Afghanistan: The Failed Metrics of Ten Years of War

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Last Updated: February 7, 2012
Introduction

The US has now been at war in Afghanistan for more than a decade, and is committed to stay through 2014 – with a possible advisory, aid, and funding presence that may extend to 2025. There still, however, are no convincing unclassified ways to measure progress in the war, and the trends in the fighting and level of violence.

There are, however, a wide mix of “metrics” that provide insight into some areas of progress. These range from analyses of the pattern in violence to estimates of casualties, attempts to show areas of insurgent influence, and efforts to measure the effectiveness of Afghan governance and aid.

This analysis looks at the reporting available on the state of the war at the end of 2011, in terms of the data, trends, and maps available from the US Department of Defense, the US National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the NATO/ISAF command, and the UN. It attempts to explore the meaning of these data, the reasons for the sharp difference between them, and what they say about the fighting to date and its progress.
Setting the Stage: Earlier Trends and Campaign Geography
Setting the Stage

It is important to note that the war in Afghanistan may have been going on for a more than decade, but it only escalated into a serious conflict during 2006-2008. The level of the intensity of the conflict must also be kept in perspective. The Afghan War is far less violent than the war in Iraq after 2003, and the insurgent movements less prone to attack civilians.

- **Figure 1 shows how rapidly the war escalated after 2007**, and how much weather and crop cycles affect the fighting. It also shows how much improvised explosive devices have played a critical role in the war, along with other methods of attacks that limit the expose of insurgents.

  What Figure 1 does not show is how slow the US and its allies were to react in building up their forces, and in funding and providing trainers and advisors for the Afghan forces. It also cannot map the extent to which the US and its allies left virtually power vacancies in terms of troop and aid presence in the east and south – allowing the Taliban and other insurgents to regroup and build-up their influence until the US and its allies finally began to seriously react in 2009 – decisions that could not begin to be fully implemented until 2010.

  As the following Figures show, the present state of the war is now very serious, but this should not be ascribed to the difficulties in nation building and COIN, or cultural issues. It took a half a decade of gross underreaction and underresourcing, and a US focus on Iraq that led the US to ignore key developments and trends in Afghanistan to create the current situation.

- **Figure 2 shows just how much more violent that war in Iraq was than the war in Afghanistan.** Such counts are highly judgmental, but the methodology is consistent for both wars. They indicate that during two peak years in the Iraq War – 2006 to 2007 – there were more than 10 times as many victims in Iraq as in Afghanistan. Both countries have roughly the same population of 30 million, and while they differ in almost every other respect, these measures do provide a rough indication of the intensity of war.
Figure 3 shows that the NCTC estimates that even in 2010 and 2011, the war in Afghanistan only involved marginally more attacks and incidents of violence than in a “peaceful” Iraq.

Figure 4 shows that the NCTC estimates that in 2009-2011, the war in Afghanistan produced roughly 2/3s the total number of victims as suffered in a “peaceful” Iraq.

Figure 5 shows that the NCTC estimates that there were important differences in the type of violence that affected given victims. The number of dead was roughly the same in both wars, but Iraq had 2-3 times more wounded and far fewer hostages or kidnapped.

None of these data indicate that the Afghan War is not a serious conflict, but its intensity should not be exaggerated, and the challenges in winning it should be kept in proportion.

Figure 6 shows that the intensity of the war also varies sharply according to population and region, and that the strategic focus of US, NATO/ISAF, and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) centers on limited parts of the country where insurgent presence and violence is highest. Again, no one can argue that this makes the war in any way easy to win, but its intensity needs to be kept in proportion.
Figure 1: DoD - The War Becomes Real: Total Weekly Kinetic Events 7-08 to 9-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 2009</td>
<td>1034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 2009</td>
<td>1682</td>
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<td>Q2 2010</td>
<td>3016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q3 2010</td>
<td>4723</td>
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Kinetic Events (KE) include Direct Fire (DF), Indirect Fire (IDF), Surface to Air Fire (SAFIRE), Improvised Explosive Device (IED) events. IED events comprise IED exploded, IED found/cleared, mine strike, mine found/cleared, and turn-ins.

There have been increases in all methods of attacks, except IEDs, which were lower in August 2010 than they were in August 2009, and direct fire (DF) is increasing at a higher rate than indirect fire (IDF). This is possibly due to the amount of resources it takes to attack utilizing IDFVs versus DF and IEDs. Overall kinetic events are up 300 percent since 2007 and up an additional 70 percent since 2009. Total kinetic events increased nearly 55 percent over the previous quarter and 65 percent compared to the third quarter, 2009, as Figure 12 below indicates. The overall increase was driven primarily by increased incidents of direct fire. Insurgent-initiated attacks also increased this quarter by over 60 percent, and direct fire attacks comprised the majority of this increase. The rise in violence is partly attributable to the increase in Coalition Forces and ANSF as well as greater operational tempo. The sharp increase in insurgents’ use of direct fire attacks may be significant, as it suggests capacity limitations for the insurgents.

Other US and UN data show a sharp rise in the number of assassinations of Afghan leaders, security personnel, and civilians. This is a key indicator insurgents have shifted from confront US/ISAF/ANSF to a focus on terror and intimidation to control the population.
Figure 3: NCTC Estimate of Total Attacks in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan 2009-2011 Does Not Reflect High Overall Level of Violence

Figure 4: NCTC - Total Victims in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan 2009-2011: Iraq is More Violent

Figure 5: NCTC Comparison of Causes of Victims in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan 2009-2011 Shows Higher Percentage of Killed in Afghanistan

Figure 6: Measuring Violence: Which Districts Are Critical?

**Operational Main Effort**

**Shaping/Supporting Effort**

**Economy of Force**

**Strategic Main Effort:**
Grow the ANSF

- **Badghis-Ghormach**
  - #4 – Islam Qal’eh
  - #7 – Torah Ghundey

- **Kunduz-Baghlân**
  - #3 – Hairatan
  - #6 – Shayr Khan Bandar

- **Central Helmand**
  - #5 – Zaranj
  - #2 – Wesh (Chaman)

- **Kandahar**
  - #1 – Tor Kham

- **Nangahar, Kunar, Laghman**
  - #5 – Ghulum Khan

- **Paktika, Paktiya, Khost and Ghazni**

Key Terrain District (81)
Area of Interest Districts (41)
Border Crossing Point

COMISAF Campaign Overview, June 2010
Counting the Patterns in Attacks
Counting the Patterns in Attacks

There is no standard way to count the number of attacks or translate them into a credible measure of the intensity of the war. The conflict has been further complicated by the fact that no element of the insurgency has ever been able to win a major clash with the US and NATO/ISAF, or elements of the ANSF they support. This makes it difficult to relate pattern of attack to tactical success.

Moreover, it is only since 2010 – and the start of intensive US and ISAF offensives in the south – that a major military effort has been made to deny large areas to the Taliban and other insurgents. As a result, there has never been a clear correlation between any measure of violence and insurgent success in winning control and influence, and even today, it is not clear that formal transfers of responsibility for security or US and ISAF tactical victories in the south can be translated into lasting Afghan government control of given areas.

- **Figure 7 uses NCTC data to show does show the rising intensity of the war, and how the trends in all forms of attack compare with the trend in victims of given kind of violence caused by Afghan insurgents** *(The NCTC does count all insurgent acts as acts of terrorism but does not count US/ISAF/ANSF-inflicted casualties and violence.)* It shows that violence and victims both increased steadily from 2004 on, rose sharply after the US surge and added allied resources were deployed in 2009, and rose again after major war fighting in 2010. The NCTC and DoD/ISAF differ significantly, however, about the rate of increase over time, and the extent that level of violence dropped in 2011.

- **Figure 8 highlights the NCTC estimate of total terrorist/insurgent attacks. It too shows a sharp peak emerging in 2009, reaching a height in 2010, and dropping back below the 2009 level in 2011.** The NCTC figures show lower counts of lower levels of violence than those counted by the US and ISAF, but striking fewer total incidents that those counted by the UN. This is a critical area of uncertainty, and one that makes it exceptionally difficult to understand the intensity of the conflict – a problem further complicated by the lack of clear definitions of how incidents are being counted by a given source.

- **Figure 9 again illustrates just how different attack or incident counts can be. Unlike the Department of Defense, ISAF, and NCTC; the UNDP estimates a major rise in security incidents in 2011.**
count of incidents is also roughly ten times higher than the NCTC count and some 7 times higher that the ISAF count. Figure 36 provides a limited explanation of some of the differences, but only begins to address the radical differences in the actual numbers. And, as Figure 16 shows, other UN reports use a different method of counting form the UNDP.

Figure 10 highlights the radical differences between the UN and ISAF data. The UN estimate of the increase in attacks in 2010 is at least 50% higher than the ISAF/DoD estimate and there is a 44% difference in the trend estimate for 2011 – an 18% rise for the UN and a 26% cut for ISAF/DoD.

Figure 11 shows the DoD estimate of violence by type. It shows the continuing impact of IEDs as well as direct fire engagements after the September 2010 cut off date in Figure 1. It also illustrates the problems in data consistency. The trend lines in direct fire and IEDs do not track directly with those in Figure 1.

Figure 12 provides a different and potentially important way of counting attacks. It shows how few complex and coordinated attacks the insurgent conducted, and a major drop in 2011. ISAF and DoD do, however, grossly exaggerate the importance of such trends in ways that approach vacuous propaganda. Insurgents have no reason to attack well-organized regular forces with a vast superiority in firepower, mobility, and airpower – particularly after they learn this leads to decisive defeats, when they can relocate, when they can shift to indirect attacks with weapons like IEDs, when they have near “sanctuaries” in Pakistan and parts of Eastern Afghanistan, when they can wait out the major US and allied troop presence in Afghanistan, and when they can concentrate on controlling the population while avoiding tactical engagements with a superior force. Calling insurgents “cowards” or “tired” for doing this ignores these facts, and the many times insurgents have ultimately won without defeating superior regular forces.

Figure 13 show a significant drop in enemy initiated attacks in 2011. Like the previous figure, however, the importance of such trends should not be exaggerated.
• Figure 14 highlights the extent to which NATO/ISAF gains are highly regional even by NATO/ISAF estimates, and have so far been limited to the Southwest. The limited gains in other areas are too limited to be significant, given enemy sanctuaries and ability to wait out the US and ISAF. It would take significant additional gains in 2012 to reflect such a shift, and then they would only matter once the Afghan government and Afghan forces showed they could hold such gains after major US and allied withdrawals in 2014.

• Figure 15 again highlights the radical differences in UN vs. US and ISAF estimates of the number of incidents, but also illustrates how much of the violence is concentrated in the south and southwest, and that most fighting is highly regional in Pashtun areas, rather than nation-wide.

• Figure 16 provides some help in understanding the differences between the UN and US and ISAF estimates, but scarcely explains the differences and this UN estimate seems to adopt the ISAF method of counting rather than the UNDP focus on violent incidents.
Figure 7: NCTC Catalogue of Afghan Security/”Terrorist” Incidents

Figure 9: UNDP/UNAMA Estimate of Total Security Incidents in Afghanistan: 2009-2011

Figure 10: ISAF Estimate of Attack Patterns: 2006-9/2011

Figure 11: DoD Major Security Incidents Drop in 2011
Monthly Security Incidents (October 2009 – September 2011)

All data reflect data from the Afghanistan Mission Network CIDNE as of September 30, 2011. Security incidents include direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire, and IED events. IED events include IED explosions, IEDs found and cleared, mine explosions, and mines found and cleared.

Figure 12: DoD Fewer Complex, Coordinated Enemy Attacks

Monthly Complex and Coordinated Attacks (October 2009 – September 2011)

The high-operational tempo has kept the insurgency off-balance during the fighting season, evidenced by the sharp decrease in complex and coordinated attacks this year compared to 2010.

The number of complex and coordinated attacks for the last three months of this reporting period was nearly half of that observed in 2010; complex and coordinated attacks in the summer fighting season of 2011 were only four percent higher than those reported during the same period in 2009.

In addition to the ongoing ANSF-ISAF conventional operations, persistent, precise Special Operations Forces strikes have removed a number of mid-level insurgent leaders, which has severely degraded the insurgency’s capacity and capability to launch deliberately planned complex and coordinated attacks.

While violence in Afghanistan remains high, 16 of the last 20 weeks in this reporting period, witnessed a decrease in nation-wide enemy-initiated attacks when compared to the same period in 2010. Through the end of September, enemy-initiated attacks in Afghanistan were five percent lower than the same period in 2010. Much of the decrease in attacks is due to significantly less direct fire attacks compared to last year, down 40 percent from the same time period last year. All data reflect data from the Afghanistan Mission Network CIDNE as of September 30, 2011. Security incidents include direct fire, indirect fire, surface-to-air fire, and IED events. IED events include IED explosions, IEDs found and cleared, mine explosions, and mines found and cleared.

As a result of ANSF-ISAF operations, violence in RC-SW continues to decrease, particularly in central Helmand Province, which was the first area to receive surge forces last year. In the districts of Marjeh, Nad ‘Ali, and Garm Ser, violence during the summer fighting season dropped by approximately 70 percent in comparison to the same period last year.

Violence in RC-SW during the last three months of the reporting period was 27 percent lower than last year at this time, and continues to drop. Violence levels in RC-S appear to be following a similar pattern to RC-SW, likely reflecting the later flow of surge troops into the region.

These trends, however, remain nascent. Violence in RC-E remains 16 percent higher for the summer fighting season compared to 2010, with the most notable changes in the provinces of Ghazni (11 percent increase in violence), Logar (76 percent increase), and Wardak (19 percent increase) due to ongoing clearance operations. The availability of safe havens in Pakistan has enabled this increase in violence, and violence levels are expected to remain high throughout the remainder of 2011. More than 68 percent of nationwide indirect fire attacks are reported in RC-E.
Figure 15: UNDP/UNAMA Break Out of Catalogue of Security Incidents in Afghanistan By Region

- Southern: 7,329 (36%)
- Southeastern: 7,329 (32%)
- All Other Regions: 8,245 (32%)

The Secretary General of the UN reported to the Security Council on September 21, 2011 that, both violence and casualties had increased in 2011 – an assessment that may be more accurate in reflecting the impact of operations on the Afghan people than the tactically oriented counts by ISAF,

“There were fewer security incidents in July (2,605) and August (2,306) than in June (2,626). As at the end of August, the average monthly number of incidents for 2011 was 2,108, up 39 per cent compared with the same period in 2010. Armed clashes and improvised explosive devices continued to constitute the majority of incidents. The south and south-east of the country, particularly around the city of Kandahar, continued to be the focus of military activity and accounted for approximately two thirds of total security incidents.

…There were 9 suicide attacks in July, the third successive monthly decrease from a peak of 17 in April. There were 11 suicide attacks in August. As at the end of August, the average monthly number of suicide attacks for 2011 was 12, a level that was unchanged compared with the same period in 2010. Complex suicide attacks made up a greater proportion of the total number of suicide attacks. On average, three such attacks have been carried out per month in 2011, a 50 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2010. Insurgents continued to launch complex suicide attacks in urban centers, including the attacks on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul on 28 June, on the British Council in Kabul on 19 August, in the vicinity of the United States Embassy in Kabul on 13 September and on provincial centers, such as the one on Tirin Kot, Uruzgan Province, on 28 July. The focus of suicide attacks was no longer southern Afghanistan, the central region currently accounting for 21 per cent of such attacks.

…As in the previous reporting period, insurgents continued to conduct a campaign of intimidation, including through the targeted assassination of high ranking Government officials, members of the security forces and influential local political and religious leaders. There were 54 incidents in July and 72 in August, killing 89 and 93 individuals, respectively. The following four high-level persons from southern Afghanistan were killed in July: Ahmad Wali Karzai, Head of Kandahar Provincial Council; Hikmatullah Hikmat, Head of Kandahar Ulema Shura; Jan Muhammad Khan, Senior Adviser to the President; and Ghulam Haydar Hamidi, Mayor of Kandahar. News of the assassinations reverberated across the country, raising concerns for the political stability of the south, given the influence exerted by those killed and their ties to the Government in Kabul.”

Figure 17: ANSO Estimate of Insurgent Attack Patterns Show Sharp Rise in 2011: 2Q2010 vs. 2Q/2011

- Insurgent attacks up 42% in first six months of 2011 versus first six months of 2010
- Peak of 1680 in 2nd quarter 2011 versus 1093 in 2009 (+119%) and 1541 in 2010 (+42%).

- Rise in 2nd quarter of 2011 versus 2010 is:
  - +113% RC North
  - -33% in RC Capital
  - +86% in RC East
  - +94% in RC South
  - +362% in RC Southwest
  - +44% in RC West
  - Country-wide attack pattern up from 19.6 incidents to 40.9 per day.

- Rise 59% over 2nd quarter of 2008 vs. -2009, 55% over 2nd quarter of 2009 vs. 2010, and 42% over 2nd quarters of 2010 vs. 2011.

- Major rise in general insecurity of provinces and districts for NGOs.
  - Attacks shifting out of south and to North and East.
  - NGO abductions up 85%

Caches and IED Attacks
Caches and IED Attacks

There are several specialized metrics that help shed light on the importance of the patterns in attacks.

- **Figure 18 shows a major rise in the discovery of insurgent caches.** This is an important metric because it shows insurgents may face growing supply problems, because so much of the data used in finding them came from Afghan civilians, and because the drop over the course of 2011 may reflect the fact there were fewer caches to be found.

- **Figure 19 highlights the critical importance of IEDs in the fighting over time.**

- **Figure 20 shows the continuing importance of IEDs in late 2010 and the first three quarters of 2011, and that the numbers increase – rather than decreased – in 2011.** This highlights the risk that insurgents have turned to different tactics, rather than been defeated, and shows their continuing ability to generates survivable attacks and maintain their impact on the population.
After a significant increase in weapons cache discoveries from October 2010 to March 2011, finds decreased during the reporting period. This is likely due to a combination of the cyclical nature of cache creation, reduction in insurgent supplies, last fall’s expansion of ANSF-ISAF operations into previously-held insurgent areas increasing find rates, and insurgents adjusting their tactics by reducing cache sizes and moving into unpatrolled areas. Regardless, the high rate of cache finds will continue to impair insurgents’ ability to initiate violence.

The volume of IED use increased significantly from FY 2009, alongside an increased CF operational tempo. Despite this increased volume of attacks, efficacy rates remained steady in the last half of FY 2010 as seen above. Decreased severity of IED events, combined with other operational factors led to a decreasing rate of U.S. personnel killed in action (KIA) per effective IED attack. Non-U.S. CF KIA per effective attack remained constant. Afghan insurgents continue to rely predominantly on victim-operated IEDs (VOIEDs) and command wire IEDs employing simple, yet effective technologies and designs often used with large net explosive weight charges. The incorporation of HME and other block explosives into IEDs continued to be the most significant IED threat to CF in Afghanistan. Insurgents also continued elevated targeting rates of dismounted forces due to the increase of dismounted operations by CF forces in support of counterinsurgency (COIN) operations.

The insurgency increased their use of IEDs during the reporting period, as IEDs are an efficient and effective weapon to target ANSF-ISAF operations and to avoid decisive engagement in order to preserve rank-and-file fighters. Year-to-date IED figures for 2011 indicate that IED activity has increased by 22 percent compared to 2010.

Despite the increase in IED activity, however, IED strikes increased only five percent during the period of January – September when compared to the same period in the previous year. The smaller increase in IED strikes relative to IED activity is attributable to a much greater increase in IEDs found and cleared without explosion; 55 percent of planted IEDs were found and cleared during this year’s fighting season, up 10 percent from last year.

This improvement is a result of the increase in assistance from the local Afghan population. Tips reported by Afghan civilians have increased nearly three-fold since last year, especially in regions where security gains have been reinforced with effective governance and stabilizing development efforts. The overall improvement of the ANSF, particularly in counter-IED capabilities, has also contributed to the increase in the IED found-and-cleared rate.

Casualties: Rising Even if Significant Acts of Violence are Dropping?
Casualty estimates have become one of the most controversial measures of the intensity of war, and its moral and human impact. This is particularly in the case of insurgencies, where military casualties tend to be relatively limited compared to civilians. The practical problem is that it is extremely difficult to generate credible counts and trace the source of casualties.

This is particularly true of wounded, where many cases are unreported and the seriousness of a “wound” can be a major issue. There also is an important difference between the increasing use of the term “casualty” to only count killed, and the dictionary definition of “casualty” which includes both killed and wounded. There is only limited historical correlation between the number of “killed” and the number of “wounded,” but the number of “wounded” is generally much higher and is a better indication of the intensity of war.

Moreover, there is a major difference between “wounded” and “victim.” Threats, beating, and kidnapping are common insurgent tactics. Insurgencies seeking to dominate civilian populations do not win by killing them. They do often make major gains through the use of targeted violence, intimidation, and kidnapping or hostage taking. In the case of Afghanistan, for example, the insurgents have far more incentive to use such tactics than try to fight NATO/ISAF forces directly through enemy initiated or complex attacks.

So is extortion, destruction or seizure of assets, collateral damage, and being made a refugee or displaced person. Millions of people were displaced at some point in the Iraq War, and millions have been displaced and impoverished in the course of decades of fighting in Afghanistan.

The following figures focus on these issues, not because military and police casualties are not important, but because civilian casualties are larger and more critical in terms of perceptions and as a measure of combat intensity in this specific type of highly political, population-dominated war.

- **Figure 21: An ISAF estimate showing a critical correlation between civilian deaths and popular support for ISAF.** This is a warning of a reality supported by polls in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Popular perceptions of the US and its allies, and the war, are very heavily affected by perceptions of the violence and deaths caused by US and allied forces – general out of all proportion to the size of the.
numbers involved.

ABC polls in Iraq, for example, showed that far more Iraqis encountered US and allied use of force during 2006-2008 than insurgent uses of force – although the use might be something as minor as blocking a road or a search. In Afghanistan, polls show hostile reactions often occur when US and allied forces bring fighting into the area and do not bring lasting security. The US is seen as the primary cause of violence even when insurgents actually cause the casualties, or use force to reassert themselves after US forces have left.

- **Figure 22 provides a US estimate of the trends in security incidents and killed and wounded as caused by US/ISAF/ANSF or insurgent forces. It again shows there is no direct correlation between the number of incidents, and the numbers of killed or wounded; that Coalition forces cause few casualties; and even insurgent-caused casualties are not high relative to many previous wars.** Unfortunately, the politics of casualties are such that that Coalition forces still get a high percentage of the blame.

- **Figure 23 updates and reinforces past US/ISAF estimates, and again shows how many of the total of civilian deaths are caused by insurgents. There are drops in some months of 2011, but the level in most months approaches that in 2010.**

- **Figure 24 shows the NCTC estimate of total victims.** These estimates are much higher than the US/ISAF estimates of deaths, and including wounded and hostages provide a somewhat more realistic indication of the intensity and suffering of combat. **These higher totals are particularly striking because the NCTC only counts threat or hostile “terrorist”/ insurgent acts and does not count US/ISAF/ANSF-inflicted casualties and violence.**

  The NCTC totals do not, however, include displaced persons and acts of intimidation, and the counts of killed and wounded are necessarily as uncertain as those of the US, ISAF, and the UN. This metric may, therefore, only count about 40-60% of the violence seen by the population in the area.
More broadly, there simply is no way to accurately assess the total impact of such wars on the civilian population with any accuracy, particularly in a society with the high inherent tribal and family violence levels of parts of southern and eastern Afghanistan. No element of violence can be counted in ways that address many acts of insurgent violence and Coalition violence in the field that are never reported – particularly low-level insurgent acts in areas where there is no strong Afghan government of ISAF presence to detect them -- and blame is often impossible to assess. Insurgents constantly attempt to exaggerate Coalition violence for propaganda purposes. Counts that attempt to be all include add many suspect and inaccurate numbers to the total while counts that use demanding criteria exclude many suspect but real instances.

It must also be stressed that polls show popular perceptions of violence are often shaped by the side with which civilians have most contact and the extent to which that side does or does not provide lasting protection and/or services. This helps explain why hostility to the US and ISAF may be far greater in some areas where the insurgents cause most of the violence and suffering.

• **Figure 25 shows the NCTC estimate of victims by type of insurgent-caused violence.** These estimates reinforce the previous points. The number of deaths does not track with the DoD/ISAF data – which may be explained in part by the fact the NCTC does not count US/ISAF/ANSF-inflicted casualties and violence -- but is much closer. Wounded and hostages dominate the totals, but almost certainly reflect a serious undercount because the NCTC database excludes many suspect cases.

• **Figure 26 shows the UNAMA/UNDP estimate of the trend in total deaths. Unlike the DoD/ISAF and NCTC count, it shows a continuous rise through 2011, and not a significant drop in 2011.** There is no way to tell which count is most accurate. The ISAF and NCTC counts may focus more on the areas of
• The US did discover that it was making a significant undercount relative to more accurate Iraqi
government figures in periods of the Iraq War, but this is simply a reflection of how hard it is to get
accurate estimates, and there is no clear reason to assume one count is more accurate than the other.

• It is disturbing that after 10 years of war, no reliable count of trends in violence exist even in terms of
deaths – the most visible form of violence and one that is only a small portion of the actual causes and
patterns of violence in the war.

• Figure 27 shows the UNAMA/UNDP estimate causes of deaths by whether they were caused by
Coalition forces, insurgents, or unknown. The counts of insurgent-caused dead for 2010 and 2011
are notably lower than the NCTC estimate in Figure 26, and again show a rising trends in 2011
where the NCTC data do not, and the ISAF data through September 2011 do not show a clear trend.
Once again, there is no way to estimate which source is correct, the cause of the differences in detail, or
the trends in the war.

• Figure 28 provides a list of the facts and developments shaping the UN counts. These data help
explain the UN count, but not in enough detail to assess the causes of differences with the DoD/ISAF,
and NCTC counts. Unlike US public counts of air activity, the UN also recognizes the importance of
rotary wing US and allied aircraft

• Figure 29 provides an NGO count of deaths. It is close to the UN count, but has a number of minor
unexplained differences. Unlike the Iraq War, which produced gross differences – some politically
motivated – NGO estimate are careful to qualify the levels of uncertainty involved.

    It is unclear that any NGO has a credible ability to make independent counts of civilians or violent
incidents, but several provide useful breakouts of estimates similar to the UN, and NGO counts of no-
US ISAF and ANSF casualties seem generally correct.

    The ANSO counts also provide useful data on NGO casualties. There does not seem to be a credible
public count of foreign and Afghan contractor casualties, including private security forces.
• Figures 30 and 31 provide a comparison of NCTC counts of wounded caused by terrorist/insurgents with UNAMA counts of total injuries. Again, the trends are different for 2010 and 2011, with NCTC showing a decline in the period and the UNAMA showing a rise. There is also a much higher UNAMA count of injuries than an ISAF count of wounded. It is not possible to explain the differences. Once again, there is no reliable or credible trend. It should be stressed, however, that the differences seem driven by legitimate difference in method and collection and not be ideology, bias, or any effort to skew the data.

• Figure 32 shows the UNAMA/UNDP breakout of what kind of US/ISAF/ANSF attack produces a given number of deaths. It shows a decline in the number caused by US and allied air attacks – which was seen in the past as a key source of Afghan resentment. There is no count of night raids and home invasions, however, which is often seen as the leading single cause of Afghan resentment in spite of the fact it produces limited casualties of any kind. Unlike Iraq, there are no reliable public polls of how Afghan’s perceive the causes of violence or assign blame to a given side.

• Figure 33 shows similar data for the insurgents. It reflects a rise in target killings and suicide bombings after the “surge” in US forces and ISAF combat activity. While such data are uncertain, they suggest that the insurgents are moving away from clashes with ISAF forces they know they cannot win, and adopting new methods of attack. This is yet another warning that US and ISAF comments that the insurgents are somehow tired or losing because they do not attack US and ISAF forces in direct ways where the insurgents know they will lose ignore the history of past insurgencies and borders on the militarily absurd.

• Figures 34 and 35 provides a UNAMA/UNDP regional pattern analysis of the causes of insurgent-inflicted deaths that reinforces these points –points that press sources indicate are made by the CIA in contrast to ISAF.

• Figure 36 provides a broad comparison of the UN and ISAF methodology. It is, however, too general to explain any significant reasons for the differences. ISAF and DoD do not publically explain or define the basis for their calculations.
Civilian Casualties, whether ISAF or Insurgent are responsible, increases violence.

- When ISAF is responsible for civilian casualties kinetic activities increase by **25-65 % for 5 months**

- When Insurgents are responsible for attacks kinetic activities increase **10 and 25% for 3 months**
Beginning with the August 2009 tactical directive, and continuing with General Petraeus’ 2010 Counterinsurgency Guidance and Tactical Directive (Rev 2), forces operate under an imperative to reduce ISAF-caused civilian casualties, while still providing for their own protection. The trend line for 2010 in the figure below manifests a decreasing trend in ISAF caused civilian casualties during a sample 12-week period, compared to the same time period during 2009. ISAF and coalition forces have experienced a reduction in civilian casualties in spite of a spike in total violence during the summer fighting season. Insurgent-caused CIVCAS increased during the summer months, in line with the seasonal violence trends. Figure 15 illustrates the total number of ISAF-caused civilian casualties during this reporting period. The drop in CIVCAS compared to last year is attributable to both ISAF and insurgents. Insurgent-caused CIVCAS from direct fire doubled during the second half of the reporting period compared to 2009, which is likely due to insurgent shift in TTPs to a much greater use of direct fire.

The trend line for 2010 in the figure below manifests a decreasing trend in ISAF caused civilian casualties during a sample 12-week period, compared to the same time period during 2009. ISAF and coalition forces have experienced a reduction in civilian casualties in spite of a spike in total violence during the summer fighting season. Insurgent-caused CIVCAS increased during the summer months, in line with the seasonal violence trends. Figure 15 illustrates the total number of ISAF-caused civilian casualties during this reporting period. The drop in CIVCAS compared to last year is attributable to both ISAF and insurgents. Insurgent-caused CIVCAS from direct fire doubled during the second half of the reporting period compared to 2009, which is likely due to insurgent shift in TTPs to a much greater use of direct fire.

Previous trends in civilian casualties continued during this reporting period, with civilians primarily being killed and wounded by insurgent-emplaced IEDs. From January to September 2011, the insurgency caused 80 percent of civilian casualties. Of the year-to-date civilian casualties caused by insurgents, more than 70 percent were caused by IEDs. ISAF-caused civilian casualties from January to September 2011 remain unchanged from the same period in 2010, despite a significant increase in ISAF operations.

Figure 24: NCTC Total Victims in Afghanistan: 2005-2011

Figure 25: NCTC - Incidents of Hostages and Wounded in Afghanistan 2005-2011

2011 marked the fifth consecutive year in which UNAMA documented an increase in civilian casualties in Afghanistan. 11,864 civilians have been killed in the conflict since 2007. UNAMA documented 3,021 civilian deaths in 2011, an increase of eight percent over 2010 (2,790 civilian deaths) and a 25 percent increase from 2009 (2,412 civilian deaths. Anti-Government Elements caused 2,332 conflict-related deaths of Afghan civilians in 2011, up 14 percent from 2010. 77 percent of all conflict-related civilian deaths in 2011 were attributed to Anti-Government Elements. 410 civilian deaths resulted from the operations of Pro-Government Forces, down four percent from 2010. 14 percent of all conflict-related civilian deaths were attributed to Pro-Government Forces in 2011. A further 279 civilian deaths, or nine percent of the total, could not be attributed to a particular party to the conflict.

Anti-Government Elements caused 2,332 conflict-related deaths of Afghan civilians in 2011, up 14 percent from 2010. 77 percent of all conflict-related civilian deaths in 2011 were attributed to Anti-Government Elements. 410 civilian deaths resulted from the operations of Pro-Government Forces, down four percent from 2010. 14 percent of all conflict-related civilian deaths were attributed to Pro-Government Forces in 2011. A further 279 civilian deaths, or nine percent of the total, could not be attributed to a particular party to the conflict.

The record loss of the lives of Afghan children, women and men resulted from changes in the tactics of Anti-Government Elements and changes in the effects of tactics of parties to the conflict. Anti-Government Elements used improvised explosive devices more frequently and more widely across the country, conducted deadlier suicide attacks.

yielding greater numbers of victims, and increased the unlawful and targeted killing of civilians. Civilian deaths from aerial attacks by Pro-Government Forces increased in 2011, in spite of a decrease in the number of aerial attacks and an overall decline in civilian deaths attributed to Pro-Government Forces. At the same time, the geographic distribution of civilian casualties shifted significantly particularly in the second half of 2011. As the armed conflict lessened in severity in the south and intensified in provinces in the southeast, east and north of the country, rising numbers of Afghan civilians in these areas were killed and injured, accounting for an increasing proportion of all civilian casualties nationally. For example, in the second half of 2011, ground engagement between Anti-Government Elements and Pro-Government Forces caused 289 civilian deaths, a decline of 33 percent compared to the same period in 2010. Deaths from this tactic decreased in all regions except the eastern region where 72 civilians died in ground combat, up 29 percent from 2010.

Overall Trends

- 3,021 civilian deaths in 2011, an increase of eight percent over 2010 (2,790 civilian deaths) and a 25 percent increase from 2009 (2,412 civilian deaths)
- 2011 marked the fifth consecutive year in which UNAMA documented an increase in civilian casualties in Afghanistan. 11,864 civilians have been killed in the conflict since 2007.
- In 2011, UNAMA documented 2,332 civilian deaths and 3,649 injuries by Anti-Government Elements for a total 5,981 civilian casualties, an increase of 10 percent in deaths and injuries attributed to Anti-Government Elements compared to 2010.
- Conflict and insecurity displaced 185,632 Afghans in 2011, an increase of 45 percent from 2010.
- The United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in Afghanistan recorded an 18 percent increase in security incidents in 2011 compared to 2010. 22,903 incidents were reported compared with 19,403 in 2010 and 11,524 in 2009. The southern and southeastern regions accounted for 64 percent of all incidents (32 per cent each). The average monthly growth rate of incidents was highest in these regions each recording a 38 per cent growth compared to 2010. However, the southern region recorded a steep decrease after September 2011 with incident levels remaining low.

Casualties Caused by Pro-Government Forces (ANSF, ISAF, US)

- In 2011, 410 civilian deaths were attributed to Pro-Government Forces, a decrease of four percent compared with 2010. 14 percent of all civilians killed in 2011 were attributed to Pro-Government Forces, a one percent decrease from 2010. 335 civilians were injured as a result of operations of Pro-Government Forces in 2011, a decrease of 16 percent from 2010.
- Similar to 2009 and 2010, in 2011 aerial attacks accounted for the most civilian deaths by Pro-Government Forces at 187 deaths, or 44 percent of the total civilian deaths attributed to these forces. Kunar province in the eastern region experienced almost a third of all civilian deaths from aerial attacks caused by Pro-Government Forces reflecting the geographical shift in the conflict over 2011.
- In 2011, escalation of force incidents contributed to 38 civilian deaths and search operations accounted for 63 deaths. Ground engagements and other tactics also caused some civilian deaths.
- In 2011, aerial attacks remained the tactic that caused the most civilian deaths by Pro-Government Forces. 187 civilians were killed in aerial attacks, a nine percent increase compared to 2010 (171 civilians died in air strikes in 2010). This rise in civilian deaths from air strikes reverses the decline seen in 2010 and accounts for 44 per cent of the total civilian deaths caused by Pro-Government Forces in 2011. The increase in civilian deaths occurred despite reduced numbers of aerial operations by ISAF/Operation Enduring Freedom using fixed or rotary-wing aircraft (from 1,816 in 2010 to 1,675 in 2011).
- Close air support missions (CAS) with weapons conducted by fixed and rotary-wing aircraft in Afghanistan numbered 1,675 that included 4,896 sorties with weapons releases in 2011 down from 1,816 CAS missions entailing 5,101 sorties with weapons releases in 2010. See US Air Forces Central Public Affairs News Release, ‘Combined Forces Air Component Commander 2008 – 2011 Statistics.'

Figure 28: Key UNAMA/UNDP Casualty Details - II

- Civilian deaths from search and seizure night operations or “night raids” documented by UNAMA followed the downward trend seen in 2010 and 2009. In 2011 UNAMA documented 63 civilian deaths from such operations, representing a 22 percent decrease from 2010.
- Despite fewer civilian casualties, night raids continued to generate controversy and anger among Afghans countrywide. Although ISAF command has consistently stated that night operations deliver tactical results unachievable by other means, the Government has long expressed concerns that night operations carried out by international military forces in particular violate the sanctity of the home, infringe on Afghanistan’s sovereignty and fail to respect cultural practices.

Casualties Caused by Taliban, Haqqani Network, HIG, and other Anti-Government Forces

- The United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) recorded an average of 23 IEDs detonated or discovered every day in 2011, twice the daily average in 2010. The widespread use by Anti-Government Elements of IEDs was the single largest cause of civilian deaths and injuries in Afghanistan in 2011. Between 1 January and 31 December 2011, UNAMA recorded 967 civilian deaths and 1,586 injuries from IEDs, constituting 32 percent of the total number of civilian casualties in 2011.
- The number of civilians killed by suicide attacks increased dramatically in 2011 compared to 2010. 431 civilians were killed, an increase of 81 percent from 2010. For example, in Kunduz province, civilian deaths from suicide attacks increased from 83 in 2010 to 145 in 2011. Suicide attacks accounted for 14 percent of all civilian deaths, and 18 percent of civilian deaths attributed to Anti-Government Elements. The types of suicide attacks that occurred ranged from those carried out by single individuals either wearing vests or driving vehicles with explosives, to multiple suicide bombers that initiated complex attacks involving large numbers of fighters.
- The shifting tactics of Anti-Government Elements included targeted killings of civilians aimed at terrorizing the civilian population and weakening the Government’s presence in particular locations. The campaign of targeted killings against civilian government officials and workers that emerged in 2010 continued in 2011 with no sign of decreasing. UNAMA documented 495 targeted killings of civilians, an increase of three percent from 2010. Targeted killings decreased in the south, central and northeast regions but increased greatly in other parts of the country: by 255 percent in the western region; 114 percent in the southeastern region; and, 107 percent in the east region.
- In addition to ANA, ANSF includes, ANP, NDS, ANBP, ANCOP and ALP when they are directly taking part in the hostilities. Between July and December 2011, UNAMA documented 41 civilians killed and 133 injured as a result of ANSF operations and actions. This represents a 192 percent increase in civilian deaths and 55 percent increase in civilian injuries compared with the same period in 2010 (UNAMA recorded 14 civilian deaths and 49 injuries in the last half of 2010).
- In 2011, UNAMA documented minimal increases or decreases in civilian casualties caused directly by ANSF in transitioned areas.

Figure 27: ANSO Patterns in Afghan Casualties: 2008-2010

ANSO: Conflict related civilian fatalities, by AOG/MF, 2008-2010

ANSO: ANA, ANP, IMF fatalities, 2009 -2010

ANSO: Leading causes of civilian collateral fatality, 2010

Conflict related civilian fatalities grew by 18% this year (above left), to a total of 2,428 persons killed, with 17% caused by IMF and 83% caused by AOG. The leading cause of death was roadside IED strikes (below) with 820 people dying this way, 58% of them in the Southern provinces. This reflects the increased volume of ‘pressure plate’ (VOIED) devices utilized as AOG sought stand-off strike capability against overwhelming IMF numbers. The IMF have succeeded in reducing both the volume and percentage of fatalities caused by them, although IMF airstrikes killed a comparable number to AOG suicide attacks. Within the security forces*, the ANP still account for the majority of fatalities (above right) with a roughly 5:1 ratio against ANA/IMF deaths.

Figure 30: NCTC - Incidents of Hostages and Wounded in Afghanistan 2005-2011

UNAMA excluded in its total number of civilian casualties for 2011 those deaths and injuries of Afghan civilians caused by shelling from Pakistan.

Figure 32: UNAMA: ISAF, US, and ANSF Causes of Civilian Deaths and Injuries: 2009-2011

Figure 33: UNAMA/UNDP Taliban, Haqqani, HIG, and Other Insurgent Causes of Civilian Deaths and Injuries: 2009-2011

Figure 34: UNAMA/UNDP - Taliban, Haqqani, HIG, and Other Insurgent Targeted Killings and Assassinations: 2009-2011

As the year progressed, the conflict gathered intensity outside those southern provinces where fighting has historically been concentrated and worsened in several provinces in the southeastern and eastern regions. In the last half of 2011, although Kandahar and Helmand remained the provinces with the highest number of civilian deaths with 290 civilians killed; this number is a 39 percent decrease compared to the same period in 2010.

In contrast, the southeastern provinces of Khost, Paktika and Ghazni and eastern provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar saw a combined total of 446 deaths, a 34 percent increase compared with the same period in 2010. Between July and December 2011, civilian deaths in the central region jumped from 128 to 230, an 80 percent increase from the previous year. This rise was prominent in Kabul province, where civilian deaths increased from 23 in the last half of 2010 to 71 in 2011. 67 of the 71 civilian deaths in Kabul during this period occurred as a result of six suicide attacks.

Although targeted killings by AGEs decreased in the southern, central and northeastern regions in 2011, country-wide such killings rose by six percent, with huge increases in the western region (255 percent), the southeastern region (114 percent) and the eastern region (107 percent). This shift was particularly evident in the second half of the year.

In 2011, UNAMA documented 54 Afghan civilian casualties (18 killed and 36 injured) as a result of shelling from counter-insurgency operations carried out by Pakistani military forces in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) bordering Kunar, Nangarhar and Nuristan provinces in Afghanistan. The shelling also displaced hundreds of families in Kunar and Nangarhar provinces and destroyed civilian property including homes and livestock.
Methodology

UNAMA investigates reports of civilian casualties by conducting on-site investigations wherever possible and consulting a broad range of sources and types of information that are evaluated for their credibility and reliability. In undertaking investigation and analysis of each incident, UNAMA uses best efforts to corroborate and cross-check information from as wide a range of sources as possible including accounts of eyewitnesses and directly affected persons, military actors (including Government of Afghanistan and international military forces), local village/district and provincial authorities, and religious and community leaders. Corroboration and cross-checking of information is further obtained through direct site visits, physical examination of items and evidence gathered at sites of incidents, visits to hospitals and medical facilities, still and video images, reports of the UN Department of Safety and Security and other UN agencies, secondary source accounts, media reports, and information gathered by NGOs and other third parties. Wherever possible, investigations are based on the primary testimony of victims and/or witnesses of the incident and on-site investigations. On some occasions, primarily due to security-related constraints affecting access, this form of investigation is not possible. In such instances, UNAMA relies on a range of techniques to gain information through reliable networks, again through as wide a range of sources as possible that are evaluated for credibility and reliability.

Where UNAMA is not satisfied with information concerning an incident, it will not be reported. In some instances, investigations may take several weeks before conclusions can be drawn. This may mean that conclusions on civilian casualties from an incident may be revised as more information becomes available and is incorporated into the analysis. Where information is unclear, conclusions will not be drawn until more satisfactory evidence is obtained, or the case will be closed without conclusion and will not be included in the statistical reporting.

In some incidents the non-combatant status of the reported victims cannot be conclusively established or is disputed. In such cases, UNAMA is guided by the applicable standards of international humanitarian law and does not presume fighting age males are either civilians or fighters. Rather, such claims are assessed on the facts available on the incident in question. If the status of one or more victim(s) remains uncertain, such deaths are not included in the overall number of civilian casualties.

UNAMA established an electronic database in 2009 to support its analysis and reporting on protection of civilians in armed conflict. The database is designed to facilitate the systematic, uniform and effective collection and analysis of information, including disaggregation by age, gender, perpetrator, tactic, weapon, and other categories. UNAMA makes every effort to identify as precisely as possible the party responsible for a particular civilian casualty. However, due to limitations associated with the operating environment, such as the joint nature of some military operations and the inability of primary sources in many incidents to identify clearly or distinguish between diverse military actors or insurgents or where no party claims responsibility for an incident,

UNAMA attributes responsibility for the particular incident to either Pro-Government Forces or Anti-Government Elements. UNAMA notes that obtaining accurate data on night search operations is difficult given the lack of transparency, frequency and wide scale of such operations conducted by ISAF, ANA, international and national special forces and special operations forces, other government agencies and the ANBP, both independently and jointly. According to ISAF, information on numbers of night search operations and any civilian casualties from these operations is generally classified. Given both limitations associated with the operating environment and limited access to information, UNAMA may be under-reporting night search operations involving civilian casualties.

Different Definitions of Civilian Casualties

UNAMA notes that civilian casualty figures may vary among organizations gathering and analyzing such information. Variations between ISAF and UNAMA in numbers of civilians killed and injured in the conflict arise from the use of different methodologies, different levels of access to locations and incidents of civilian casualties and different geographical coverage of the country.

ISAF notes this divergence may be attributed to the following factors:

Figures for Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) caused civilian casualties are not monitored by ISAF, and reporting of insurgent-caused civilian casualties is based on what is observed or on reports that can be confirmed by ISAF; it therefore presents an incomplete picture."

ISAF further notes that UNAMA and ISAF use different definitions for civilian casualties regarding the categorization and entities that cause civilian casualties and differ on how civilian casualty events and numbers are confirmed. ISAF states that it includes only Afghan civilians in its statistics and not every noncombatant (armed and unarmed internationals, unarmed Afghans such as interpreters and international civilians such as tourists). ISAF’s statistics also include all civilians casualties identified as ISAF-caused and ANSF-caused civilian casualties when an ANSF unit is partnered with ISAF.

Additional ANSF-caused civilian casualties reported or not reported to ISAF are excluded from ISAF’s figures. ISAF states it confirms civilian casualty incidents and numbers through ISAF HQ SOP 302 Edition 3 further to verification by a Joint Incident Assessment Team (JIAT).

UNAMA tracks and includes in its statistics civilian deaths and injuries resulting from the operations of ISAF, ANSF and Anti-Government Elements. UNAMA also proactively monitors, verifies and reports conflict-related killings of civilians including targeted killings by parties to the conflict. UNAMA relies on a wide range of sources to verify and confirm civilian casualties as noted above. UNAMA does not claim the statistics presented in this report are complete; it may be that UNAMA is under-reporting civilian casualties given limitations associated with the operating environment.

Mapping US, Allied and ISAF Activity and Plans

Uncertain Ability to Maintain Tactical Momentum and Implement Current Strategy with Coming Force Cuts
US, ISAF, and ANSF area of military activity are a key indicator of violence. Only very limited unclassified data exist to trace such patterns of violence as distinguish from national totals. It would require at least a regional command breakout of trends by number and type of military action to show the trend, and probably at by province. These data are lacking.

• Figure 37 does show, however, that the US and ISAF had very broad operational goals before the US force cuts announced in 2011.

• Figure 38 updates these goals and intentions. The combined ability of the US, ISAF, and ANSF forces to achieve all of these objectives seems extremely uncertain. There is, however, no supporting indication of the planned scale of activity or force availability vs. force requirement.
To better prioritize coalition operations, 94 key terrain districts (KTD) and 44 area of interest districts (AOI) were identified in agreement with the Afghan Government. Key terrain is defined as areas the control of which provides a marked advantage to either the Afghan Government or the insurgency. AOI districts, though of secondary importance to KTDs, are areas in which ISAF and the ANSF operate in order to positively shape KTDs to meet operational objectives.

After steady improvement in Afghanistan-Pakistan cooperation in recent reporting periods, events during this reporting period have put the relationship under significant strain, most notably the May 2 U.S. raid in Pakistan which led to the death of Osama bin Laden.

Despite persistent attempts to improve relations by focusing on mutual security interests, the relationship deteriorated further in late July following several incidents of indirect fire from the Pakistani military, particularly in Kunar and Nangarhar Provinces. ANSF and ISAF forces reported a sharp increase in enemy-initiated cross-border attacks in Paktika, Khost, and Paktia Provinces; from January through July 2011, enemy-initiated cross-border attacks increased more than five-fold compared to the same period in 2010. The border situation began to improve towards the end of the summer, and cross-border attacks subsided throughout August and early September, but had begun to increase throughout September.
Figure 38: Mission Possible? ISAF Goals for Stable Areas by End 2012 After President’s July Force Reduction Announcement

Source: ISAF, December 2011
Mapping Insurgent Activity and Plans
Mapping Insurgent Activity and Plans

One key metric for assessing progress in the war is the degree to which insurgents control given areas, fighting in them, or have influence. The US and ISAF have never provide meaningful unclassified version of such maps, and even provided consistent maps of insurgent goals.

The US and ISAF provide broad maps of insurgent plans, and what may be intended to be data on insurgent activity in the broadest possible sense. These maps, however, do not provide any specific indication of insurgent activity by area in depth, show which areas are most threatened or subject to insurgent activity, and the only quantitative map counts enemy initiated attacks – a metric of limited value for the reasons explained in discussing Figure 13.

- **Figure 39** shows an April estimate of an ISAF estimate of insurgent goals for 2011. It provides a helpful broad indication of areas of insurgent concentration of effort, but it is unclear that insurgent goals really involved the implied level of activity in the south, and the areas involved in the map do not show insurgent activity or areas of influence per se, but rather insurgent goals for all of the major population centers in Afghanistan. The areas of influence map the US issued in Iraq, and the maps showing trends were far more useful and convincing metrics of insurgent progress and Coalition success in reducing it.

- **Figure 40** provides a somewhat similar DoD map issued later in the year showing radically different areas of activity. There is no way to know why the differences exist, or the extent to which the second maps is any more meaningful that the first. In any case, it does not seem to measure either insurgent activity or areas of influence.

- **Figure 41** provides a third version of the same map, supposedly show some estimate of activity by insurgent group, but one that does not track in detail with the estimates in Figures 40 and 41, and raises far more questions than answers.

- **Figure 42** provides the same map with percentages of increase or decrease in enemy-initiated attacks – a metric that provides an artificial exaggeration of success.
Figure 39: DoD - April 2011 Estimate of Insurgent Goals for 2011

Figure 40: DoD - Insurgent Focus Areas: Mid-2011

Figure 41: ISAF Estimate of Insurgent Goals for 2012

While the INS has suffered recent setbacks, he doesn’t think he’s defeated

Source: ISAF, December 2011
Figure 42: Estimate of State of Insurgency: End 2011

Source: ISAF, December 2011; EIA=Enemy Initiated Attacks. Green is percentage down; red is percentage up.
The Uncertain Geography
Afghan of Government
Influence and Aid Impact
Mapping Afghan Government Influence and Success in Aid and Civil programs

The opposing metric is estimate the level of Afghan government influence and control and the impact of aid programs. Some metrics have been issued the help provide insight into this aspect of the course of the war, but they have been totally inconsistent, often lacking in credibility, and fewer and fewer have been provided as the transfer of responsibility to the Afghan government has become a steadily more urgent issue.

- **Figure 44 shows the quality of Afghan district governance, and warns that the quality is so low that Afghanistan is not ready for any meaningful form of transition.** It shows a decline in afghan capability during 2010 to 2011, not an improvement. It does not indicate that the US/IDSAF strategy and aid efforts are failing – given the timing of the surge and campaign – but it clearly warns there were then no meaningful indicators of success in Afghan governance.

- **Figure 45 provides a more detailed version of virtually the same map from roughly the same source focusing on control rather than governance and showing more positive trends.** The news is not good in either Figure 44 or Figure 45, but only the difference imply that the improvement in Figure 45 come from expanding ISAF military impact and Afghan government is not capable of exploiting this program. Neither figure can be trusted without more detail and explanation.

- **Figure 46 provides a larger version of the most recent map in Figure 46. It highlights the problems in having maps that only show one side, rather than relative Afghan government and insurgent influence.** Even if Figures 44 and 45 were consistent, they are not a substitute for the total lack of any kind of summary net assessment.

- **Figure 47 provides a UN effort to highlight key priorities by province.** Like a number of other UN and NGO maps of this kind, it so exaggerates risk as to be meaningless.

- **Figure 48 provides a cherry picked or rigged metric of governance showing what may happen by way of merit-based promotion of provincial deputy governors that ignores the quality of the governors and which was never followed up with a map of success and the degree to which they were free of corruption and power broker character.**
• Figure 49 provides an equally cherry picked or rigged metric of governance showing what may happen by way of merit-based promotion of district governors that only covers a small part of the country, including many critical districts. It too ignores the quality of the governors and which was never followed up with a map of success and the degree to which they were free of corruption and powerbroker character.

• Figure 50 illustrates a potentially useful map of corruption by province, but provides the maps in unreadable form.

• Figure 51 provides a useful measure of progress in development in 2010. The results were evidently so negative that no follow up map was ever provided.

• Figure 52 provides a map of rapid progress in health care facilities at a rate of very uncertain credibility; that does not seem to track with any of the previous assessment of the quality of Afghan governance; and does not define what progress is in terms of coverage relative to quality, population density, and distance and ease of access.

• Figures 53-56 raise critical questions about what will happen to the number of US and allied PRTs and aid worker in the field, and make no attempt to show the areas PRTs and aid influences, the distribution of aid, and/or any aspect of aid effectiveness by key district or area. More than a decade into the war, aid effectiveness is rated largely by the size of the aid teams and how much money they spend. There is no meaningful mapping or estimate of their impact on development or the war.
Figure 43: ISAF - Decline in District Governance?

Source: ISAF Joint Command District Trend Tracker, Governance

NATO/ISAF UNCLASSIFIED

Source: ISAF 5/2011

9/13/21
Source: IJC July 2011. This slide demonstrates clear improvements in overall GIROA control in Central Helmand River Valley in RC South West, P2K region of RC East and the Baghlan Kunduz Corridor in RC North.
Figure 45: ISAF - Best Case is Still Very Weak GIROA Control by Key District: June 2011
Figure 46: UN Estimate of Priorities

UNDAF, 2010, Annex B
Figure 47: ISAF - Deputy Provincial Governor Appointments

Civil Service Appointments Board fills 12 Deputy Provincial Governor posts with merit-based appointments February 2011

76% of Provinces will have DPGs selected on merit following current round (if approved by PoA)

On-going merit-based selection of 14 Deputy Provincial Governor posts (23 May 2011)

Source: ISAF 5/2011
Figure 48: IASF - District Governor Appointments

CSAB selects 38 District Governor posts through merit-based process in April 2011

- 23 Provinces with merit-based appointments (68%)
- 58 Districts with merit-based appointed DGs to date (16%)

Next District Governor Appointment Board expected in July 2011

Previous District Governor merit-based appointments

Source: ISAF 5/2011
Figure 49: Keeping Corruption in Perspective

Do you believe that corruption in the Government affects your daily life?

How satisfied are you with your current quality of your life?

ISAF, May 2011
Figure 50: ISAF - Little or No Progress in Development in Many Areas in Mid-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Assessment</th>
<th>04-Feb-10</th>
<th>29-/pr-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Growth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Growth</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Growth</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalled Growth</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population at Risk</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Assessed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In April and May alone, 33 health centers opened across the country, bringing the nationwide total to more than 1,800. These new facilities, which include four Comprehensive Health Centers, one Basic Health Center, and 17 Sub-Health Centers, are staffed to provide care for up to 389,000 Afghans. Fifteen additional health facilities opened in July and August, including 2 district hospitals and 5 sub-health centers, which are staffed to provide care to more than 300,000 Afghans. Further, the number of health centers in key terrain districts and area of interest districts that meet or exceed MoPH standards increased from 45 in 2009 to 91 in 2011. Facilities that were assessed as below standards decreased from 41 to two during the same period.

Improvements in facilities have led to improvements in accessibility. In 2002, only nine percent of the population had access to basic health services within the MoPH benchmark of two hours walking distance; 85 percent of Afghans now reside within one hour of a health facility.

The MoPH continues its efforts to expand the availability of health services toward the new goal of 90 percent national coverage by 2013.

Figure 52: ISAF - Losing Outside Support: US Aid Effort Goes from 13 PRTs to 5 Entities in 2014. Allies at Zero?

Figure 53: ISAF - Provinces with PRT Bases

Note: Map depicts PRT base locations; some PRTs manage projects for more than one province.
a. Balkh PRT also supports Jawzjan, Sane-Pul, and Samangan provinces.
**Figure 54: ISAF - Provincial Reconstruction Teams**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location (City)</th>
<th>Province/Command</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S.-Lead (all under ISAF banner)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Gardez</td>
<td>Paktia Province (RC-East, E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ghazni</td>
<td>Ghazni (RC-E), with Poland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Jalalabad</td>
<td>Nangarhar (RC-E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Khost</td>
<td>Khost (RC-E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Qalat</td>
<td>Zabol (RC-South, S), with Romania.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Asadabad</td>
<td>Kunar (RC-E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sharana</td>
<td>Paktika (RC-E), with Poland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mehtarlam</td>
<td>Laghman (RC-E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Jabal o-Saraj</td>
<td>Panjshir Province (RC-E), State Department lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Qala Gush</td>
<td>Nuristan (RC-E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Farah</td>
<td>Farah (RC-SW)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Partner Lead (most under ISAF banner)** | |
| **PRT Location** | **Province** | **Lead Force/Other forces** |
| 12. Qandahar   | Qandahar (RC-S) | Canada (seat of RC-S) |
| 13. Lashkar Gah | Helmand (RC-S) | Britain, with Denmark and Estonia |
| 15. Herat      | Herat (RC-W)   | Italy (seat of RC-W) |
| 16. Qalah-ye Now | Badghis (RC-W) | Spain |
| 17. Mazar-e-Sharif | Balkh (RC-N) | Sweden |
| 18. Konduz    | Konduz (RC-N)  | Germany (seat of RC-N) |
| 29. Faizabad  | Badakhshan (RC-N) | Germany, with Denmark, Czech Rep. |
| 24. Maidan Shahr | Wardak (RC-C)  | Turkey |
| 25. Pul-i-Alam | Lowgar (RC-E)   | Czech Republic |
| 26. Shebergan  | Jowzjan (RC-N)  | Turkey |
| 27. Charikar   | Parwan (RC-E)   | South Korea (Bagram, in Parwan Province, is the base of RC-E) |

**Note:** RC = Regional Command.
Figure 55: How Will the USAID “Surge” Fade?

| Location of USAID Direct Hire Employees | 122 Kabul-based (40%) | 183 Field-based (60%) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Afghanistan Staffing by Type &amp; Location</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Kabul</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FELLOW</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USPSC</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDH</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal US Hires</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>183</td>
<td></td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSN/TCN</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Employees</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>215</td>
<td></td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developing the New Metrics of Transition
Developing the New Metrics of Transition

Putting the Metrics and Violence, Casualties, and Insurgent vs. Afghan Government Influence Into Perspective

Finally, it is important to note key issues where better metrics are needed to justify changes in transition, force cuts, transition plans, and continuing the war. These include each of the following areas where current trends raise critical questions about the current course of the war:

**Coming troop cuts:** DoD reports that, “during the reporting period, President Obama announced that recent security progress and the increasing capacity and capability of the ANSF have allowed for the recovery of U.S. surge forces. Ten thousand U.S. troops will be redeployed by the end of the 2011, and the entire surge force of 33,000 personnel will be recovered by the end of September 2012. Approximately 68,000 U.S. troops will remain in Afghanistan after September 2012, but no further details of the cuts are available until the deadline of removing all troops by the end of 2014. ISAF is currently developing a recommendation for future force levels. Although force levels will gradually decrease, the United States remains committed to the long-term security and stability of Afghanistan, and negotiations are progressing on a long-term strategic partnership between the United States and Afghanistan.” US troop cuts are no longer “conditions-based; they effectively are open ended. They also are being accompanied by allied troop cuts.

**Sanctuary in Pakistan:** After more than 10 years, the US has yet to show that it can persuade Pakistan to give up its influence over the Taliban, Haqqani network, and other insurgent groups, and to stop using them as potential tools to secure its own influence in Afghanistan and counter India. This is a critical failure. As the DoD report notes, “Although security continues to improve, the insurgency’s safe havens in Pakistan, as well as the limited capacity of the Afghan Government, remain the biggest risks to the process of turning security gains into a durable, stable Afghanistan. The insurgency remains resilient, benefitting from safe havens inside Pakistan, with a notable operational capacity, as reflected in isolated high-profile attacks and elevated violence levels in eastern Afghanistan.”
**Sustain Victory in the South and Winning in the East:** The levels of US and ISAF forces were significantly lower than was requested in shaping the new strategy, and are dropping sharply. It is far from clear that there will be enough ISAF troops to both hold on to gains in the south and make the needed gains in the east and the rest of Afghanistan that are called for in the current strategy. This could leave Afghanistan vulnerable along the border where the insurgency now is strongest, and the DoD report notes that, “The security situation in Regional Command East, however, remains tenuous. Cross-border incidents have risen during the reporting period as a result of the sanctuary and support that the insurgency receives from Pakistan. In Regional Command Capital, the ANSF has established a layered defense system in and around Kabul, which has resulted in improved security, and the ANSF continues to respond effectively to threats and attacks. Nevertheless, Kabul continues to face persistent threats, particularly in the form of high-profile attacks and assassinations.

The ANA development effort is being rushed, funding is being cut, there are trainer and partner shortfalls, and the end result may be unsustainable. The ANSF is making progress, particularly the ANA. There are sharp differences, however, as to how much progress is really being made, and no agreed plan as yet exists for shaping and full force development through 2014 or afterwards. Major cuts have already been made in future near term funding. There are important ethnic differences in the ANA that could affect its future loyalties, and there are serious problems with loyalty to powerbrokers, corruption, and in leadership. These could all be corrected with time, the needed number of foreign trainers and partners, and adequate funds – but none may be available at the levels and duration required. The total current revenue generating capability of the Afghan government is also only about one-sixth of the US and allied spending on the ANSF in 2011. ISAF and NTM-A reporting sharply downplays these problems, but they are all too real.

The ANSF will not be ready until 2016, and will then have very limited combat and IS&R capability. The ANP development effort is being rushed, funding is being cut, there are far greater trainer and partner shortfalls, and the ANP are not supported by an effective rule of law in terms of courts, detention and the rest of the legal system. The most effective element, the ANCOP, have an unacceptable attrition rate. Other police units have major problems with leadership corruption, and loyalties to local power brokers. The border police are particularly corrupt. The Afghan Local Police work as long as they are supported by large elements of Special.
Forces, but these forces are not large enough to meet current expansion goals, and it is unclear what will happen when SOF advisors leave.

*Future year cuts in funding, equipment, trainers, and aid in sustainability could easily repeat the problems that occurred in Vietnam.* Until mid-2011, plans called for levels of aid through 2024 that now may not be provided through 2015.