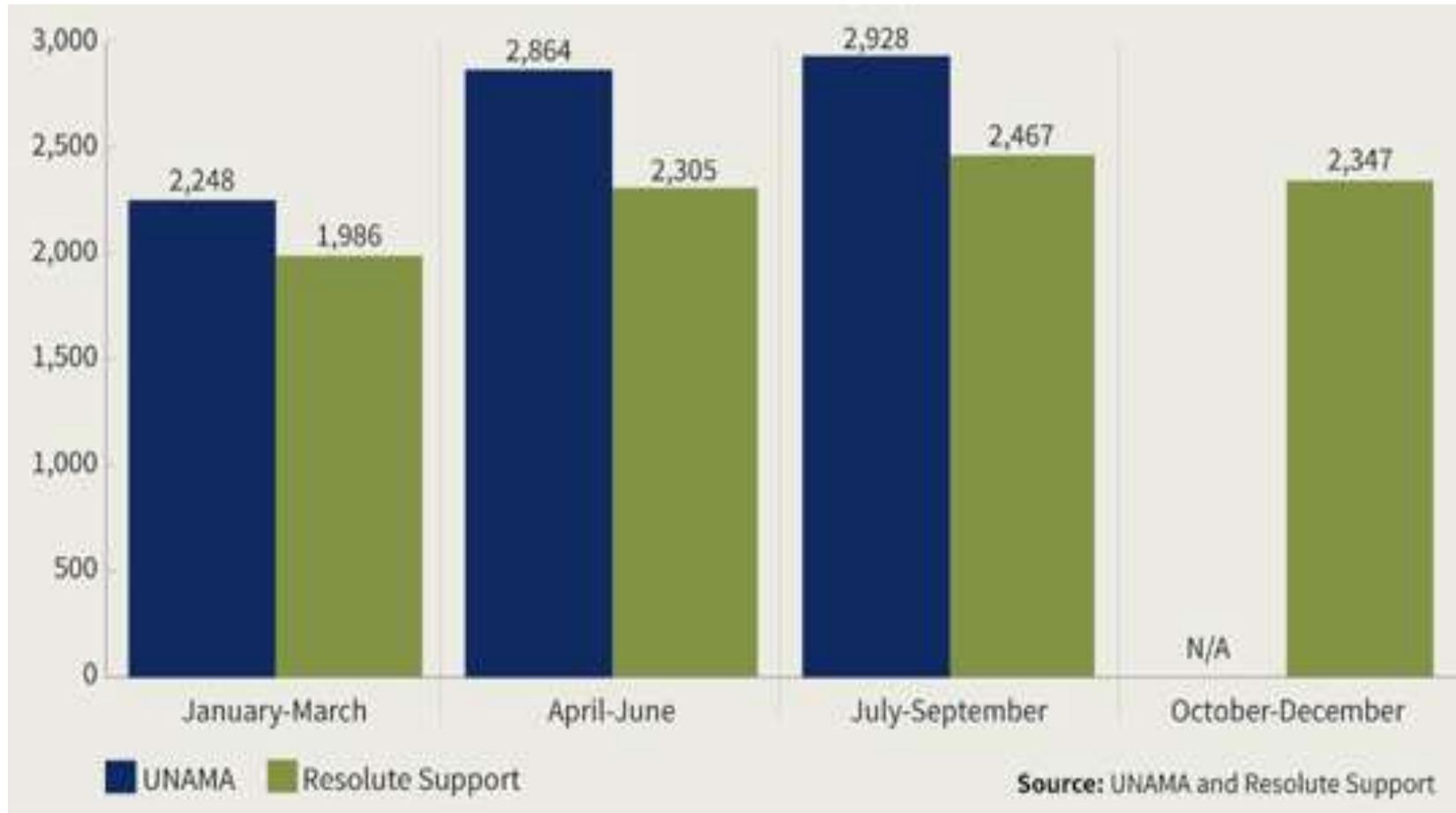
Civilian Casualties by Aerial Operations and Perpetrators  
January to December 2018



IMF Afghan Air Force PGF undetermined

# LIG: Conflicting Estimates of Civilian Casualties: 2018

## Civilian Casualties by Quarter and Reporting Organization, October-December 2018



Source: Adapted from Lead Inspector General, OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL, LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS. OCTOBER 1, 2018–DECEMBER 31, 2018, p. 20.

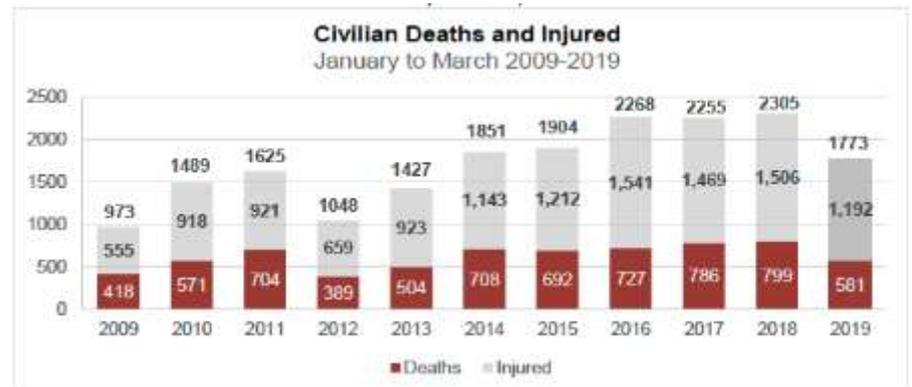
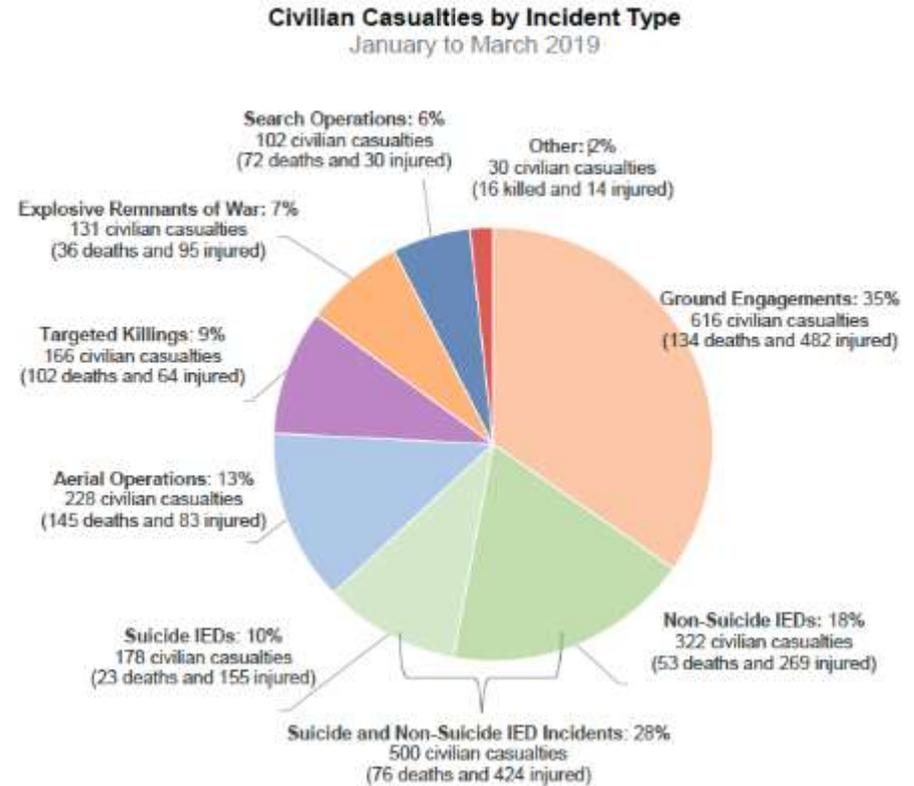
# UNAMA Estimates of Civilian Casualties: 1st Quarter 2019

In the first quarter of 2019, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) continued to document high levels of harm to civilians from the armed conflict. From 1 January to 31 March 2019, UNAMA documented 1,773 civilian casualties (581 deaths and 1,192 injured), including 582 child casualties (150 deaths and 432 injured). This represents a 23 percent decrease in overall civilian casualties as compared to the same period last year and is the lowest for a first quarter since 2013.

The overall reduction of civilian casualties was driven by a decrease in civilian casualties by suicide improvised explosive device (IED) attacks. UNAMA notes the particularly harsh winter conditions during the first three months of the year, which may have contributed to this trend. It is unclear whether the decrease in civilian casualties was influenced by any measures taken by parties to the conflict to better protect civilians, or by the ongoing talks between parties to the conflict.

UNAMA is very concerned by the continued targeting of civilians and increase in civilian casualties from the use of non-suicide IEDs by Anti-Government Elements, as well as significant increases in civilian casualties from aerial and search operations, which drove an overall increase in civilian casualties by Pro-Government Forces. Civilian deaths attributed to Pro-Government Forces surpassed those attributed to Anti-Government Elements during the first quarter of 2019.

Ground engagements were the leading cause of civilian casualties, causing approximately one-third of the total. A single mortar attack incident by *Daesh*/Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) on 7 March 2019 in Kabul caused approximately one-fifth of all civilian casualties from ground engagements (see below). The use of IEDs was the second leading cause of civilian casualties. Contrary to 2017 and 2018 trends, the majority of IED civilian casualties were caused by non-suicide IEDs rather than suicide IEDs. Aerial operations were the leading cause of civilian deaths<sup>3</sup> and the third leading cause of civilian casualties, followed by targeted killings and explosive remnants of war. Civilians living in Kabul, Helmand, Nangarhar, Faryab and Kunduz provinces were most affected (in that order).



# LIG on Afghan Forces, U.S. and Coalition Casualties – March 2019

## **AFGHAN SECURITY PERSONNEL CASUALTIES**

USFOR-A told the DoD OIG that the number of ANDSF casualties during the period December 2018 to February 2019 was approximately 31 percent higher than the same period one year ago. The number of casualties during defensive operations increased by 45 percent while the number of casualties during offensive operations increased by 21 percent. Almost half of the ANDSF casualties during this 3-month period were inflicted during checkpoint security operations.

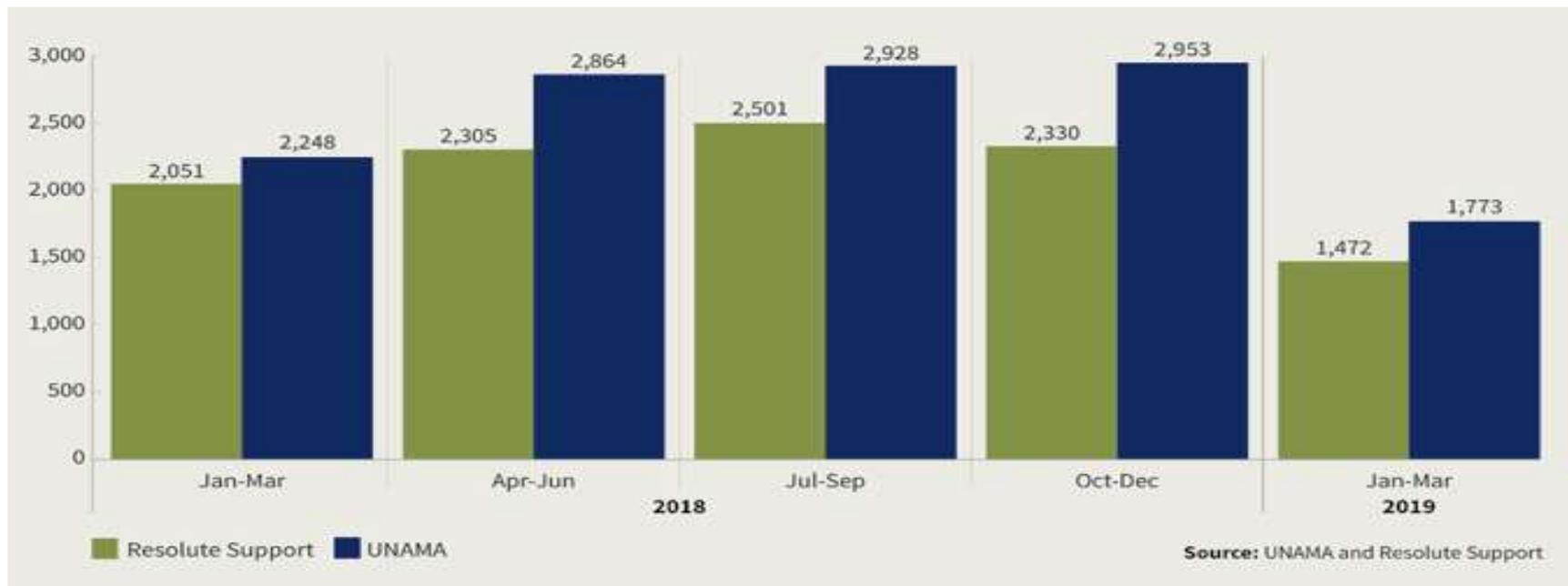
USFOR-A classified ANDSF casualty and attrition rates at the request of the Afghan government. However, Afghan political leaders occasionally release some information about ANDSF casualties to the media. In January 2019, President Ghani stated that 45,000 ANDSF members had been killed since he took office in 2014.

## **U.S. AND COALITION FORCES CASUALTIES**

Four U.S. military personnel died because of combat injuries during the quarter. The DoD announced that a Soldier died of wounds sustained on January 13 in Badghis province; a Soldier died on January 22 as a result of small arms fire in Uruzgan province; and two Soldiers died as a result of wounds sustained in Kunduz province on March 22.

Resolute Support did not report any casualties among its non-U.S. partner forces during the quarter.

## Resolute Support versus UNAMA Estimate of Afghan Civilian Casualties by Quarter and Reporting Organization: March 2019



Resolute Support assesses reports of civilian casualties using ANDSF and coalition operational reports, aircraft video footage, records of U.S. and Afghan weapons releases, and other coalition and Afghan government-generated information. Resolute Support reported that it verified 1,472 civilian casualties (372 killed, 1,100 wounded) during the quarter.<sup>1</sup> Most of these civilian casualties were the result of IED and direct fire attacks. The provinces with the greatest number of civilian casualties during the quarter were Kabul, Nangarhar, and Helmand.

UNAMA reported that it had verified 1,773 civilian casualties (581 killed, 1,192 injured) during the quarter. This figure represents a 23 percent decrease from the same period in 2018, which UNAMA attributed, in large part, to a reduction in casualties caused by IEDs. Overall, IEDs and ground engagements remained the most frequent cause of civilian casualties during the quarter. UNAMA concluded that the Taliban was responsible for the largest share of civilian casualties (39 percent), followed by the ANDSF (17 percent), international military forces (13 percent), and ISIS-K (12 percent).

By comparison, UNAMA reported that during the same period in 2018, the Taliban was responsible for a much larger share of civilian casualties (50 percent), followed by ISIS-K (11 percent), ANDSF (11 percent), and international military forces (2 percent).

# DoD on U.S. vs. UN Estimates of Civilian Casualties: June 2019

(The vast majority of the civilian casualties (81 percent killed and 89 percent wounded) can be attributed to the Taliban, ISIS-K, and other insurgent groups)

Preventing civilian casualties remains a top priority for U.S. forces. USFOR-A takes extraordinary measures to reduce and mitigate civilian casualties. USFOR-A recognizes and respects its moral, ethical, and professional imperative to reduce and mitigate these casualties, consistent with the law of war. USFOR-A uses reports of civilian casualties to determine if and how such losses of life could have been averted and to evaluate and improve upon its ability to protect civilians in the future.

On May 1, 2019, DoD submitted to the Congress the report, entitled “Annual Report on Civilian Casualties in Connection With United States Military Operations,” pursuant to Section 1057 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018. In this report, DoD informed Congress that USFOR-A was responsible for 76 civilians killed and 58 civilians wounded in Afghanistan from January 1 to December 31, 2018. Although DoD does not enumerate child casualties in its official reports to the Congress, the Commander, USFOR-A, confirmed that out of the total 134 civilian deaths and injuries in 2018 for which USFOR-A was responsible, 42 were children, including 31 killed and 11 injured.

## RS and UNAMA Reporting Differences During 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2019

The RS Civilian Casualty Mitigation Team (CCMT), which collects civilian casualty data for the coalition, documented 1,512 total civilian casualties during the first quarter of 2019 (January 1 – March 31, 2019), of which 401 were killed and 1,111 were injured. The CCMT relies primarily upon operational reports from the TAACs and the ANDSF. During the first quarter of 2019, the CCMT attributed 1,289 casualties (303 killed and 986 injured) to insurgents and terrorists; 84 casualties (36 killed and 48 injured) to the ANDSF; and 70 casualties (47 killed and 23 injured) to U.S.-led Coalition forces. The CCMT attributed the rest of the 69 casualties (15 killed and 54 injured) to other parties of the conflict.

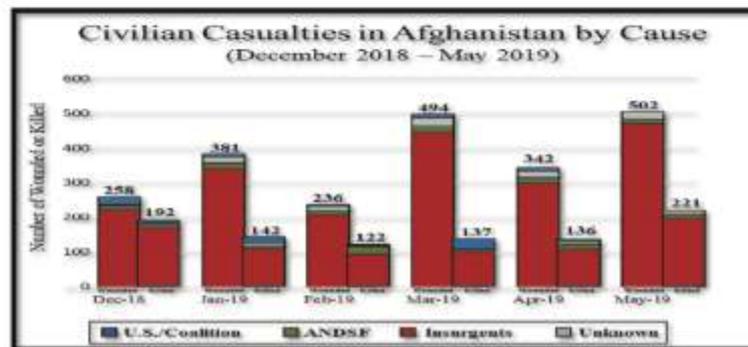
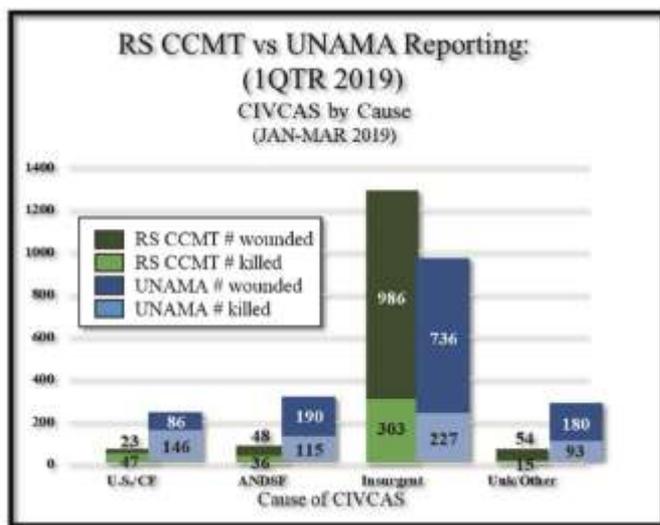
In contrast, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan’s (UNAMA) latest report claimed that there were 1,773 civilian casualties for the same period in 2019, of which 581 were killed and 1,192 were injured. UNAMA reported that insurgents and terrorists were responsible for 963 casualties (227 killed and 736 injured); UNAMA also reported that the ANDSF were responsible for 305 casualties (115 killed and 190 injured); and that international military forces were responsible for 232 casualties (146 killed and 86 injured). UNAMA attributed the remaining 273 casualties (93 killed and 180 injured) to other parties to the conflict.

The difference in the reported numbers of civilian casualties between the CCMT and UNAMA is primarily due to different sources of information and different standards of evidence collection methodology. CCMT has access to a wider range of forensic data than such civilian organizations, including full-motion video, operational summaries, aircraft mission reports, intelligence reports, digital and other imagery, open-source media, social media, and other sources. CCMT’s civilian casualty assessment process requires that all reports of civilian casualties be initially assessed within 24 hours of receipt to identify quickly whether additional assessment will be necessary to determine whether the report is likely accurate. Allegations for which there is sufficient, reliable information are forwarded to the responsible operational command for additional review. These procedures allow USFOR-A to assess with a relatively high degree of confidence the circumstances of each report of civilian casualties. By contrast, the UNAMA reports rely primarily on human sources that may have only limited relevant information about an event, or, at times, may provide false information, including even about whether a casualty was a noncombatant civilian or a combatant.

## Resolute Support Civilian Casualty Data from December 1, 2018, to May 31, 2019

The CCMT documented 3,163 civilian casualties from December 31, 2018, to May 31, 2019, of which 950 were killed and 2,213 were injured. Of the 3,163 civilian casualties, CCMT attributed 115 (60 killed and 55 injured) to the U.S. led Coalition, 158 (68 killed and 90 injured) to the ANDSF, 2,749 (778 killed and 1,971 injured) to insurgents and terrorists, and 141 (44 killed and 97 injured) to unknown parties to the conflict.

Figure 6: CCMT Reported Civilian Casualties During Reporting Period<sup>17</sup>



Source: Department of Defense, Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan, June 2019, Report to Congress In Accordance With Section 1225 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (P.L. 113-291), as amended, June 2019, pp. 26-27.

# DoD Civilian Casualties Report for 2018: April 2019 - I

*Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL.* In 2018, U.S. military efforts in Afghanistan in support of the South Asia Strategy (SAS) were conditions-based and focused on two well-defined and complementary missions. First, U.S. forces conducted counter-terrorism missions against al-Qa'ida, ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K), and associated groups to prevent their resurgence and ability to plan and execute external attacks. Second, in partnership with NATO allies and operational partner nations in the RESOLUTE SUPPORT (RS) Mission, U.S. forces advise and assist the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in their fight against insurgents and terrorist groups. The ANDSF have maintained a proactive mindset and have demonstrated exceptional resilience through a difficult and sustained fight.

DoD assessed that there were credible reports of civilian casualties caused by U.S. military actions in Afghanistan during 2018. As of March 19, 2019, U.S. Forces - Afghanistan (USFOR-A) assessed that 37 reports of civilian casualties during 2018 were credible, with approximately 76 civilians killed and approximately 58 civilians injured as a result of U.S. military actions. The following table contains additional details about each instance during 2018 that was assessed to have resulted in civilian casualties.

DoD continues to acknowledge differences between DoD assessments of civilian casualties and reports by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). As explained in last year's Section 1057 report and as noted in Section II below, UNAMA relies on different types of information and uses a different methodology to assess whether civilian casualties have occurred, and whether such casualties occurred as a result of U.S. military actions. For example, USFOR-A considers all available information in conducting assessments, including information furnished through UNAMA. Additionally, USFOR-A also considers information that is unavailable to UNAMA, such as classified intelligence information and operational data that can include full-motion video from surveillance and weapon platforms.

USFOR-A assessments also consider information provided by subject-matter experts, reports of partner forces, and the operational command associated with the report of civilian casualties. It is not unusual for classified intelligence information, as well as subject-matter expert and partner-provided information, to make clear that what appeared to be U.S. military-caused civilian casualties, when viewed through the lens of unclassified sources, actually had other causes. Even though USFOR-A meets with UNAMA monthly to brief it on the results of USFOR-A's assessments, UNAMA has found itself unable to agree with those assessments because UNAMA simply lacks access to all the information relevant to assessing whether civilian casualties resulted from U.S. military actions in any particular instance.

## DoD Civilian Casualties Report for 2018: April 2019 - II

	Date	Location	Operation Type	Civilians Injured	Civilians Killed
1	1-Jan-18	Nangarhar	Air	4	0
2	1-Jan-18	Nangarhar	Air	0	2
3	3-Jan-18	Helmand	Air	1	1
4	8-Feb-18	Jawzjan	Air	2	0
5	15-Feb-18	Helmand	Air	1	1
6	16-Feb-18	Helmand	Air	0	1
7	17-Feb-18	Laghman	Ground	0	1
8	25-Feb-18	Balkh	Air	2	0
9	11-Mar-18	Kandahar	Ground	2	0
10	14-Mar-18	Kunar	Air	1	3
11	31-Mar-18	Herat	Air	0	1
12	8-May-18	Wardak	Air	0	1
13	11-May-18	Kunar	Ground	0	1
14	21-May-18	Helmand	Air	1	0
15	1-Jun-18	Nangarhar	Air	2	1
16	2-Jun-18	Logar	Air	1	0
17	30-Jun-18	Farah	Air	0	1
18	19-Jul-18	Kunduz	Air	1	12
19	23-Jul-18	Helmand	Air	0	2
20	26-Jul-18	Uruzgan	Ground	1	1
21	16-Aug-18	Helmand	Air	0	3
22	26-Aug-18	Zabul	Air	0	2
23	6-Sep-18	Logar	Air	1	0
24	29-Sep-18	Helmand	Air	0	2
25	1-Oct-18	Kunar	Ground	0	3
26	2-Oct-18	Laghman	Air	4	5
27	2-Oct-18	Paktiya	Ground	1	0
28	7-Oct-18	Paktiya	Ground	1	0
29	10-Oct-18	Helmand	Air	0	1
30	20-Oct-18	Kunar	Air	0	3
31	10-Nov-18	Paktiya	Air	1	2
32	19-Nov-18	Laghman	Air	0	3
33	24-Nov-18	Helmand	Air	4	0
34	27-Nov-18	Helmand	Air	3	14

	Date	Location	Operation Type	Civilians Injured	Civilians Killed
35	28-Nov-18	Helmand	Air	2	1
36	3-Dec-18	Farah	Ground	5	0
37	14-Dec-18	Kunar	Air	17	8
TOTAL				58	76

Department of Defense, *Annual Report on Civilian Casualties in Connection With United States Military Operations*, Submitted pursuant to section 1057 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 (Public Law 115-91), E-95F9776 ,April 29, 2019

# SIGAR: UNAMA vs. Resolute Support Estimates of Casualties: April 2019

## UNAMA: Civilian Casualties in Early 2019 Decline Sharply

In a stark change from the final months of 2018, UNAMA documented 1,773 civilian casualties from January 1 through March 31, 2019, a 23% decrease in casualties compared to the same period in 2017 and the lowest number of civilian casualties in the first three months of the year since 2013. The casualties included 581 deaths and 1,192 injuries.<sup>160</sup>

UNAMA noted that the significant decrease in civilian casualties so far this year was primarily driven by a 76% decrease in casualties caused by suicide IED attacks. Last year's figures were higher due to many more suicide attacks in early 2018, including the January 27, 2018, attack in Kabul, which was the deadliest incident UNAMA had ever recorded. UNAMA also said the particularly harsh winter conditions during the first three months of this year may have contributed to the decline in civilian casualties, and that it is unclear whether the trend was influenced by any measures undertaken by parties to the conflict to better protect civilians, or by the ongoing talks between some of the parties. UNAMA expressed continued concern about the increase in civilian casualties from the use of nonsuicide IEDs by anti-government elements (up 21% compared to last year).<sup>161</sup>

UNAMA reported that progovernment elements caused more civilian deaths than antigovernment elements thus far in 2019 (608 casualties, 305 deaths and 303 injuries). This was attributed to substantial increases in civilian casualties caused by progovernment aerial (41%) and search operations (85%) compared to last year. UNAMA attributed 17% of all civilian casualties to the ANDSF, 13% to international military forces, 2% to progovernment armed groups, and 2% to multiple progovernment forces. As in previous years, antigovernment elements were responsible for the majority of overall civilian casualties during the first quarter of 2019 (963 casualties, 227 deaths and 736 injuries).<sup>162</sup>

The decrease UNAMA reported for the first three months of 2019 is offset by the high number of civilian casualties seen from October through December 2018 (2,943). Civilian casualties from October 2018–March 2019 were at roughly the same level they were from October 2017–March 2018.<sup>163</sup>

## RS Civilian Casualties Data

RS reported 9,214 civilian casualties in 2018 (2,845 killed and 6,369 wounded). As reported last quarter, September and October were the deadliest months, with 950 and 1,274 civilian casualties respectively. RS's and UNAMA's data aligned in that Kabul, Nangarhar, and Helmand Provinces experienced the most civilian casualties in 2018. According to RS, about 21% of 2018's civilian casualties occurred in Kabul Province (1,976 casualties), 17% in Nangarhar (1,590), and 5% in Helmand (477). As seen in Figure 3.35 on the previous page, RS said the majority of the civilian casualties reported in 2018 were caused by IEDs (50%), followed by direct fire (22%), and indirect fire (7%).<sup>164</sup>

### UNAMA Collection Methodology

According to UNAMA, data on civilian casualties are collected through "direct site visits, physical examination of items and evidence gathered at the scene of incidents, visits to hospital and medical facilities, still and video images," reports by UN entities, and primary, secondary, and third-party accounts. Information is obtained directly from primary accounts where possible. Civilians whose noncombatant status is under "significant doubt," based on international humanitarian law, are not included in the figures. Ground-engagement casualties that cannot be definitively attributed to either side, such as those incurred during crossfire, are jointly attributed to both parties. UNAMA includes an "other" category to distinguish between these jointly-attributed casualties and those caused by other events, such as unexploded ordnance or cross-border shelling by Pakistani forces. UNAMA's methodology has remained largely unchanged since 2008.

Source: UNAMA, *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, 3/6/2018, I-II; 1/2010, p. 35; 2/11/2009, pp. 4–5; and 8/2015, p. 4.

### RS Collection Methodology

According to DOD, the RS Civilian Casualty Management Team relies primarily upon operational reporting from RS's Train, Advise, and Assist Commands (TAACs), other Coalition force headquarters, and ANDSF reports from the Afghan Presidential Information Command Centre to collect civilian-casualty data.

Source: DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 12/2017, p. 27.

# SIGAR: Resolute Support Estimates of Casualties: July 2019 - I

## UNAMA: Civilian Casualties

No UNAMA civilian casualty update was available this quarter before this report went to press. For SIGAR's latest reporting on UNAMA's civilian casualty data, see SIGAR's April 2019 *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*.

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## RS Civilian Casualties Data

RS reported 2,706 civilian casualties from January 1 through May 31, 2019, (757 killed and 1,949 wounded), a 32% decrease in the number reported during the same period last year. March and May were the most violent months, which saw 631 and 722 civilian casualties, respectively. Of the three provinces with the most civilian casualties during this period, about 15% of total casualties occurred in Kabul Province (402 casualties), 11% in Nangarhar (309), and 8% in Helmand (221), following 2018 trends. As seen in Table 3.7, Helmand Province was the most dangerous for civilians per capita.

RS reported that the majority of the civilian casualties in the first five months of 2019 have been caused by IEDs (43%), followed by direct fire (25%), and indirect fire (13%), also in line with 2018 trends. However, some shifts have occurred in 2019: the percentage of total casualties caused by IEDs was down by seven percentage points thus far in 2019 compared to the IED percentage of all attacks in 2018, while casualties caused by direct fire and indirect fire were up by three points and six points, respectively. These changes are likely due to recent Coalition and Afghan efforts to limit the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan's (IS-K) ability to conduct mass-casualty attacks with IEDs, but they could also be the result of an uptick in ground operations between the parties to the conflict.

RS attributed 87% of this year's civilian casualties (through May) to antigovernment elements (57% to unknown insurgents, 29% to the Taliban, and 1% to IS-K). The remaining 8% were attributed to progovernment forces (5% to the ANDSF and 3% to Coalition forces) and 5% to other or unknown forces.

# SIGAR: Resolute Support Estimates of Casualties: July 2019 - II

## RS-REPORTED CIVILIAN CASUALTIES: JANUARY-MAY 2019

Province	Population	Total Casualties	Casualties Per Thousand	Province	Population	Total Casualties	Casualties Per Thousand
Helmand	1,112,152	221	0.20	Takhar	1,206,745	75	0.06
Naristan	173,222	29	0.17	Paktiya	671,495	41	0.06
Nangrahar	1,664,582	309	0.17	Nunduz	1,237,001	58	0.05
Zabul	374,440	61	0.16	Balkh	1,633,048	79	0.05
Kunar	551,469	81	0.15	Samangan	479,695	22	0.05
Laghman	552,894	71	0.14	Ghor	645,015	39	0.05
Wuz	704,149	89	0.13	Badghis	807,825	28	0.05
Logar	481,271	59	0.12	Sare-Pol	690,595	25	0.04
Nopisa	540,051	64	0.12	Jawzjan	656,187	23	0.04
Baghlan	1,129,511	132	0.12	Powand	517,955	27	0.03
Farah	622,562	69	0.11	Wardak	729,583	23	0.03
Faryab	1,226,475	134	0.11	Daykundi	561,551	14	0.02
Konishar	1,512,293	136	0.09	Nimroz	202,489	2	0.01
Unagan	429,415	37	0.09	Bamyan	549,243	3	0.01
Herat	2,226,261	192	0.08	Badakhshan	1,165,967	6	0.01
Gharn	1,507,262	118	0.08	Panjshir	187,859	0	0.00
Kabul	5,452,662	402	0.07	<b>Total</b>	<b>33,229,950</b>	<b>2,796</b>	<b>Avg: 0.08</b>
Paktika	532,653	36	0.07				

Note: Casualties include killed and wounded. Population data is from LiveScan 2018 data provided by RS in its local district casualty assessment (October 22, 2018).

Source: RS, response to SIGAR data req. #12-0279 and 12/23/2018; SIGAR analysis of RS-provided data, 7/2019.

## U.S. Force Casualties

According to DOD, five U.S. military personnel were killed and 35 were wounded in action (WIA) in Afghanistan this reporting period (April 17 to July 15, 2019). As of July 15, 2019, a total of 72 U.S. military personnel have died in Afghanistan (53 from hostilities and 19 in non-hostile circumstances) and 427 military personnel were WIA since the start of Operation Freedom's Sentinel on January 1, 2015. Since the beginning of U.S. operations in Afghanistan in October 2001, 2,419 U.S. military personnel have died (1,898 from hostilities and 521 in non-hostile circumstances) and 20,530 have been WIA.

## Insider Attacks on U.S. and Coalition Forces

USFOR-A reported that there was one confirmed insider attack on U.S. and Coalition forces this quarter (data through May 31, 2019) that wounded two military personnel. There were no reported insider attacks from roughly the same period in 2018 (January 1 to May 16, 2018), but there were two such attacks during the same period in 2017 that wounded three personnel.

## ANDSF Casualties – Data Classified

USFOR-A continued to classify most ANDSF casualty data this quarter at the request of the Afghan government. SIGAR's questions about ANDSF casualties can be found in Appendix E of this report. Detailed information about ANDSF casualties is reported in the classified annex of this report. SIGAR also reports USFOR-A's estimates of insurgent casualties in the classified annex.

RS provided a general, unclassified assessment of ANDSF casualties this quarter. Though RS reported that effective (casualty producing) enemy-initiated attacks declined by about 7% this reporting period compared to the same period last year, RS also said that ANDSF casualties "are the same this quarter [March through May 2019] as they were in the same quarter one year ago."

DOD also reported in June on ANDSF casualty trends from December 2018 through May 2019. According to DOD, the majority of ANDSF casualties continue to be the result of direct-fire attacks, with IED attacks and mine strikes contributing to overall casualties at a much lower level. While the number of ANDSF casualties incurred from conducting local patrols was at the same level as the same period last year, those suffered while conducting checkpoint operations were 7% higher than the same reporting period last year, and casualties incurred during offensive operations has increased by 17% over the same period.

# UNAMA Estimates of Civilian Casualties: 2nd Quarter 2019 - I

## (Highest recorded civilian deaths from conflict at mid-year point)

**KABUL** - Latest figures released today by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) show continuing record high casualty rates being inflicted on the Afghan civilian population by the warring parties. Covering the period 1 January to 30 June 2018, findings include the **killing of more civilians in the first six months of this year – 1,692 deaths – than at any comparable time over the last ten years since records have been kept.**

UNAMA renews its call on parties to the conflict to increase efforts to protect the civilian population and encourages parties to work towards reaching a peaceful settlement.

UNAMA's latest update documents 5,122 civilian casualties (1,692 deaths and 3,430 injured) - a three percent overall decrease from last year – with civilian deaths up by one percent, the most recorded in the same time period, since UNAMA began systematic documentation of civilian casualties in 2009. The number of civilians injured decreased by five percent.

Civilian casualty figures remain at record highs despite the unprecedented unilateral ceasefires by Government and Taliban that occurred over the three-day period 15-17 June 2018. Aside from casualties resulting from two *Daesh*/Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP)-claimed suicide attacks in Nangarhar during the ceasefires, UNAMA documented almost no other civilian casualties during the break in fighting.

“The brief ceasefire demonstrated that the fighting can be stopped and that Afghan civilians no longer need to bear the brunt of the war,” said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan. “We urge parties to seize all opportunities to find a peaceful settlement – this is the best way that they can protect all civilians,” said Yamamoto, who is also head of UNAMA.

The use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in attacks by Anti-Government Elements remained the leading cause of civilian casualties. The combined use of suicide and non-suicide IEDs caused nearly half of all civilian casualties. Continuing trends first documented last year by UNAMA, the majority of IED casualties were caused by suicide and complex attacks, which again were responsible for record high civilian casualties, resulting in 1,413 civilian casualties (427 deaths and 986 injured), a 22 percent increase.

**UNAMA attributed 52 percent of civilian casualties from suicide and complex attacks to *Daesh*/ISKP, mainly in Kabul and Nangarhar province. The Taliban were responsible for 40 percent, the remainder were attributed to unidentified Anti-Government Elements.**

Ground engagements were the second leading cause of civilian casualties, followed by targeted and deliberate killings, aerial operations, and explosive remnants of war. Civilians living in the provinces of Kabul, Nangarhar, Faryab, Helmand and Kandahar were most impacted by the conflict.

While the mission documented decreases in civilian casualties from some incident types, notably an 18 percent reduction in casualties caused by ground engagements, UNAMA documented a disturbing increase in the number of civilian casualties from suicide and complex attacks by Anti-Government Elements, with more than half attributed to *Daesh*/ISKP. The mission also documented a sharp increase in civilian casualties from aerial attacks by Pro-Government Forces.

The armed conflict caused 544 women casualties (157 deaths and 387 injured), with almost half from ground engagements. While overall women casualties decreased by 15 percent compared to the same period in 2017, women casualties remain a matter of grave concern.

UNAMA recorded 1,355 child casualties (363 deaths and 992 injured), a 15 percent drop compared to the same period in 2017. Though UNAMA recorded decreases in child casualties from explosive remnants of war, 89 percent of civilian casualties from explosive remnants of war were children.

Source: UNAMA, “Highest recorded civilian deaths from conflict at mid-year point - latest UNAMA update,” QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT, 15 July 2018, <https://unama.unmissions.org/highest-recorded-civilian-deaths-conflict-mid-year-point-latest-unama-update>, and [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama\\_poc\\_midyear\\_update\\_2019\\_-\\_30\\_july\\_2019\\_english.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama_poc_midyear_update_2019_-_30_july_2019_english.pdf).

## UNAMA Estimates of Civilian Casualties: 2nd Quarter 2019 - II

“UNAMA continued to document the toxic consequences of this conflict, with Afghan boys and girls killed, maimed, sexually assaulted, abused, recruited and used by parties to the conflict,” said Danielle Bell, UNAMA’s Human Rights Chief. “Conflict related violence continued to erode the rights of children to education, healthcare, freedom of movement and other fundamental rights, as well as family life, playing outdoors and simply enjoying a childhood free of the brutal effects of war,” said Bell.

The mission is concerned by the emerging trend of targeting of education facilities by Anti-Government Elements as a reaction to operations by Pro-Government Forces. In Nangarhar province alone, through the month of June, the mission recorded 13 related incidents attributed to *Daesh*/ISKP.

UNAMA recorded 341 civilian casualties (117 deaths and 224 injured) from election-related violence. Such violence began with the start of voter registration on 14 April, after which UNAMA documented attacks on *tazkira* (national ID) distribution centers and voter registration sites, as well as election-related personnel, through the use of IEDs, suicide attacks and targeted killings.

UNAMA is concerned that the number of civilian casualties attributed to Anti-Government Elements continued at record high levels, including increased civilian casualties from attacks targeting civilians. Anti-Government Elements caused 3,413 civilian casualties (1,127 deaths and 2,286 injured). UNAMA attributed 67 percent of all civilian casualties to Anti-Government Elements, with 42 percent attributed to the Taliban, 18 percent to *Daesh*/ISKP, and seven percent to unidentified others.

The continued use of indiscriminate and unlawful pressure-plate IEDs by Anti-Government Elements caused 314 civilian casualties (114 deaths and 200 injured), mostly attributed to the Taliban. This represents a 43 percent reduction compared to the same period last year. The mission also recorded a 23 percent decrease in civilian casualties caused by Anti-Government Elements (mainly Taliban) during ground engagements. UNAMA has engaged in extensive advocacy efforts with parties to the conflict on civilian casualties caused by pressure-plate IEDs and ground engagements over the past several years.

UNAMA attributed 1,047 civilian casualties to Pro-Government Forces, approximately the same as during the corresponding period in 2017. Pro-Government Forces caused 20 percent of all civilian casualties in the first half of 2018 (17 percent by Afghan national security forces, two percent by international military forces, and one percent by pro-Government armed groups).

The mission documented a 21 percent reduction in ground engagement civilian casualties attributed to Pro-Government Forces (mainly Afghan national security forces), though this was offset by a significant increase in civilian casualties from aerial attacks.

Amidst continued reports of expanded airstrike operations, during the first six months of 2018, the mission documented 353 civilian casualties (149 deaths and 204 injured) from aerial attacks, a 52 percent increase from the same period in 2017. The mission attributed 52 percent of all civilian casualties from aerial attacks to the Afghan Air Force, 45 percent to international military forces, and the remaining three percent to unidentified Pro-Government Forces. The report urges forces to uphold their commitments to take continuous steps to improve civilian protection in their aerial operations.

Actions by the Government of Afghanistan to prevent civilian casualties continued, resulting in a reduction of civilian deaths and injuries from their operations, particularly from ground fighting, an area that UNAMA has consistently focused its advocacy with parties to the conflict in recent years.

# UNAMA Estimates of Civilian Casualties: 2nd Quarter 2019 - III

## Pro-Government Forces

From 1 January to 30 June 2019, UNAMA attributed 1,397 civilian casualties (717 deaths and 680 injured) to Pro-Government Forces, a 31 percent increase from the corresponding period in 2018. Pro-Government Forces caused 37 percent of all civilian casualties in the first half of 2019 (18 percent by Afghan national security forces, 12 percent by International Military Forces, 2 percent by pro-Government armed groups and the remainder to undetermined or multiple Pro-Government Forces). This compares to 20 percent of all civilian casualties caused by Pro-Government Forces in the first half of 2018. The mission documented an increase in civilian casualties from ground engagements, mainly attributed to Afghan national security forces; aerial attacks, mainly attributed to International Military Forces; and search operations, mainly attributed to National Directorate of Security (NDS) Special Forces, the Khost Protection Force and Paktika-based Shaheen Forces, which are supported by International Military Forces.

## Aerial operations

Amidst reports of increasing airstrikes as part of the United States' strategy to target Taliban leaders and "set the conditions for a political settlement", 17 civilian casualties from aerial operations continued to increase throughout the first half of 2019 as compared to the same period in 2018. The number of airstrike incidents and civilian casualties resulting from this tactic also increased in the second quarter of 2019 as compared to the first quarter. From 1 January to 30 June 2019, aerial operations caused 519 civilian casualties (363 deaths and 156 injured), 150 of which were child casualties (89 deaths and 61 injured). This represents a 39 percent increase in overall civilian casualties from this tactic in comparison to the first half of 2018. While the number of injured decreased, the number of civilians killed more than doubled in comparison to the first six months of 2018, highlighting the lethal character of this tactic. UNAMA attributed 83 percent of the civilian casualties resulting from aerial operations to International Military Forces, nine percent to the Afghan Air Force, and the remaining eight percent to undetermined Pro-Government Forces.

UNAMA continues to express serious concern about the rising level of civilian harm as a result of aerial operations, particularly those conducted in support of Afghan forces on the ground and strikes on civilian structures. For instance, on 25 March at around 2200 hrs in Surobi district, Kabul, Afghan National Army and United States military forces conducted a search operation in a residential area of a local Taliban commander, which led to an exchange of fire with Taliban. Air support was called in, resulting in five civilians killed (including three women and one boy) and four injured (including three women). Resolute Support acknowledged in a media statement shortly after the incident that four women and one child were killed. In another incident on 23 May in Shib Koh district, Farah province, International Military Forces carried out an airstrike reportedly targeting a Taliban location, which caused the deaths of two male employees of a local NGO delivering hygiene services. The airstrike also destroyed the NGO compound and damaged a project vehicle.

The high level of civilian harm resulting from these aerial operations reflects the risks inherent in conducting strikes in civilian-populated areas, or on homes or other civilian structures. UNAMA has in recent years consistently raised its concern about the increasing numbers of civilian casualties arising from airstrikes, and the need for continuous review of targeting criteria and pre-engagement precautionary measures, particularly considering the likelihood of civilians being present in the same buildings and locations as Anti-Government Elements. UNAMA reiterates its calls on Pro-Government Forces to strengthen efforts to review incidents with allegations of civilian casualties, particularly in the context of partnered operations, conduct effective battle damage assessments, and increase engagements with affected communities on incidents in which civilian casualties have occurred.

## Airstrikes on drug manufacturing facilities.

Following the announcement of the United States' South Asia strategy in August 2017, and a relaxation of the rules of engagement for United States Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A), USFOR-A began to target "revenue streams" of Anti-Government Elements, including drug manufacturing facilities (commonly known as "labs").

# UNAMA Estimates of Civilian Casualties: 2nd Quarter 2019 - IV

UNAMA documented a number of airstrikes thereafter on civilian structures reported to be used as drug labs, often conducted at night and in support of counternarcotic operations on the ground. USFOR-A indicated after the first quarter of 2019 that it had ended its campaign against drug processing labs and warehouses. However, on 5 May, during the daytime, USFOR-A carried out a series of airstrikes against what it reported to be more than 60 drug manufacturing "labs" in Bakwa district, Farah province, extending into Delaram district, Nimroz province. According to USFOR-A, it targeted methamphetamine labs that were controlled and operated by Taliban, and it considered all personnel inside of the laboratories to be Taliban combatants. USFOR-A assessed that there were no civilian casualties resulting from the operation.

However, UNAMA received multiple reports of significant numbers of civilian casualties resulting from this operation. It carried out a mission to Bakwa District, which is under Taliban control. UNAMA is continuing its verification of civilian casualties stemming from this incident. UNAMA intends to publish a separate report on this incident.

## **Search operations**

Between 1 January and 30 June 2019, UNAMA recorded 218 civilian casualties (159 deaths and 59 injured) as a result of search operations, more than half of which were caused by NDS Special Forces. This represents a 79 percent increase from the first half of 2018, when UNAMA documented 122 civilian casualties (99 deaths and 23 injured).

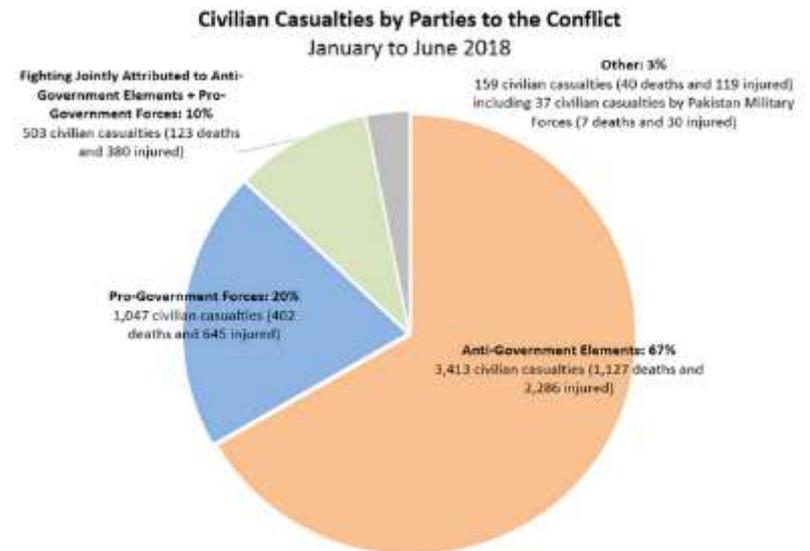
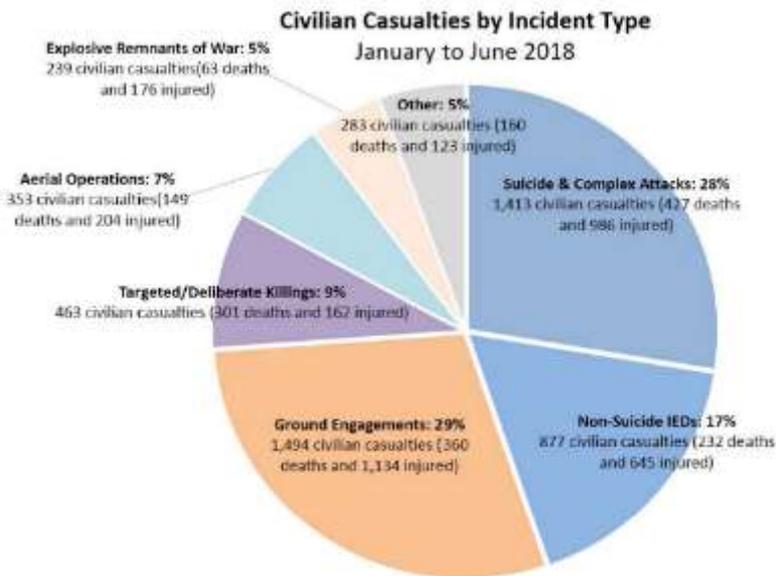
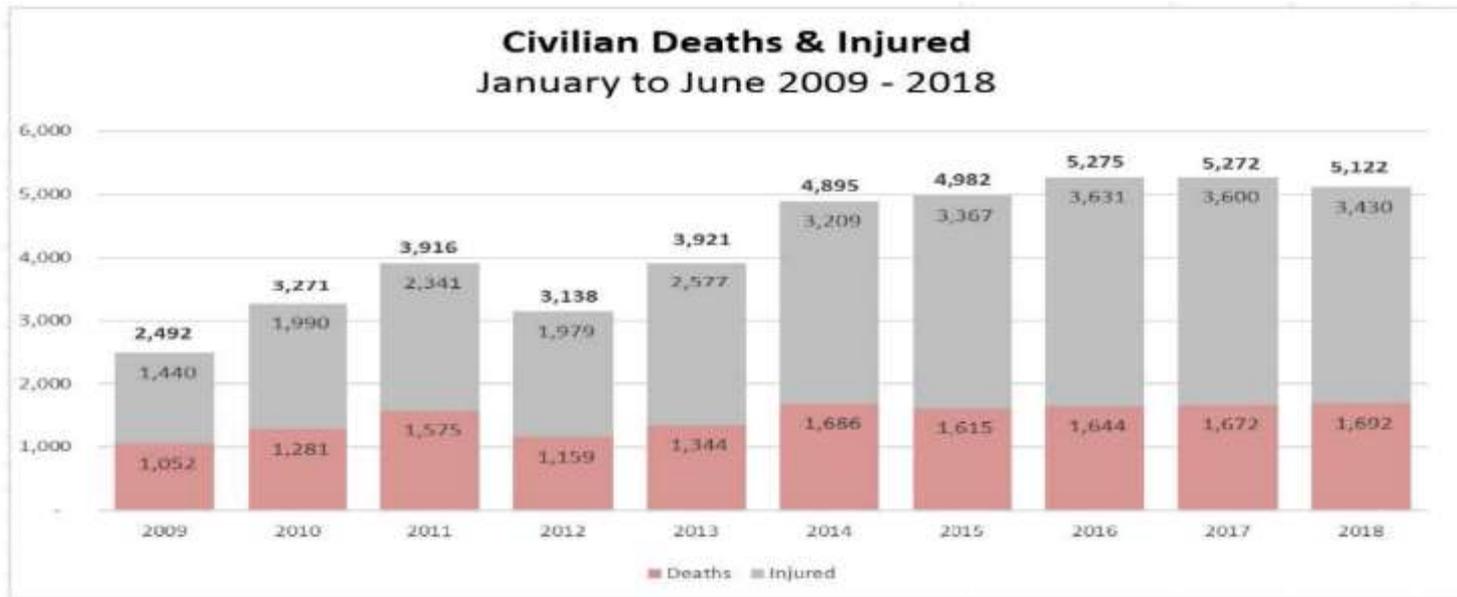
UNAMA has increasingly raised concern in recent reports about the rising level of civilian harm caused during search operations, particularly those carried out by the NDS Special Forces and the Khost Protection Force. In 2019, UNAMA has also started to document civilian casualties resulting from search operations in Paktika province carried out by a pro-Government armed group referred to locally as "Shaheen Force," which is reported to be supported by United States Forces. UNAMA has documented that search operations carried out by these forces have significantly higher civilian casualty figures as well as higher death rates in comparison to operations carried out by the Afghan National Army. In addition to the rising numbers of civilian casualties, UNAMA has also documented alarming human rights abuses by these forces, including intentional killings, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests, intentional property damage, and other abuses.

For example, on the night from 22 to 23 February, NDS Special Forces, with International Military Forces' support, conducted a search operation on Taliban locations in multiple villages of Daimardad district of Maidan Wardak province. During the operation, ground forces used explosive material to destroy the door of a house. They pulled a couple and their children and relatives out of their rooms, blindfolded the father and adult son, and moved the rest of the family to a neighboring house. The father was shot and killed by NDS Special Forces in the garage of the house and the son was arrested and transferred to Kabul. During the operation, another civilian man was shot and killed in his home in the same village.

UNAMA reiterates that the killing, by any party to the conflict, of persons taking no active part in hostilities is explicitly prohibited by Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions at any time and any place, and may amount to a war crime. UNAMA also reiterates that under international human rights law, the unlawful killing of a person constitutes a violation of the right to life. States must investigate the use of lethal force by their agents in the context of law enforcement operations and situations of alleged violations of the right to life committed during armed conflict.

As it has done several times previously, UNAMA calls on the Afghan authorities to immediately disband and disarm all illegal armed groups and militias, including the Khost Protection Force and Shaheen forces, or formally incorporate members into the Afghan national security forces following a robust vetting procedure; increase transparency and accountability concerning operations of NDS Special Forces, which fall outside of the official Afghan national security forces' chain of command; and investigate all allegations of human rights abuses and international humanitarian law violations with a view to ensuring accountability.

# UNAMA Estimates of Civilian Casualties: 2nd Quarter 2019 - V



# World Bank Estimate of Casualty and Security Trends: July 2019

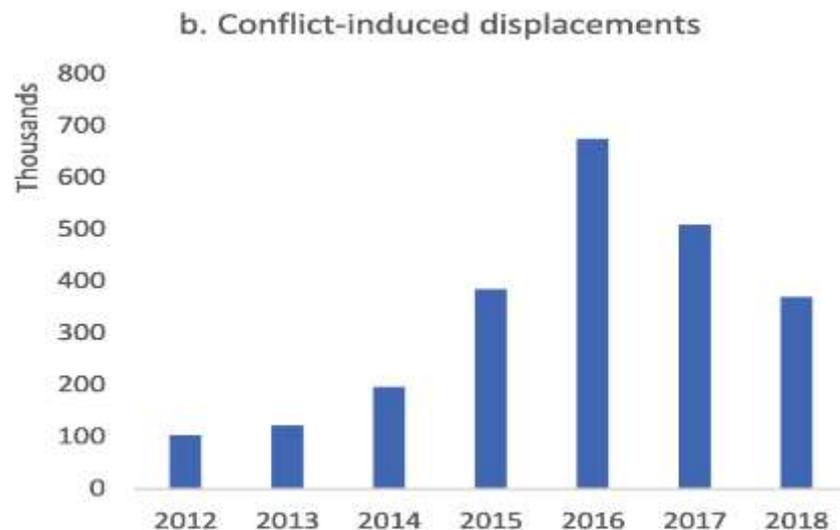
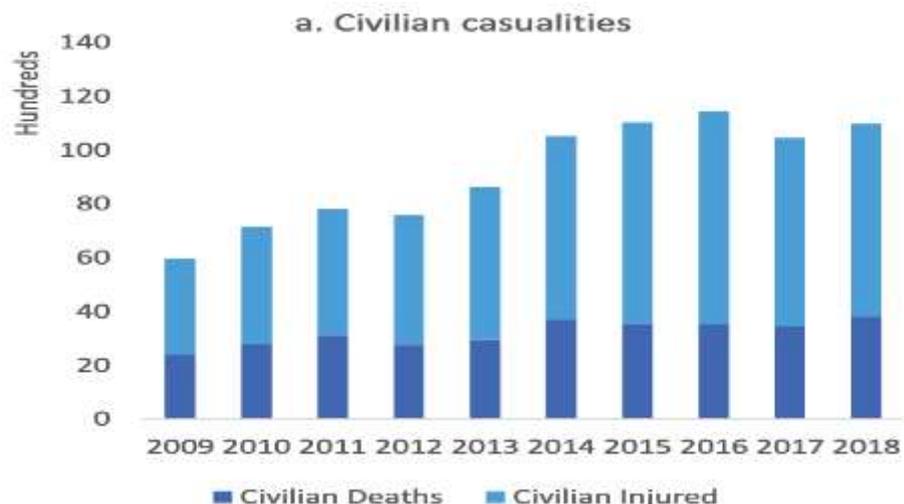
Intensifying violence and political uncertainty continue to impact confidence and growth. The security situation continued to deteriorate through 2018.

Total civilian casualties reached 10,993 during 2018, higher than 10,459 in 2017, with civilian deaths reaching a record high of 3,804. Anti-government elements inflicted 64 percent of casualties (59 percent of civilian deaths and 66 percent of injuries). Suicide and complex attacks and ground battles remained the leading causes of civilian casualties.

Conflict-driven displacement remained substantial but decreased by 27 percent to around 369,600 in 2018. Total civilian casualties declined slightly during the first quarter of 2019 relative to first quarter of 2018. Political uncertainties also intensified. The parliamentary elections were held in October, with voter turnout reaching around 47 percent. A total of 435 civilian casualties were recorded during the three election days due to election-related violence—significantly exceeding casualties over the four previous elections.

Political uncertainties were further compounded by: i) uncertainty regarding the continued level and duration of international security support; ii) the possibility of a disruptive presidential election (now scheduled for September); and iii) the uncertain process and outcome of ongoing peace negotiations with the Taliban.

While a political settlement with the Taliban could present opportunities for significant improvements in security, outcomes will depend heavily on whether peace can be sustained, the nature of any post-settlement government, and the broader post-peace institutional environment.



**Estimates of Terrorism in Afghanistan  
Are Uncertain But Seem to Reflect  
Steady Increases**

# Terrorism in Afghanistan: Uncertain to Dubious Reporting

Reporting on terrorism in Afghanistan, as distinguished from insurgency and counterinsurgency, is erratic and uncertain. Only the LIG reporting provides useful declassified details on the estimated size of the threat, although the *Long War Journal* provides useful outside analysis and maps of centers of terrorist activity.

As a result, the metrics and summary assessments in this section are more a warning of the problems in distinguishing between terrorism and insurgency/counterinsurgency, than a source of useful data and insights. The continued level of insurgent conflict in Afghanistan makes it difficult to impossible to distinguish between terrorism and insurgent action, a problem compounded in many areas by a high level of social and tribal violence. START does estimate that the Taliban accounted for some 60% of terrorism between 2011 and 2016, but such counts seem to be extremely uncertain.

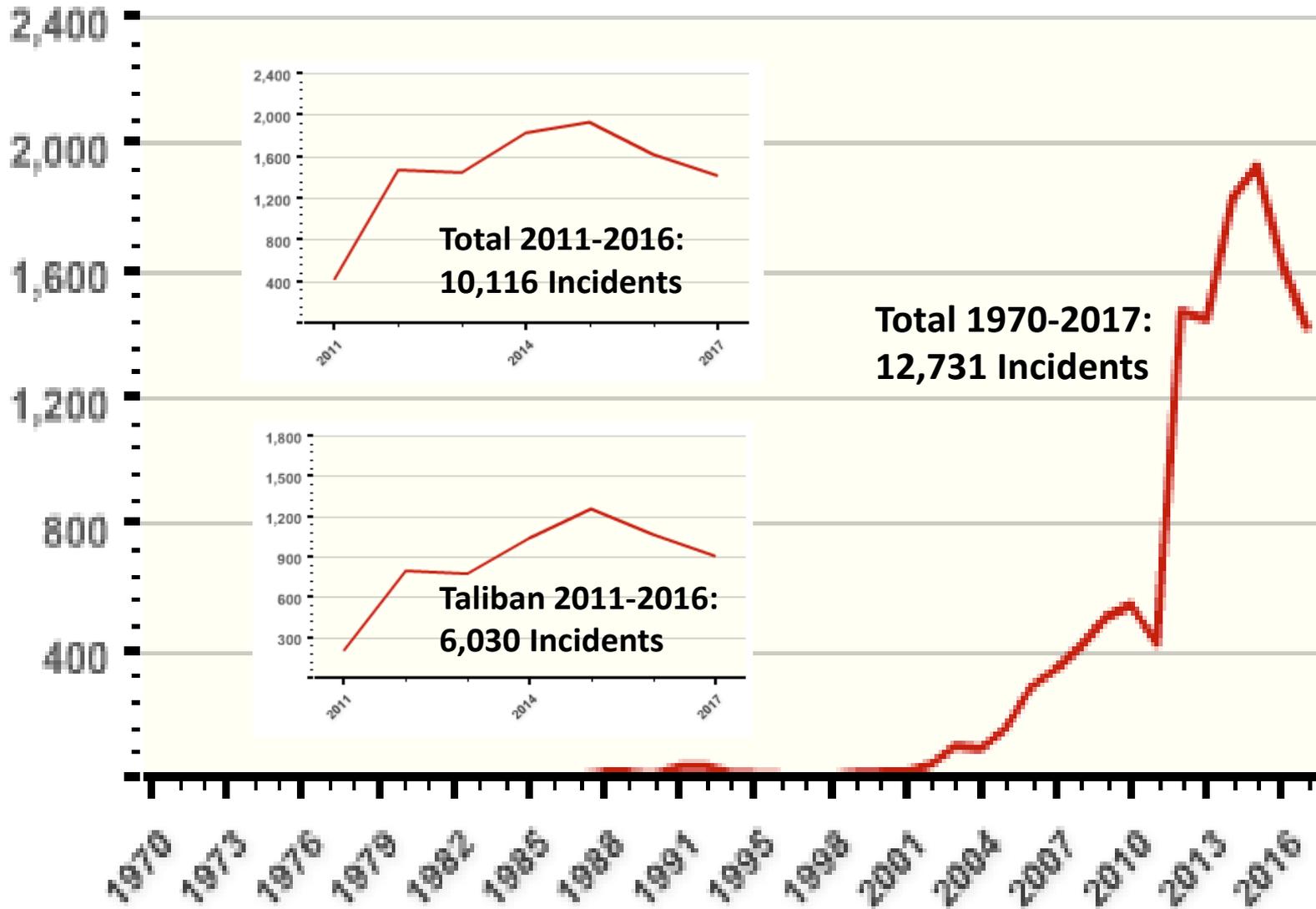
IHS Janes and START make very different estimates of the level of terrorist attacks/incidents in 2017, and IHS Janes and UNAMA make very different estimates of civilian casualties – a category where there seem to be no clear criteria for separating out casualties from terrorism from casualties caused by insurgent fighting.

Many terrorist attacks are also estimated to have been directed against the Army and the Police, and it is not clear that there is a basis for distinguishing between terrorism and warfare in many such cases. The fact that guns and explosives are used in so many “terrorist” incidents is a further indication of the difficulty in distinguishing between insurgency and terrorism.

What is clear is that Daesh/ISIS – which has not been a major player in the insurgency – has become a more significant player in terrorism. UN reporting indicates that ISIL strongholds exist in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan and Laghman. The UN estimates the total strength of ISIL in Afghanistan at between 2,500 and 4,000 militants.

The UN also notes, however, that the Taliban attacked ISIS forces in 2018, and inflicted serious casualties on at least one occasion.

# START: Terrorism Trends: 1970-2017

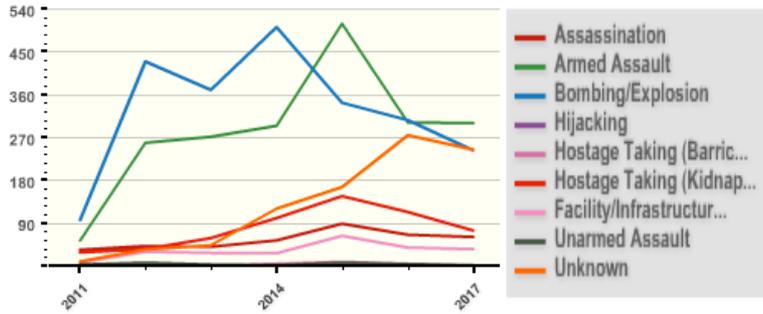


SOURCE; START ADVANCED DATABASE,

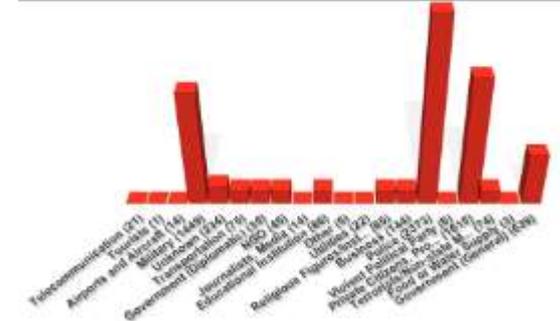
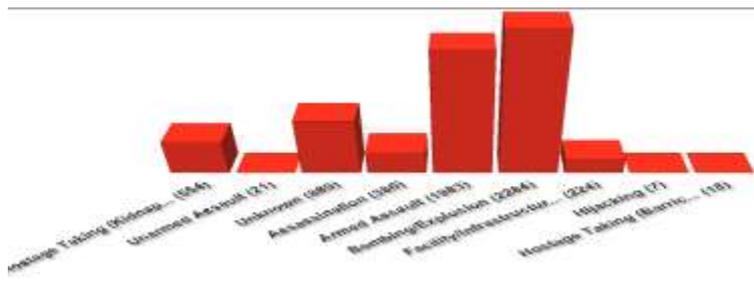
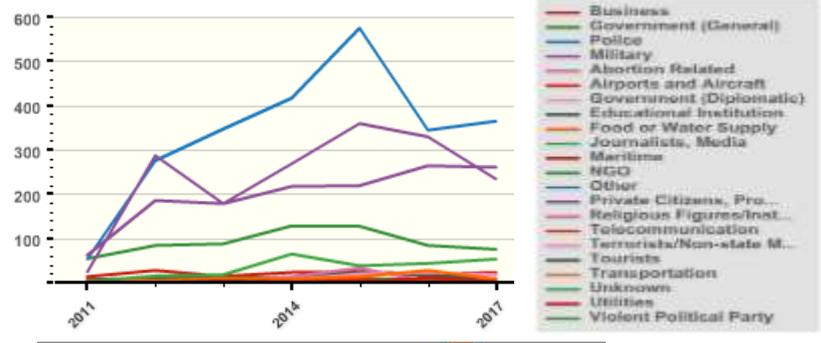
[https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=perpetrator&casualties\\_type=b&casualties\\_max=&start\\_yearonly=2011&end\\_yearonly=2017&dtp2=all&country=4&perpetrator=652,20529&weapon=1,2,6,7,5,8,9,4,12,3,11,13,10](https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=perpetrator&casualties_type=b&casualties_max=&start_yearonly=2011&end_yearonly=2017&dtp2=all&country=4&perpetrator=652,20529&weapon=1,2,6,7,5,8,9,4,12,3,11,13,10), Accessed 29.4.2019.

# START: Taliban Attack Patterns: 2011-2017

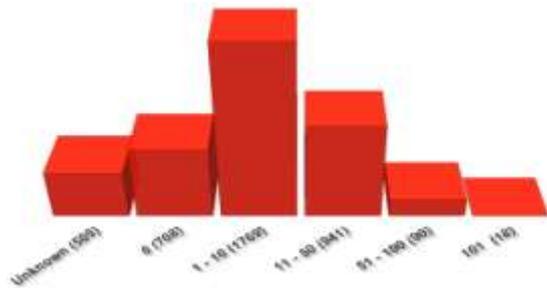
## Attack Type – 6,030 Incidents



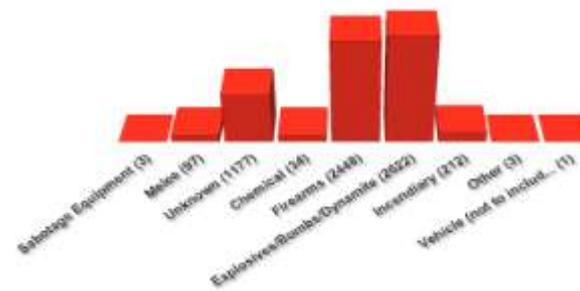
## Target Type – 6,030 Incidents



## Casualties: Killed & Injured Per Incident – 6,030 Incidents



## Weapon Type – 6,030 Incidents



Years: (between 2011 and 2017). All incidents regardless of doubt.  
 SOURCE; START ADVANCED DATABASE,  
[https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=target&casualties\\_type=b&casualties\\_max=&start\\_yearonly=2011&end\\_yearonly=2017&ctp2=all&country=4&perpetrator=20029,40325,20225,40151,652,20529](https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=target&casualties_type=b&casualties_max=&start_yearonly=2011&end_yearonly=2017&ctp2=all&country=4&perpetrator=20029,40325,20225,40151,652,20529), Accessed 29.4.2019.

# Comparative START, HIS Janes, and UNAMA Estimates of Terrorist Attacks and Total Civilian Casualties: 2017-2018

Source	Attacks/Incidents		Non-Militant Fatalities	
	2017	2018	2017	2018
IHS Janes	661	869	2,299	4,180
START	1,414	ND	ND	ND
<b>UNAMA Total</b>			<b>3,438</b>	<b>3,804</b>
• Anti-Government Elements (AGEs)			2,303	2,243
• Taliban			1,574	1,348
• Daesh/ISKP			399	681

SOURCES; IHS Janes, 2018 Global Attack Index, Afghanistan; ; START ADVANCED DATABASE, [https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=target&casualties\\_type=b&casualties\\_max=&start\\_yearonly=2011&end\\_yearonly=2017&dtp2=all&country=4&perpetrator=20029,40325,20225,40151,652,20529](https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?chart=target&casualties_type=b&casualties_max=&start_yearonly=2011&end_yearonly=2017&dtp2=all&country=4&perpetrator=20029,40325,20225,40151,652,20529) , Accessed 29.4.2019; UNAMA, Afghanistan: *Protection of Civilians in Armed Combat, annual 2018, Annual 2018*, 24.2.2019.

## UN Assessment of Daesh/ISIS Threat: 2/2019

...while ISIL has transformed into a covert network, including in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, it remains a threat as a global organization with centralized leadership. This threat is increased by returning, relocating or released foreign terrorist fighters.

At present, ISIL strongholds in Afghanistan are in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan and Laghman. The total strength of ISIL in Afghanistan is estimated at between 2,500 and 4,000 militants... ISIL is also reported to control some training camps in Afghanistan, and to have created a network of cells in various Afghan cities, including Kabul. The local ISIL leadership maintains close contacts with the group's core in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. Important personnel appointments are made through the central leadership, and the publication of propaganda videos is coordinated. Following the killing of ISIL leader Abu Sayed Bajauri on 14 July 2018, the leadership council of ISIL in Afghanistan appointed Mawlawi Ziya ul-Haq (aka Abu Omar Al-Khorasani) as the fourth "emir" of the group since its establishment.

...Throughout 2018, ISIL is assessed to have carried out 38 terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, many of them high profile, including some in Kabul... ISIL targets have included Afghan security forces, the Taliban, North Atlantic Treaty Organization military personnel, diplomats, employees of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, journalists and medical institutions, as well as religious minorities viewed by ISIL as soft targets.

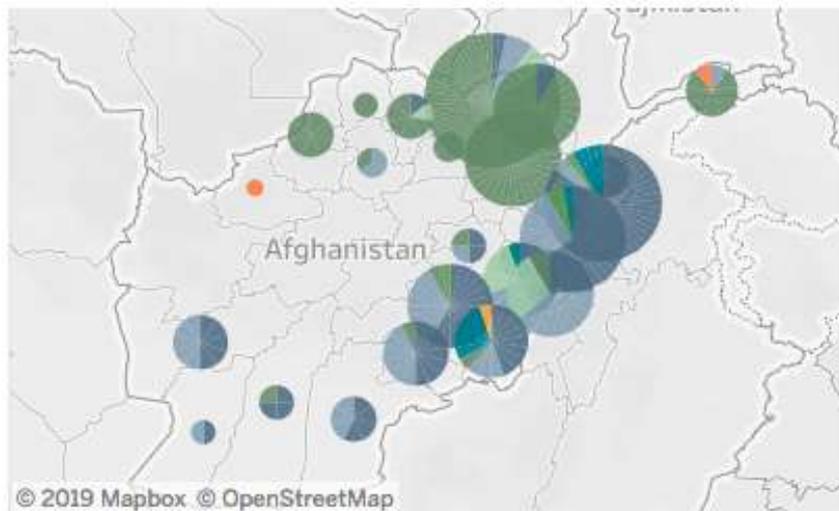
...ISIL suffered a severe setback in northern Afghanistan during the reporting period. In July 2018, 1,000 Taliban attacked ISIL positions in Jowzjan province, killing 200 ISIL fighters, while 254 ISIL fighters surrendered to government forces and 25 foreign terrorist fighters surrendered to the Taliban. One Member State assesses that the ISIL presence in Jowzjan has been eliminated while, elsewhere in the north, a minority of Taliban – approximately 170 fighters in Faryab, 100 in Sari Pul and 50 in Balkh – retain sympathies for ISIL...

...ISIL is seeking to expand its area of activity in Central Asia and has called for terrorist attacks targeting public gatherings, primarily in the Ferghana Valley of the Central Asian region. On 30 July 2018, ISIL claimed responsibility for the killing of four foreign cyclists in Tajikistan. In November, ISIL stated that one of its fighters was responsible for the attack that had sparked the riot in a high-security prison in Khujand, Tajikistan.

...ISIL killed 24 and injured 60 people in the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 22 September 2018 Ahvaz attack...

# Long War Journal Estimates of Terrorist Activity in 2019

## Coalition raids against al Qaeda and allied groups in Afghanistan, 2007 to present.



This map shows US and Afghan raids against foreign terrorist groups in Afghanistan by province from 2007 to present. The data is based on press releases from the US, NATO, and Afghan security services, as well as martyrdom statements by jihadist groups announcing the deaths of its leaders in Coalition raids in Afghanistan. Map and data created by FDD's Long War Journal.

BY [BILL ROGGIO](#) | May 21, 2019 | [admin@longwarjournal.org](mailto:admin@longwarjournal.org) | [@billroggio](#)

Al Qaeda is operating “across the country” and not confined to one region, the commander of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan confirmed.

General Austin Miller, the commander of Resolute Support Mission and US Forces – Afghanistan, confirmed several analyses by *FDD's Long War Journal*, which has noted for years that al Qaeda's footprint spans all regions of Afghanistan.

“We have seen al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Yes, in different parts of Afghanistan,” Miller said, according to *TOLONews*. “In different parts of Afghanistan, we can find them, so it's not one particular region, it's across the country.”

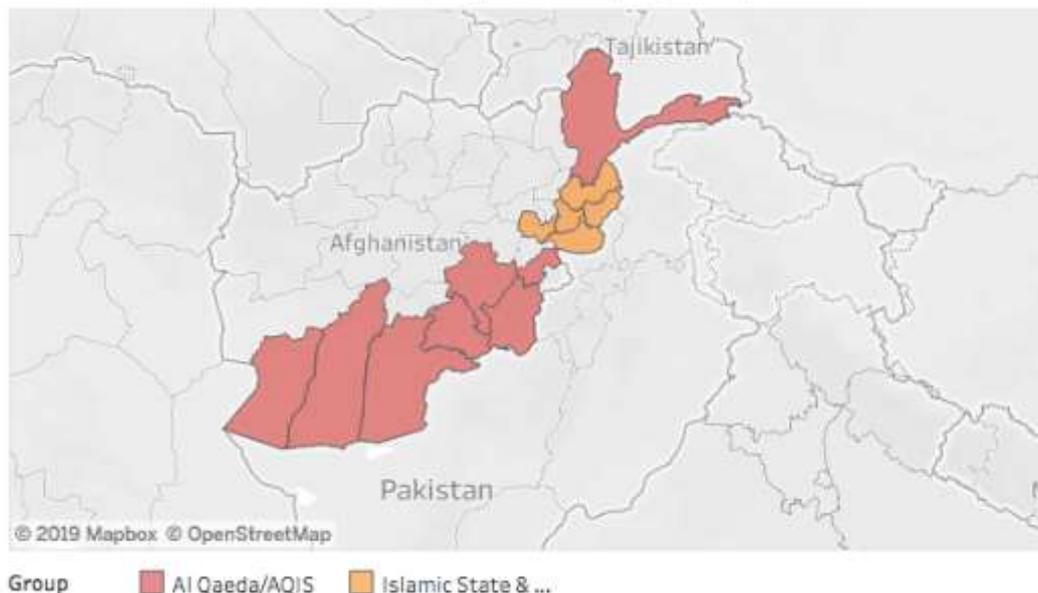
*FDD's Long War Journal* has tracked al Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan for well over a decade, using press releases and public statements from the US military, NATO's command in Afghanistan, and Afghan security services, as well as the jihadist groups' own martyrdom statements. This data was then geotagged to a map (above) which tracks the terrorist group's operations and movement, as well as the US and Afghan military's operations against them. [See [Taliban continues to host foreign terrorist groups, despite assurances to the contrary.](#)]

The data clearly show that al Qaeda and allied terrorist groups have been operating on Afghan soil for the past two decades with the approval of the Taliban. These terrorist organizations often operate in areas controlled by the Taliban – and the jihadists killed in coalition or Afghan raids often die alongside members of the Afghan Taliban.

Since 2007, NATO, US, and Afghan forces, have launched *at least* 373 operations against these foreign terror groups in 27 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

# Long War Journal Estimate of Al Qaida and ISIS Presence and Activity

Based on recent UN reports & US/Afghan operations



BY [BILL ROGGIO](#) | May 21, 2019 | [admin@longwarjournal.org](mailto:admin@longwarjournal.org) | [@billroggio](#)

FDD's *Long War Journal* has also created a map, seen above, of al Qaeda's and the Islamic State's presence in Afghanistan based primarily on the last two United Nations Security Council reports on al Qaeda and the Islamic State's presence in Afghanistan. In its latest report, the UNSC warned that both groups maintain a significant presence in Afghanistan. [See [UN: Al Qaeda continues to view Afghanistan as a 'safe haven'](#).]

The data was supplemented with operational reporting from the US military and Afghan security forces in recent years. The map above shows the presence of al Qaeda and al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), as well as the Islamic State, across 13 Afghan provinces. Al Qaeda and its regional branch, Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, are present in all 13 of the shaded provinces. The Islamic State's Khorasan Province is present in five of the shaded provinces.

The US government, led by Zalmay Khalilzad – the Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation – is currently negotiating with the Taliban and has said the terror organization can be an effective counterterrorism partner and prevent Afghanistan from being used as a launchpad for international terrorist attacks.

However, Al Qaeda and the Taliban remain steadfast allies, and Khalilzad is well aware of that fact. While testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee in July 2016, he personally described the Taliban as an “extremist organization” with enduring ties to al Qaeda, and said the two would not part ways. [See [Khalilzad flip flops on Pakistan, Taliban's relationship with al Qaeda](#).]

Miller's comments about al Qaeda's presence throughout Afghanistan should call into question the US efforts to negotiate a peace deal with the Taliban. The Taliban is clearly supporting al Qaeda to this day, because al Qaeda would not be able to operate “across the country” without the explicit support and approval of the Taliban.

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# DoD Reporting on Terrorist and Extremist Threat: July 4, 2019

## ISIS-K

During this reporting period, ISIS-K maintained the ability to defend itself and conduct attacks, and made territorial gains in its strongholds in eastern Afghanistan despite pressure from the Coalition, ANDSF, and the Taliban. The detention of ISIS-K militants in Kabul temporarily degraded the attack tempo and denied propaganda victories. Over the past few years ISIS Khorasan continues to take a more active role in the management of regional ISIS networks in India, Bangladesh, and other areas assigned by ISIS-core, but its progress in enabling or inspiring attacks outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan very likely has been limited. ISIS-K maintains the capability to conduct mass casualty attacks with the intent to weaken public support for the Afghan Government and the Taliban. During this reporting period, it conducted attacks primarily against Afghan Government and security forces and election targets of opportunity. ISIS-K also conducted several attacks in December and again in February and March against Taliban forces and ANDSF in Kunar Province aimed at expanding their territory. In March 2019, ISIS-K launched a rocket attack against a political gathering in Kabul and a suicide attack near Jalalabad Airfield killing at least 11 and 16 people, respectively. ISIS-K has fewer than 2,000 fighters operating in its safe haven in eastern Afghanistan. In this period, ISIS-K remained consolidated in pockets of its primary safe haven in Nangarhar, but did make territorial gains against the Taliban in Kunar Province. Social media remains the primary method for ISIS affiliates to communicate, and it is also a medium through which ISIS propaganda influences online.

Regionally, the group continues to evade, counter, and recover from sustained CT and combat pressure to maintain its territorial safe haven in eastern Afghanistan, from which it plans attacks and spreads its ideology to displace al-Qa'ida and the Taliban as the predominant regional militant group. Although ISIS-K continues to develop connections to other networks outside of Afghanistan, it remains operationally limited to South and Central Asia.

## Al-Qa'ida

Al-Qa'ida poses a very limited threat to U.S. personnel and our partners in Afghanistan. Al-Qa'ida's affiliate—al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)—poses a greater threat to those elements. AQIS routinely supports and works with low-level Taliban in its efforts to undermine the Afghan Government, and maintains an enduring interest in attacking U.S. forces and Western targets in the region. AQIS faces continuous Coalition CT pressure and will focus on ensuring its safe haven remains viable. Additionally, AQIS assists local Taliban in some attacks, according to al-Qa'ida statements.

The few remaining al-Qa'ida personnel focus largely on survival, while ceding al-Qa'ida's regional presence to AQIS. AQIS continues to work toward its stated goals of freeing occupied Muslim lands, establishing an Islamic caliphate, and implementing Shar'ia law. AQIS's interest in attacking U.S. forces and other Western targets in Afghanistan and the region persists, however, continuing Coalition CT pressure has reduced AQIS's ability to conduct operations in Afghanistan.

## LIG: ISIS-K Makes Tactical Gains – March 2019

ISIS-K claimed responsibility for multiple attacks in Afghanistan during the quarter, particularly in Kabul, Nangarhar, and Kunar provinces.<sup>68</sup> Many ISIS-K attacks targeted the country's Shia minority, but they also targeted Taliban fighters, the Afghan government, and civilian organizations. For example, on March 6, ISIS-K suicide bombers attacked a construction company in Nangarhar province, killing 16 civilians. The following day, ISIS-K launched a mortar attack on a Shia memorial service in Kabul attended by several political leaders, killing 11 people.

The DIA reported to the DoD OIG that ISIS-K “made tactical gains” against the Taliban and the ANDSF during the quarter. While the ANDSF conducted operations against ISIS-K in eastern Afghanistan, the group expanded the territory it holds in Kunar province. USFOR-A reported to the DoD OIG that ISIS-K is operating in Kabul, as well as Nangarhar and Kunar provinces. USFOR-A said that it is likely that ISIS-K operates in additional provinces of northeastern Afghanistan and that it is “highly likely” that smaller ISIS-K cells operate in Afghan government-controlled and Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan.

USFOR-A assessed that ISIS-K will likely focus future attacks on “targets of opportunity” and high-profile attacks that garner media attention and increase public perception of the group's capability.

U.S. forces continued unilateral counterterrorism operations against ISIS-K and also supported Afghan special forces as they targeted ISIS-K fighters. NSOCC-A told the DoD OIG that successful counterterrorism operations during the quarter included the detention of ISIS-K recruiters and financiers. NSOCC-A told the DoD OIG that as a result of these operations, ISIS-K has been changing its tactics to focus more on defensive operations and IED emplacement.

Source: Lead Inspector General Report to U.S. Congress, *Operation Freedom's Sentinel*, January 1, 2019-March 31, 2019, pp.21- 22.

# Lead IG Estimate of Terrorist Forces: March 2019

The presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan, particularly al Qaeda and ISIS-K, remains a central focus of the OFS mission and has emerged as one of the key concerns in the ongoing peace negotiations. As the peace talks continue, the questions of whether the Taliban can help influence and deny sanctuary to these groups, and the extent to which an ongoing U.S. counterterrorism presence may be required, have become more prominent.

U.S. and Afghan officials have stated that there are at least 20 terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan. USFOR-A provided the DoD OIG estimates of how many fighters these groups have in the region, shown in Table 2. Like its estimates of Taliban force size, it makes these assessments with low confidence. As discussed in the Lead IG quarterly report for October 1 to December 31, 2017, most of these groups do not have global aspirations or reach. For example, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, one of the larger groups, focuses on fighting the Pakistani government.

The DoD identified the Haqqani Network, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), and Lashkar-e Tayyiba as groups that present the greatest threat to U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan.<sup>80</sup> ETIM, which aims to establish a so-called “East Turkistan” within China, maintains close ties with the Taliban, al Qaeda, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. The DoS disagreed with the characterization of ETIM as a comparable threat to the Haqqani Network and Lashkar-e Tayyiba but did not provide a separate assessment of the group.

Al Qaeda, the group that organized the September 11, 2001 attacks, precipitating U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan, is among the smaller terrorist groups in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda did not claim any attacks against U.S. or allied forces during the quarter. USFOR-A assessed that al Qaeda poses “a limited, indirect threat” to U.S. and allied forces through the support it provides for Taliban and Haqqani Network attacks. Specifically, al Qaeda runs training camps, helps plan and fund attacks, and creates and disseminates propaganda highlighting attacks by other groups.

Al Qaeda remains dependent on the Taliban for safe haven, facilitation routes, and supply networks, according to USFOR-A’s assessment. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the al Qaeda emir, recognizes the Taliban leader, Haybatullah Akhundzada, as “Leader of the Faithful,” and many al Qaeda members belong to both groups simultaneously.

By contrast, the Taliban regularly battles ISIS-K for control of territory. Estimates of ISIS-K’s force size vary, but have grown over the past year. One year ago, USFOR-A estimated that there were about 1,000 ISIS-K fighters in Afghanistan. This quarter, USFOR-A estimated that the number of ISIS-K fighters could be as high as 5,000.

The DIA assessed that ideological differences between ISIS-K and the Taliban prevent them from reconciling. However, the DIA said, some Taliban members who oppose the peace process may join ISIS-K to keep fighting and receive better compensation. The Afghan Taliban have not been officially designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, in order to facilitate diplomatic contacts and negotiation with the group that would be otherwise illegal were they so designated.

## Estimates of Terrorist Group Force Size

Terrorist Group	Estimated Number of Fighters
ISIS-K	3,000-5,000
Haqqani Network	3,000-5,000
Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan	3,000-5,000
Islamic Emirate High Council	1,000
al Qaeda	300
Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan	300
Lashkar-e Tayyiba	300
Tariq Qidar Group	100-300
Jamaat ul-Ahrar	200
Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement	100
Islamic Jihad Union	25
Jamaat Dawa Quran	25

## No Credible Information Available for the Following Terrorist Groups

- Iranian Revolutionary Guard-Quds Force
  - Hizbul Mujahidin
  - Commander Nazir Group
  - Jundullah
  - Harakat-ul Jihad Islami/Bangladesh
  - Lashkar-I Jhangvi
  - Harakat-ul Mujahidin
  - Jaish-e- Mohammad
- Source: USFOR-A