



RECONSTRUCTING THE AFGHAN NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES: LESSONS FROM THE U.S. EXPERIENCE IN AFGHANISTAN







Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Lessons From the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan is the second in a series of lessons learned reports to be issued by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. The report examines how the U.S. government—primarily the Departments of Defense, State, and Justice—developed and executed security sector assistance (SSA) programs to build, train, advise, and equip the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), both unilaterally and as part of a coalition, from 2002 through 2016. The report identifies lessons to inform U.S. policies and actions at the onset of and throughout a contingency operation and provides recommendations for improved performance. In Afghanistan today, the U.S. effort to train, advise, and assist the ANDSF does not appear to be over. In light of the administration’s current focus on strategy in Afghanistan, this report provides timely and actionable recommendations for our current and future efforts there.

Our analysis revealed that the U.S. government was not properly prepared from the outset to help build an Afghan army and police force that was capable of protecting Afghanistan from internal and external threats and preventing the country from becoming a terrorist safe haven. We found the U.S. government lacked a comprehensive approach to SSA and a coordinating body to successfully implement the whole-of-government programs necessary to develop a capable and self-sustaining ANDSF. Ultimately, the United States designed a force that was not able to provide nationwide security, especially as that force faced a larger threat than anticipated after the drawdown of coalition military forces.

SIGAR began its lessons learned program in late 2014 at the urging of General John Allen, Ambassador Ryan Crocker, and others who had served in Afghanistan. This report and those that follow comply with SIGAR’s legislative mandate to provide independent and objective leadership and recommendations to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness; prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse; and inform Congress and the Secretaries of State and Defense about reconstruction-related problems and the need for corrective action.

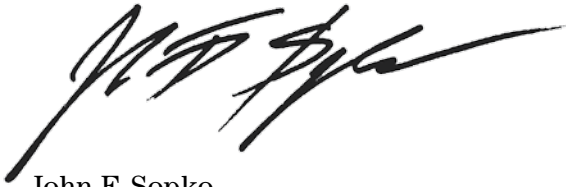
Unlike other inspectors general, SIGAR was created by Congress as an independent agency, not housed inside any single department. While other inspectors general have jurisdiction over the programs and operations of their respective departments or agencies, SIGAR has jurisdiction over all programs and operations supported with U.S. reconstruction dollars, regardless of the agency involved. SIGAR is the only inspector general focused solely on the Afghanistan mission, and the only one devoted exclusively to reconstruction issues. Because SIGAR has the authority to look across the entire reconstruction effort, it is uniquely positioned to identify and address whole-of-government lessons.

As *Reconstructing the ANDSF* has done, future lessons learned reports will synthesize not only the body of work and expertise of SIGAR, but also that of other oversight agencies, government entities, current and former officials with on-the-ground experience, academic institutions, and independent scholars. The reports will document what the United States sought to accomplish, assess what it achieved, and evaluate the degree to which these efforts helped the United States reach its strategic goals in Afghanistan. They will also provide recommendations to address the challenges stakeholders face in ensuring efficient, effective, and sustainable reconstruction efforts, not just in Afghanistan, but in future contingency operations. Other lessons learned reports, currently in progress, will cover a range of topics, including, but not limited to, counternarcotics, stabilization, and private sector development.

SIGAR's lessons learned program comprises subject matter experts with considerable experience working and living in Afghanistan, aided by a team of experienced research analysts. In producing its reports, the program also uses the significant skills and experience found in SIGAR's Audits, Investigations, and Research and Analysis directorates, and the Office of Special Projects. I want to express my deepest appreciation to the research team members who produced this report, and thank them for their dedication and commitment to the project.

I also want to thank all of the individuals—especially the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford; Resolute Support mission commander, General John Nicholson; former Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) commander, Major General Richard Kaiser; deployed personnel at Resolute Support, the regional train, advise and assist commands, and the U.S. Embassy; senior agency officials at the Departments of Defense, State, and Justice; and academicians, subject matter experts, and others—who provided their time and effort to contribute to this report. It is truly a collaborative effort meant to not only identify problems, but also to learn from them and apply reasonable solutions to improve future reconstruction efforts.

I believe the lessons learned reports will be a key legacy of SIGAR. Through these reports, we hope to reach a diverse audience in the military services and the legislative and executive branches, at the strategic and programmatic levels, both in Washington and in the field. By leveraging our unique interagency mandate, we intend to do everything we can to make sure the lessons from the United States' largest reconstruction effort are identified, acknowledged, and, most importantly, remembered and applied to reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, as well as to future conflicts and reconstruction efforts elsewhere in the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JF Sopko', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) is a cornerstone of the overall U.S. policy in Afghanistan and a key requirement of the U.S. strategy to transition security responsibilities to the Afghan government. Since 2002, the ANDSF has been raised, trained, equipped, and deployed to secure Afghanistan from internal and external threats, as well as to prevent the reestablishment of terrorist safe havens. To achieve this, the United States devoted over \$70 billion (60 percent) of its Afghanistan reconstruction funds to building the ANDSF through 2016, and continues to commit over \$4 billion per year to that effort.

This lessons learned report draws important lessons from the U.S. experience building the ANDSF since 2002. These lessons are relevant to ongoing efforts in Afghanistan, where the United States will likely remain engaged in security sector assistance (SSA) efforts to support the ANDSF through at least 2020. In addition, the United States currently participates in efforts to build other developing-world security forces as a key tenet of its national security strategy, an effort which we anticipate will continue and benefit from the lessons learned in Afghanistan. Finally, the report provides timely and actionable recommendations intended to improve our actions in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

This report examines the U.S. efforts to design, train, advise, assist, and equip the ANDSF and describes how these efforts waxed and waned within the policy priorities of the United States and other key donors. It charts the evolution of the mission from the initial U.S. agreement to serve as the lead nation for the development of the Afghan National Army (ANA), to later assuming a level of ownership for the success of the Afghan military and police forces, to ultimately making their development a critical precondition for reducing U.S. and coalition support over time. The report also describes how the U.S. government was ill-prepared to develop a national security force in a post-conflict nation; the changing resource requirements for ANDSF personnel, equipment, and funding; and the inherent tensions within and between the U.S. government and international coalition.

In addition, the report provides a detailed analysis of cross-cutting issues affecting ANDSF development. These issues include corruption, illiteracy, the role of women, the provision of weapons and equipment, high levels of ANDSF attrition, and the annual rotation of U.S. advisors and trainers.

Our report identifies 12 key findings regarding the U.S. experience developing the ANDSF:

1. The U.S. government was ill-prepared to conduct SSA programs of the size and scope required in Afghanistan. The lack of commonly understood interagency terms, concepts, and models for SSA undermined communication and coordination, damaged trust, intensified frictions, and contributed to initial gross under-resourcing of the U.S. effort to develop the ANDSF.
2. Initial U.S. plans for Afghanistan focused solely on U.S. military operations and did not include the development of an Afghan army, police, or supporting ministerial-level institutions.
3. Early U.S. partnerships with independent militias—intended to advance U.S. counterterrorism objectives—ultimately undermined the creation and role of the ANA and Afghan National Police (ANP).
4. Critical ANDSF capabilities, including aviation, intelligence, force management, and special forces, were not included in early U.S., Afghan, and NATO force-design plans.
5. The United States failed to optimize coalition nations' capabilities to support SSA missions in the context of international political realities. The wide use of national caveats, rationale for joining the coalition, resource constraints and military capabilities, and NATO's force generation processes led to an increasingly complex implementation of SSA programs. This resulted in a lack of an agreed-upon framework for conducting SSA activities.
6. Providing advanced Western weapons and management systems to a largely illiterate and uneducated force without appropriate training and institutional infrastructure created long-term dependencies, required increased U.S. fiscal support, and extended sustainability timelines.
7. The lag in Afghan ministerial and security sector governing capacity hindered planning, oversight, and the long-term sustainability of the ANDSF.
8. Police development was treated as a secondary mission for the U.S. government, despite the critical role the ANP played in implementing rule of law and providing local-level security nationwide.
9. The constant turnover of U.S. and NATO trainers impaired the training mission's institutional memory and hindered the relationship building required in SSA missions.

10. ANDSF monitoring and evaluation tools relied heavily on tangible outputs, such as staffing, equipping, and training levels, as well as subjective evaluations of leadership. This focus masked intangible factors, such as corruption and will to fight, which deeply affected security outcomes and failed to adequately factor in classified U.S. intelligence assessments.
11. Because U.S. military plans for ANDSF readiness were created in an environment of politically constrained timelines—and because these plans consistently underestimated the resilience of the Afghan insurgency and overestimated ANDSF capabilities—the ANDSF was ill-prepared to deal with deteriorating security after the drawdown of U.S. combat forces.
12. As security deteriorated, efforts to sustain and professionalize the ANDSF became secondary to meeting immediate combat needs.

In 2002, the United States and its coalition partners concluded that the development of an internationally trained and professional Afghan national security force could serve as a viable alternative to an expansion of international forces in Afghanistan. Despite being ill-prepared and lacking proper doctrine, policies, and resources, the United States took the lead for building the ANA. Coalition partners accepted responsibility for other efforts: police reform (Germany), counternarcotics (United Kingdom), judicial reform (Italy), and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (Japan). General Karl Eikenberry, the first Security Sector Coordinator in Afghanistan, remarked that “overall, it might be termed exploratory learning because the many uncertainties of the Afghanistan mission added to the steepness of the learning curve.”¹

By May 2002, U.S. training of the new ANA began with the deployment of U.S. Special Forces to lead the effort. Recognizing that training a national army was beyond the core competency of the Special Forces, the United States deployed the 10th Mountain Division of the U.S. Army to expand the training program from small infantry units to larger military formations and develop defense institutions, such as logistics networks. In order to ensure sufficient U.S. combat support for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Army National Guard assumed responsibility for the ANA training mission.

In 2004, the United Nations described Afghanistan as “volatile, having seriously deteriorated in certain parts of the country.”² The director of the Defense Intelligence Agency reported that enemy attacks had reached “their highest levels since the collapse of the Taliban government.”³ The United States recognized that dividing security sector responsibilities among the coalition was not producing the desired results, requiring the Bush Administration to increase U.S. commitments. In 2005, the United States assumed the lead for developing

both the ANA and the ANP, and in 2006, created the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A) as the proponent responsible for training, advising, assisting, and equipping the Afghan security forces.

When assuming the lead for the ANP mission, the United States failed to sufficiently coordinate police training programs and mission requirements with Germany, which had previously had the lead, and the European Union. The United States preferred a plan to militarize the police as a localized defense force, while the Europeans wanted a traditional community policing model. This led to conflicting training, advising, and assisting efforts and resulted in the current ANP identity crisis.

As U.S. and coalition military forces tried to get ahead of growing insecurity, the United States turned to rapidly expanding the ANDSF on a condensed training and development timeline. For the ANA, training capacity at the Kabul Military Training Center increased from two to five *kandaks* (U.S. Army battalion equivalents), and basic training was reduced from 14 weeks in 2005 to 10 weeks in 2007. In 2005, the U.S. military reported that of the 34,000 “trained” Afghan police officers, only 3,900 had been through the basic eight-week course, while the remainder had attended a two-week transition course. In contrast, police recruits in the United States—who are pulled from a highly literate pool of high school graduates—attend an average of 21 weeks of basic training, followed by weeks of field training.

The lack of appropriate equipment for the Afghan security forces threatened their combat readiness. According to a 2005 U.S. military report, some ANP units had less than 15 percent of the required weapons and communications systems on hand.⁴ In 2006, retired General Barry McCaffrey concluded that the ANA was “miserably under-resourced” and such circumstances were becoming a “major morale factor for the force.”⁵

Despite known issues with equipping the force, the United States pushed for the expansion of ANDSF force strength. By the end of 2006, senior U.S. officials told the Afghan government that the United States would withhold funding if the Afghans did not agree to expand the ANP from 60,000 to 82,000 police. And in 2008, the U.S. and Afghan governments agreed to expand the ANA from 75,000 to 134,000 (to include a new Afghan Air Force), without considering the associated fiscal and resource requirements.

As part of the expansion of the Afghan military, the United States initiated training of specialized units, transitioning the ANA from a light-infantry army to a combined arms service with army, air force, and special forces elements. The train, advise, and assist programs for these specialized forces were the

most successful of the training efforts, and were based on the comprehensive and persistent approach taken by U.S. Special Operations Command and some elements of the U.S. Air Force. U.S. Special Forces implemented a rigorous 16-week training program—modeled on the U.S. Army Ranger program—that included close and enduring post-training mentorship in the field. This resulted in Afghan Special Forces becoming the “best-of-the-best” in the Afghan military. And, while still a fledgling institution (largely because the program was not initiated until 2006), the Afghan Air Force shows great promise; it recently increased its ability to provide close air support and lift to ground forces.

The U.S. government initiated three specialized police programs after 2005: the Afghan National Auxiliary Police, the Afghan Public Protection Program, and the Afghan Local Police. With limited oversight from and accountability to the Afghan government and the United States, these police forces were reported to have engaged in human rights abuses, drug trafficking, and other corrupt activities, ultimately serving as a net detractor from security. While the United States stopped supporting two of the programs due to these issues, the Afghan Local Police continue to operate today.

In 2009, with the Taliban threat increasing and the ANDSF struggling to secure the country, President Barack Obama authorized a surge of U.S. combat forces and agreed to increase ANDSF end-strength to 352,000. President Obama also announced a withdrawal date for combat forces and the transfer of security to the ANDSF beginning in mid-2011. With guidance from the president, the U.S. military pursued a strategy of rapidly improving security, while also supporting the development of a struggling ANDSF. This dual-track strategy resulted in an environment ripe for capacity substitution, where U.S. trainers and advisors augmented critical gaps in Afghan capability, providing enablers such as close air support, airlift, medical evacuation, logistics, and leadership to ensure success on the battlefield. At the same time, the mandate to conduct partnered operations with the ANDSF taught the Afghans to model their fighting on that of the United States, resulting in Afghan ground forces’ increasing dependence on U.S.-provided advanced military capabilities.

Assessment tools used throughout the reconstruction effort evaluated tangible information, such as recruitment, training, and equipment, and failed to assess subjective factors, such as corruption, leadership, and battlefield performance. These assessment systems created disincentives for Afghan units to improve because the coalition prioritized supporting units with lower ratings. Furthermore, from 2005 to 2016, the United States used four different ANDSF assessment methodologies that resulted in inconsistent and often contradictory conclusions about the quality and readiness of the forces.

The ANDSF train, advise, and assist effort was chronically understaffed. In 2009, NATO established the NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan (NTM-A) as a partner organization to CSTC-A. In February 2010, when NTM-A/CSTC-A became fully operational, only 1,810 of the required 4,083 trainers were in place. Similar shortages remained as time went on. Even in those areas deemed critical priorities, NTM-A struggled to meet its personnel requirements. In November 2010, for example, about 36 percent of instructor positions seen as critical priorities were unfilled. At a time when the ANA was rapidly expanding toward a force strength goal of 171,600, these staffing shortfalls at training facilities and in the field negatively affected planned ANDSF development. General John Craddock, Supreme Allied Commander Europe from 2006 to 2009, stated that “NATO nations have never completely filled the agreed requirements for forces needed in Afghanistan” since mission inception.⁶

With a poor monitoring and evaluation system, and the United States and NATO substituting for the capacity and capability of the ANDSF, it was not a surprise that, as U.S. and NATO forces drew down and transitioned to training and advising at the regional and institutional level, the ANDSF struggled to succeed. General Joseph Dunford warned the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2014 that upon coalition troop withdrawal, the “Afghan security forces will begin to deteriorate.... I think the only debate is the pace of that deterioration.”⁷

It was not until 2015 that the United States and NATO prioritized security sector governance and defense institution building over improving the fighting capabilities of the force. Prior to 2015, developing Afghan ministerial capability in the security sector was primarily focused on governing initiatives that would improve the combat effectiveness of the force, often postponing the governing functions that are critical to improving accountability, oversight, professional development, and command of subordinate units.

Starting in January 2015, U.S. and NATO forces have provided train, advise, and assist support to the ANDSF at the ANA corps level, the ANP zone level, and within the Ministries of Defense and Interior. Four regional train, advise, and assist commands (TAAC) provide routine support to ANDSF units in close proximity and will “fly-to-advise” to more remote locations, as needed. This posture has significantly decreased U.S. “touch-points” with ANDSF units, causing the United States to rely on ANDSF information to understand the forces’ needs and struggles. Leaving some units uncovered, without regular U.S. advisors, proved disastrous in the summer of 2015, as the ANA 215th Corps in Helmand completely collapsed and had to be reconstituted.

Even with improved U.S. SSA efforts, corruption within the security forces and associated ministries continues to corrode the ANDSF's force readiness and battlefield performance. By 2013, corruption was officially recognized as a critical threat to U.S. objectives in Afghanistan. Despite consistent reports of rampant corruption, U.S. security-related aid was provided with little oversight or accountability. According to Lieutenant General Todd Semonite, former commanding general of CSTC-A, the United States had “no conditions” on funds flowing through CSTC-A to the Afghan defense and interior ministries prior to 2014.⁸ SIGAR noted in a 2015 report to Congress that, even with conditions on U.S. aid, Afghan leaders “may construct compliance charades like enacting high-sounding but unenforced laws and conceal day-to-day practices.” Today, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) is widely accepted as one of the most corrupt institutions in Afghanistan. In May 2017, at the Third Annual European Union Anti-Corruption Conference, President Ashraf Ghani publicly admitted that “the Ministry of Interior is the heart of corruption in the security sector.”⁹

As security in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate, force protection requirements have increased, ultimately restricting U.S. advisors' ability to operate. Civilian advisors, once able to drive themselves to the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and MOI, are now forced to move with armed guards, in convoys, or even by helicopter. Expeditionary Advisory Packages—the U.S. military's way of reaching remote units—typically travel in large armored convoys supported by U.S. air power. In these packages, advisor to security personnel ratios can be as high as 1 to 3. President Ghani is attempting to restructure the ANDSF to optimize offensive capabilities and to reverse the eroding stalemate, but with the U.S. military confined to large bases and the civilian advisory mission largely stuck behind U.S. Embassy Kabul's walls, there are limits on what can be achieved.

LESSONS

This report identifies 11 lessons to inform U.S. policies and actions at the onset of and throughout a contingency operation.

1. The U.S. government is not well organized to conduct SSA missions in post-conflict nations or in the developing world because our doctrine, policies, personnel, and programs are insufficient to meet mission requirements and expectations.
2. SSA cannot employ a one-size-fits-all approach; it must be tailored to a host nation's context and needs. Security force structures and capabilities will not outlast U.S. assistance efforts if the host nation does not fully buy into such efforts and take ownership of SSA programs.

3. Senior government and nongovernment leaders in post-conflict or developing-world countries are likely to scrimmage for control of security forces; SSA missions should avoid empowering factions.
4. Western equipment and systems provided to developing-world militaries are likely to create chronic, high-cost dependencies.
5. Security force assessment methodologies are often unable to evaluate the impact of intangible factors such as leadership, corruption, malign influence, and dependency, which can lead to an underappreciation of how such factors can undermine readiness and battlefield performance.
6. Developing and training a national police force is best accomplished by law enforcement professionals in order to achieve a police capability focused on community policing and criminal justice.
7. To improve the effectiveness of SSA missions in coalition operations, the U.S. government must acknowledge and compensate for any coalition staffing shortfalls and national caveats that relate to trainers, advisors, and embedded training teams.
8. Developing foreign military and police capabilities is a whole-of-government mission.
9. In Afghanistan and other parts of the developing world, the creation of specialized security force units often siphons off the conventional force's most capable leaders and most educated recruits.
10. SSA missions must assess the needs of the entire spectrum of the security sector, including rule of law and corrections programs, in addition to developing the nation's police and armed forces. Synchronizing SSA efforts across all pillars of the security sector is critical.
11. SSA training and advising positions are not currently career enhancing for uniformed military personnel, regardless of the importance U.S. military leadership places on the mission. Therefore, experienced and capable military professionals with SSA experience often choose non-SSA assignments later in their careers, resulting in the continual deployment of new and inexperienced forces for SSA missions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SIGAR recommends the following actions that can be undertaken by Congress or executive branch agencies to inform U.S. security sector assistance efforts at the onset of and throughout reconstruction efforts, and to institutionalize the lessons learned from the U.S. experience in Afghanistan. The first set of recommendations is applicable to any current or future contingency operation and the second set of recommendations is specific to Afghanistan.

Legislative Recommendations

1. The U.S. Congress should consider (1) establishing a commission to review the institutional authorities, roles, and resource mechanisms of each major U.S. government stakeholder in SSA missions, and (2) evaluating the capabilities of each department and military service to determine where SSA expertise should best be institutionalized.
2. The U.S. Congress should consider mandating a full review of all U.S. foreign police development programs, identify a lead agency for all future police development activities, and provide the identified agency with the necessary staff, authorities, and budget to accomplish its task.

Executive Agency Recommendations

1. Department of Defense (DOD) and State SSA planning must include holistic initial assessments of mission requirements that should cover the entire range of the host nation's security sector.
2. DOD and State should coordinate all U.S. security sector plans and designs with host-nation officials prior to implementation to deconflict cultural differences, align sustainability requirements, and agree to the desired size and capabilities of the force. DOD and State should also engage with any coalition partners to ensure unity of effort and purpose.
3. DOD, in partnership with State, should reinforce with host-nation leaders that the United States will only support the development of a national security force that is inclusive of the social, political, and ethnic diversity of the nation.
4. To prevent the empowerment of one political faction or ethnic group, DOD, in coordination with State and the intelligence community, should monitor, evaluate, and assess all formal and informal security forces operating within a host nation. DOD should also identify and monitor both formal and informal chains of command and map social networks of the host nation's security forces. DOD's intelligence agencies should track and analyze political

associations, biographical data, and patronage networks of senior security officials and political leadership.

5. DOD, State, and other key SSA stakeholders should enhance civilian and military career fields in security sector assistance, and create personnel systems capable of tracking employee SSA experience and skills to expedite the deployment of these experts.
6. DOD and State should mandate professional development and training for all civilian and military members involved in SSA activities, as well as review curricula from the current training programs to align training with mission requirements and fully prepare deploying SSA personnel.
7. To overcome staffing shortages within a coalition, DOD and State should bolster political and diplomatic efforts to ensure better compliance with agreed-upon resource contributions from partner nations and, if unsuccessful and unable to fill the gaps, reassess timeframes and anticipated outcomes to accommodate new realities.

DOD-Specific Recommendations

1. Prior to the initiation of an SSA mission—and periodically throughout the mission—DOD should report to the U.S. Congress on its assessments of U.S. and host-nation shared SSA objectives, alongside an evaluation of the host nation's political, social, economic, diplomatic, and historical context, to shape security sector requirements.
2. DOD should lead the creation of new interagency doctrine for security sector assistance that includes best practices from Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Vietnam.
3. DOD should review the evolution of command structures and assessment methodologies used in Afghanistan and Iraq to determine best practices and a recommended framework to be applied to future SSA missions. DOD should design new monitoring and evaluation tools capable of analyzing both tangible and intangible factors affecting force readiness.
4. DOD should conduct a human capital, threat, and material needs assessment and design a force accordingly, with the appropriate systems and equipment.
5. When creating specialized units such as special forces, DOD should submit human capital assessments and sustainability analyses for both the specialized and conventional forces to the House and Senate Appropriations and Armed Services Committees. Force capability assessments must

determine the best course of action, including redesigning requirements for each unit.

6. DOD should diversify the leadership assigned to develop foreign military forces, to include civilian defense officials with expertise in the governing and accountability systems required in a military institution.
7. DOD and the military services should institutionalize security sector assistance and create specialized SSA units that are fully trained and ready to deploy rapidly for immediate SSA missions. DOD should create an institution responsible for coordinating and deconflicting SSA activities between the services and greater DOD, provide pre-deployment training, and serve as the lead proponent for security sector governance requirements, including defense institution building.

Afghanistan-Specific Recommendations

While the United States continues to support the development and professionalization of the ANDSF, there are several actions that can be taken now to improve our SSA efforts.

Executive Agency Recommendations

1. Realign the U.S. advisor mission to meet the operational and organizational roles and responsibilities of the ANDSF, MOD, and MOI.
2. Recreate proponent leads for the ANA and ANP.
3. Create a rear element to provide persistent and comprehensive support to CSTC-A and the TAACs.
4. Synchronize troop decisions with NATO force generation conference schedules and begin discussions for post-2020 NATO support to Afghanistan.
5. Mandate SSA pre-deployment training at service-level training centers.
6. Create incentives for military and civilian personnel with expertise in SSA.
7. Improve ANDSF governing, oversight, and accountability systems.
8. Impose stringent conditionality mechanisms to eliminate the ANDSF's culture of impunity.
9. Develop a civilian cadre of security sector governance personnel at MOD and MOI.

10. Institutionalize rotational schedules that allow for continuity in mission and personnel.
11. Increase civilian advisors to the ANDSF, MOD, and MOI.

DOD-Specific Recommendations

1. Implement best practices and develop mitigation strategies for the Afghan Air Force recapitalization.
2. Conduct a human capital assessment of the ANDSF conventional and special forces.
3. Review combat and logistics enabler support to the ANA.
4. Increase advisory capacity in ANA military academies and ANA and ANP training centers.
5. Expand the train, advise, and assist mission below the corps level.
6. Consider security requirements, such as guardian angels for trainers and advisors, when making decisions on contributing additional troops.
7. Ensure that the necessary technical oversight is available when maintenance or training tasks are delegated to support contracts.
8. Consider deploying law enforcement professionals to advise the ANP.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

U.S. Army photo

The development of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) is a cornerstone of the overall U.S. policy in Afghanistan and a key requirement of the U.S. strategy to transition security to the Afghan government. Since 2002, the ANDSF has been raised, trained, equipped, and deployed to secure Afghanistan from internal and external threats, as well as to prevent the reestablishment of terrorist safe havens. To achieve this outcome, the United States devoted over \$70 billion (60 percent) of its Afghanistan reconstruction funds to building the ANDSF through 2016, and continues to commit over \$4 billion per year to that effort.

This lessons learned report draws important lessons from the U.S. experience building the ANDSF since 2002. These lessons are relevant to ongoing efforts in Afghanistan, where the United States will likely remain engaged in security sector assistance (SSA) efforts to support the ANDSF through at least 2020. In addition, the United States currently participates in efforts to build other developing-world security forces as a key tenet of its national security strategy, an effort we anticipate will continue. The report further provides timely and actionable recommendations intended to improve U.S. operations and outcomes in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

This report is divided into nine chapters. After the introductory section, chapters two through five characterize the different eras of U.S. efforts to design, train, advise, assist, and equip the ANDSF and describe how these efforts waxed and waned within the policy priorities of the United States and other key donors. The chapters chart the evolution of the mission from the United States' initial agreement to serve as the lead nation for developing the Afghan National Army (ANA), to later assuming a level of ownership for the success of the Afghan military and police forces, to ultimately making their development a critical precondition for reducing U.S. and coalition support over time. These sections note how the U.S. government was ill-prepared to develop a national security force in a post-conflict nation; the changing resource requirements for ANDSF personnel, equipment, and funding; and the inherent tensions within and between the U.S. government and the international coalition.

Chapter six provides a detailed analysis of cross-cutting issues affecting ANDSF development. These issues impacted both military and police development and were a persistent challenge from the beginning of the U.S. effort. They include corruption, illiteracy, the role of women, the provision of weapons and equipment, high levels of ANDSF attrition, and the annual rotation of U.S. advisors and trainers.

Chapters seven through nine constitute the report's conclusion. Chapter seven outlines in depth the key findings from our analysis of the U.S. efforts to develop the ANDSF. Chapter eight provides the lessons derived from this analysis. Chapter nine offers recommendations for improving security sector assistance efforts in Afghanistan and future contingency operations.

The report identifies 12 key findings regarding the U.S. experience developing the ANDSF:

1. The U.S. government was ill-prepared to conduct SSA programs of the size and scope required in Afghanistan. The lack of commonly understood interagency terms, concepts, and models for SSA undermined communication and coordination, damaged trust, intensified frictions, and contributed to initial gross under-resourcing of the U.S. effort to develop the ANDSF.
2. Initial U.S. plans for Afghanistan focused solely on U.S. military operations and did not include the construction of an Afghan army, police, or supporting ministerial-level institutions.
3. Early U.S. partnerships with independent militias—intended to advance U.S. counterterrorism objectives—ultimately undermined the creation and role of the ANA and Afghan National Police (ANP).
4. Critical ANDSF capabilities, including aviation, intelligence, force management, and special forces, were not included in early U.S., Afghan, and NATO force-design plans.

5. The United States failed to optimize coalition nations' capabilities to support SSA missions in the context of international political realities. The wide use of national caveats, rationale for joining the coalition, resource constraints and military capabilities, and NATO's force generation processes led to an increasingly complex implementation of SSA programs. This resulted in a lack of an agreed-upon framework for conducting SSA activities.
6. Providing advanced Western weapons and management systems to a largely illiterate and uneducated force without appropriate training and institutional infrastructure created long-term dependencies, required increased U.S. fiscal support, and extended sustainability timelines.
7. The lag in Afghan ministerial and security sector governing capacity hindered planning, oversight, and the long-term sustainability of the ANDSF.
8. Police development was treated as a secondary mission for the U.S. government, despite the critical role the ANP played in implementing rule of law and providing local-level security nationwide.
9. The constant turnover of U.S. and NATO trainers impaired the training mission's institutional memory and hindered the relationship building required in SSA missions.
10. ANDSF monitoring and evaluation tools relied heavily on tangible outputs, such as staffing, equipping, and training levels, as well as subjective evaluations of leadership. This focus masked intangible factors, such as corruption and will to fight, which deeply affected security outcomes and failed to adequately factor in classified U.S. intelligence assessments.
11. Because U.S. military plans for ANDSF readiness were created in an environment of politically constrained timelines—and because these plans consistently underestimated the resilience of the Afghan insurgency and overestimated ANDSF capabilities—the ANDSF was ill-prepared to deal with deteriorating security after the drawdown of U.S. combat forces.
12. As security deteriorated, efforts to sustain and professionalize the ANDSF became secondary to meeting immediate combat needs.

WHY POLICY MAKERS SHOULD CARE ABOUT SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE

A fully capable ANDSF that is able to secure Afghanistan from internal and external threats and prevent the re-establishment of terrorist safe havens is a U.S. national security objective. Despite U.S. government expenditures of more than \$70 billion in security sector assistance to design, train, advise, assist, and equip the ANDSF, the Afghan security forces are not yet capable of securing their own nation. Learning what has worked well—or not—over the past 16 years is important to improving ongoing efforts to create a capable ANDSF, as well as ensuring that future SSA efforts achieve their objectives.

In general, security sector assistance to foreign governments is used to meet U.S. national security objectives and increase U.S. influence globally. The United States aims to empower partner nations to address regional and national threats without a large deployment of U.S. combat forces. The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance noted that “building partner capacity” is a key component of defense planning and will be used as a means of decreasing Department of Defense (DOD) budgets over time.¹⁰ According to media reporting, a 2009 private White House briefing estimated the cost of deploying one U.S. soldier to Afghanistan to be about \$1 million per year.¹¹ While \$70 billion for SSA efforts over a 14-year period is a significant amount of money, that same amount equals the deployment of 70,000 U.S. soldiers to Afghanistan for only a single year, making SSA a truly cost-effective option.

While the U.S. government has a number of individual department and agency initiatives to improve SSA programs, it currently lacks a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach and coordinating body to manage implementation and provide oversight of these programs. In 2010, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates described “America’s interagency toolkit” for building the security capacity of partner nations as a “hodgepodge of jerry-rigged arrangements constrained by a dated and complex patchwork of authorities, persistent shortfalls in resources, and unwieldy processes.”¹² For example, in 2016 the RAND Corporation identified 106 “core” DOD security cooperation statutes within Title 10 of the U.S. Code. That same year, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) identified 24 programs in seven different U.S. agencies responsible just for police development.¹³

“America’s interagency toolkit” for building the security capacity of partner nations was a “hodgepodge of jerry-rigged arrangements constrained by a dated and complex patchwork of authorities, persistent shortfalls in resources, and unwieldy processes.”

—U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates

In the 2016 Brussels Agreement, the United States committed to supporting the ANDSF through 2020. The U.S. administration is currently deliberating a new Afghanistan strategy, to include potentially long-term support to training, advising, and assisting the ANDSF. It is therefore necessary to identify, understand, and apply U.S., NATO, and Afghan lessons learned over the last 15 years of SSA efforts to position the United States to meet its national security objectives in Afghanistan, and to eventually support the exit of U.S. combat forces from that nation.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE U.S. SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK

The legal and institutional framework of SSA originated in congressional documents, legislation, and executive orders beginning in the late 1940s. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 cemented the Secretary of State's policy and oversight role in SSA, with DOD serving as the primary executor. Starting in the 1980s, Congress provided DOD with its own SSA authorities under Title 10 and the annual National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA). These authorities increased through the 1990s, ultimately giving DOD the ability to independently fund security assistance programs for counternarcotics, humanitarian assistance, nonproliferation, and counterterrorism, each with State's concurrence.¹⁴

Following the mass casualty terror attacks in the U.S. homeland on September 11, 2001, and the eventual U.S. commitment to reconstruct both the Afghan and Iraqi security forces, Congress substantially increased State and DOD authorities to train, advise, assist, and equip foreign security forces. Due to State's limited number of personnel and ability to oversee security programs, DOD's role ultimately increased beyond State's oversight capacity. To meet the growing demand for SSA activities, DOD's authorities and responsibilities were increased.¹⁵

Security Sector Assistance

Security sector assistance is defined in the 2013 Presidential Policy Directive 23 (PPD 23) as "policies, programs, and activities the United States uses to: (1) engage with foreign partners and help shape their policies and actions in the security sector; (2) help foreign partners build and sustain the capacity and effectiveness of legitimate institutions to provide security, safety, and justice for their people; and (3) enable foreign partners to contribute to efforts that address common security challenges."¹⁶

Within DOD alone, there are programs for building partner capacity, security assistance, security sector assistance, security force assistance, global train and equip missions, and defense institution building (table 1 on the next page). Currently, DOD views each of these separate programs as fitting under the umbrella of "security cooperation," a term used when the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) administers defense equipment, military training, and other defense-related services. The purpose of security cooperation, as defined by DOD, is to "build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide the U.S. with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation."¹⁷ With the exception of defense institution building, each of these programs largely focuses on improving the effectiveness of fighting forces, without addressing the governance and civilian authorities that oversee them.

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

TABLE 1

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS	
Program	Description
Security Cooperation	According to DSCA, security cooperation “comprises all activities undertaken by [DOD] to encourage and enable international partners to work with the United States to achieve strategic objectives.” Additionally, security cooperation promotes specific U.S. security interests, develops allied and friendly military capabilities, and provides U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to host nations.
Security Sector Assistance (SSA)	DOD uses the 2013 definition of SSA established in PPD 23. SSA refers to the policies, programs, and activities the United States uses to engage with foreign partners to assist them with their security sector development; this includes building and sustaining partner nations’ security capacities and enabling foreign partners to contribute to common security challenge efforts. SSA is intended to complement U.S. national security and foreign assistance objectives.
Security Force Assistance (SFA)	SFA entails all DOD activities that support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions. SFA focuses on helping foreign security forces independently make decisions and conduct operations. Also, SFA seeks to support the professionalization and sustainability of foreign security forces.
Building Partner Capacity (BPC)	DSCA is responsible for managing the execution of a wide array of Title 10 and Title 22 programs designed to advance partner nation capacity and capabilities through the provision of training and equipment. Also, through Title 10 humanitarian-related programs, DOD seeks to achieve national security objectives by building military-civilian relations. DSCA houses BPC programs within the Directorate of BPC, which is organized into separate divisions: equipping division; humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and mine action division; and training division. A mixture of DOD Foreign Military Financing and Foreign Military Sales-funded personnel comprise the staffing for these programs.
Train and Equip	Train and equip programs are established in accordance with Section 1206 of the NDAA to build the capacity of foreign military forces. The Secretary of Defense, with concurrence from the Secretary of State, supports and conducts various programs to build the capacity of a foreign military force so the country can sustain its forces and defend itself without assistance.
Defense Institution Building (DIB)	DOD Directive 5205.82, issued in January 2016, describes DIB as “security cooperation activities that empower partner nation defense institutions to establish or re-orient their policies and structures to make their defense sector more transparent, accountable, effective, affordable, and responsive to civilian control.” DIB increases the sustainability of other DOD security cooperation programs and is typically conducted at the ministerial, general, joint staff, and military headquarters levels. Defense institutions include the people, organizations, rules, norms, values, and behaviors that enable a defense enterprise to function with proper oversight, governance, and management.
Ministry of Defense Advisors (MODA)	Piloted in July 2010, this effort partnered DOD civilian experts with foreign defense and security officials to build core competencies in areas such as strategy and policy, human resources management, acquisition and logistics, and financial management. Congress authorized the Secretary of Defense, with concurrence from the Secretary of State, to assign DOD civilian employees as advisors to the ministries of defense of foreign countries in the fiscal year (FY) 2012 NDAA. In Afghanistan, where the program was first implemented, MODA sought to address past concerns regarding advisors’ lack of expertise.
Defense Institutional Reform Initiative (DIRI)	DIRI is a “global institutional capacity-building program that supports partner nation ministries of defense (MOD) and related institutions to address capacity gaps.” To address partner nation weaknesses and shortfalls, DIRI provides subject matter experts to work with partner nation leaders.

Source: Defense Security Cooperation Agency, “Directorate of Building Partnership Capacity,” <http://www.dsca.mil/about-us/programs-pgm> (accessed February 7, 2017); DSCA, “Security Cooperation Overview and Relationships,” <http://www.samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-1> (accessed February 7, 2017); GAO, *Security Force Assistance: The Army and Marine Corps Have Ongoing Efforts to Identify and Track Advisors, but the Army Needs a Plan to Capture Advising Experience*, GAO-14-482, July 11, 2014, p. 1; DSCA, “Security Force Assistance (SFA),” <http://samm.dsca.mil/glossary/security-force-assistance-sfa> (accessed February 7, 2017); DOD, “Instruction 5000.68 – Security Force Assistance,” October 27, 2010, p. 2; DOD, “Directive 5205.82 – Defense Institution Building (DIB),” January 27, 2016, p. 13; GAO, *Building Partner Capacity: DOD Should Improve Its Reporting to Congress on Challenges to Expanding Ministry of Defense Advisors Program*, GAO-15-279, February 2015, pp. 1–2; DODIG, *Defense Institution Reform Initiative Program Elements Need to Be Defined*, DODIG-2013-019, November 9, 2012, p. 2; DSCA, “Defense Institutional Reform Initiative (DIRI),” <http://www.dsca.mil/programs/defense-institutional-reform-initiative> (accessed February 8, 2017); DOD, “Directive 5132.03 – DOD Policy and Responsibilities Relating to Security Cooperation,” December 29, 2016, p. 17; White House, “Fact Sheet: U.S. Security Sector Assistance Policy,” April 5, 2013; National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Pub. L. No. 109-163, § 1206; DOD, “Instruction 5111.19 - Section 1206 Global Train-and-Equip Authority,” July 26, 2011.

Security sector governance is the transparent, accountable, and legitimate management and oversight of security policy and practice.

It was not until 2008 that DOD began two small programs aimed specifically at improving **security sector governance**: the Defense Institutional Reform Initiative (DIRI) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) for Security Cooperation, and the Ministry of Defense Advisors (MODA) program, aligned under DSCA. To date, DOD lacks a coordinating and oversight institution

responsible for all defense and military security assistance activities conducted independently by the military services, Joint Staff, DSCA, and OSD.

State's SSA authorities are largely derived from Title 22 of the U.S. Code. For State, the security assistance portfolio has no formal definition, but rather consists of six budget accounts under the header "International Security Assistance."¹⁸ State's DOD-implemented programs, such as Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and International Military Education and Training (IMET), are conducted under State's Title 22 authorities. State also administers its own programs authorized by Title 22, including International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE); Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR); and Peacekeeping Operations (table 2). While DOD categorizes its efforts under the

TABLE 2

DEPARTMENT OF STATE SECURITY SECTOR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS	
Program	Description
Foreign Military Sales (FMS)	FMS is a form of security assistance authorized by the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) intended to strengthen U.S. security and promote world peace. The Secretary of State determines which countries are eligible to participate in FMS and the Secretary of Defense executes the programs. FMS is conducted through formal contracts or agreements between the U.S. government and an authorized foreign purchaser through a seven-step process.
Foreign Military Financing (FMF)	FMF is also authorized through the AECA and provides the authority to finance procurement of defense items for foreign countries and international organizations. FMF gives eligible partner nations the ability to purchase U.S. defense articles, training, and services through FMS or foreign military financing of direct commercial contracts. Similar to the FMS program, the Secretary of State determines which countries are eligible and the Secretary of Defense executes the programs. FMF funds are appropriated by Congress through the Department of State Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriation Act.
International Military Education and Training (IMET)	According to a 2014 joint report to Congress on FMF, State and DOD agreed that IMET was a "low-cost, highly effective component of U.S. security assistance." To address security issues and improve defense cooperation between the United States and other countries, IMET seeks to establish regional stability through cohesive military-to-military relations. Additionally, IMET provides training to foreign military forces and civilian personnel to reinforce their adherence to democratic values within their government and military.
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE)	In partnership with DOD, INCLE seeks to combat international drug trafficking, terrorist organizations, and other transnational crime groups through the training of foreign law enforcement and security institutions. INCLE provides training and other essential support for foreign governments to identify, confront, and disrupt the operations of illicit groups before they become a U.S. national security threat. INCLE funds are focused on areas where security situations are most dire and where U.S. resources are used in tandem with host country government strategies.
Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR)	NADR seeks to counter foreign terrorist fighters, destroy small arms, clear unexploded ordnance, and address other critical, security-related issues. The programs within NADR primarily entail working with other countries to reduce transnational threats.
Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)	PKO funds "support multilateral peacekeeping and regional stability operations that are not funded through the [United Nations]." PKO seeks to address gaps in capabilities to allow countries and regional organizations to participate in a variety of peacekeeping operations, as well as to reform security forces in a post-conflict environment.

Source: Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies, "Chapter 5: Foreign Military Sales Process," *Green Book*, January 2017, pp. 5-1, 5-2; DSCA, "Foreign Military Financing," <http://www.dsca.mil/programs/foreign-military-financing-fmf> (accessed February 8, 2017); House Committee on Appropriations, State, *Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Bill*, H.R. Rep. 114-154 (June 15, 2015), pp. 42-49; DOS and DOD, *Foreign Military Training Joint Report to Congress*, October 30, 2014, pp. II-1, II-2, II-3; DOS, "Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Program and Budget Guide: Fiscal Year 2012 Budget," <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/rpt/pbg/fy2012/185676.htm> (accessed April 20, 2017); DOS, "Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Program and Budget Guide: Fiscal Year 2012 Budget," <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/rpt/pbg/fy2012/185676.htm> (accessed April 20, 2017); DOS, "Peacekeeping Operations Account Summary," <https://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/sat/c14563.htm> (accessed February 8, 2017).

umbrella of security cooperation, State defines all support to foreign military and security forces as security sector assistance.

In an effort to address the complexity of U.S. SSA programs, the administration of President Barack Obama ordered a top-down review of all security assistance programs and authorities in 2009. As a result of this review, the White House issued PPD 23 in April 2013, mandating an overhaul of SSA policy. PPD 23 required establishing a new interagency framework for planning, implementing, assessing, and overseeing SSA to foreign governments and international organizations.¹⁹ The White House Fact Sheet for PPD 23 stated that SSA programs were aimed at “strengthening the ability of the United States to help allies and partner nations to build their own security capacity consistent with the principles of good governance and rule of law.” A further goal of PPD 23 was to promote “universal values, such as good governance, transparent and accountable oversight of security forces, rule of law, transparency, accountability, delivery of fair and effective justice, and respect for human rights.”²⁰

Congress took several actions in the FY 2017 NDAA to enhance and improve DOD’s authorities to conduct SSA. In Section 1204, Congress mandated an evaluation of DOD’s framework for security cooperation activities by an independent entity, which must submit its recommendations to Congress by November 1, 2018. Congress further recommended in Section 1205 that the Secretary of Defense “develop and maintain an assessment, monitoring, and evaluation framework for security cooperation with foreign countries to ensure accountability and foster implementation of best practices.”²¹ Recognizing that DOD has historically prioritized improving the kinetic capabilities of combat forces and placed less attention on the governing institutions overseeing them, Section 1233 stated that “the Secretary shall certify ... a program of institutional capacity building ... to enhance the capacity of such foreign country to exercise responsible civilian control of the national security forces of such foreign country” as a part of future security assistance programs.²² State, Department of Justice (DOJ), and other non-DOD SSA stakeholders have not been subject to the same scrutiny and review of SSA-related authorities and capabilities.

Complexities Enhanced: Security Sector Assistance within NATO

SSA in Afghanistan was a “whole-of-governments” effort, as programs and initiatives were divided among the United States, NATO, and non-NATO coalition partners, fundamentally increasing the complexity of the mission. After 9/11, NATO invoked Article 5 of the alliance’s charter for the first time, leading to the creation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) as the first NATO expeditionary mission.²³ While some U.S. military and civilian personnel had prior experience operating under a NATO charter, for example, in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Haiti, the United States had never partnered with NATO on a mission of the size and scale required in Afghanistan.

Understanding NATO processes, capabilities, and authorities was a challenge for U.S. officials, in particular because these activities often did not align with U.S. doctrine, policies, and authorities, as was the case with SSA missions.²⁴ Furthermore, the deployment of NATO advisors and trainers was often held up by NATO’s force-generation processes, and the advisory missions were therefore chronically understaffed and under-resourced. Due to the lack of standardization in NATO deployments, assigned trainers and advisors were beholden to their individual country’s rules, laws, and caveats; as a result, NATO forces lacked a uniform mission and purpose.²⁵ In addition, chronic issues of interoperability and information sharing unnecessarily complicated the mission. All of these differences led to the creation of an unsynchronized force and limited the development of the ANDSF.²⁶ To this day, the United States and its NATO partners lack a commonly shared doctrine or policy for conducting security sector assistance missions.



CHAPTER 2

2001–2003: BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

Jason Howk photo

EARLY U.S. EFFORTS DID NOT INCLUDE SECURITY FORCE DEVELOPMENT

On 9/11, the U.S. military had no plans prepared and readily available for operations in Afghanistan. As a result, the U.S. response was initially led by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operators, leveraging intelligence assets and personal relationships with anti-Taliban militias, mainly the Northern Alliance faction. Small teams of U.S. Special Forces quickly deployed to Afghanistan and partnered with CIA and Northern Alliance teams to target Taliban positions and track and attack al-Qaeda leaders.²⁷ A little over two weeks after the 9/11 attacks, the White House published its “Declaratory Policy on Afghanistan,” describing the United States’ focused goal in Afghanistan as “simple: eradicate the terrorism that led to the strikes that killed citizens of 78 countries on September 11.”²⁸

On October 7, 2001, with military plans finalized, President George Bush authorized Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and its strikes on al-Qaeda training camps and Taliban military installations. In his address to the nation that evening, the president stated, “Today we focus on Afghanistan, but the battle is broader.”²⁹ Based on the need for a rapid response to the 9/11 attacks, DOD planners focused on kinetic operations and had little time to plan for post-

conflict reconstruction, including building a national army and police force. The Bush administration, staunchly opposed to nation building, drafted a document for discussion among senior officials that stated the United States “should not commit to any post-Taliban military involvement, since the U.S. will be heavily engaged in anti-terrorism efforts worldwide.”³⁰ The U.S.-partnered operations with the Northern Alliance and U.S. air superiority quickly overwhelmed the Taliban battle lines, forcing large units to surrender or withdraw to Taliban-controlled pockets in the south and east of Afghanistan. Senior U.S. officials rebuffed Taliban surrender and reconciliation overtures to Afghan factional leaders, preferring a military defeat of the Taliban.³¹ On December 7, 2001, Taliban Ambassador to Pakistan Mullah Salam Zaefi announced the Taliban’s strategic withdrawal from Afghanistan.³²

Operation Enduring Freedom vs. the International Security Assistance Force

From 2001 to 2015, two separate and independent operations were being conducted simultaneously in Afghanistan: the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the NATO-led and UN-approved International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). OEF was principally designed to target al-Qaeda and Taliban elements as part of the U.S. Global War on Terrorism, with a secondary mission of developing the ANA and eventually the police. With the primary U.S. focus on counterterrorism operations, senior U.S. officials believed that reconstruction of Afghanistan should be the responsibility of the international community.

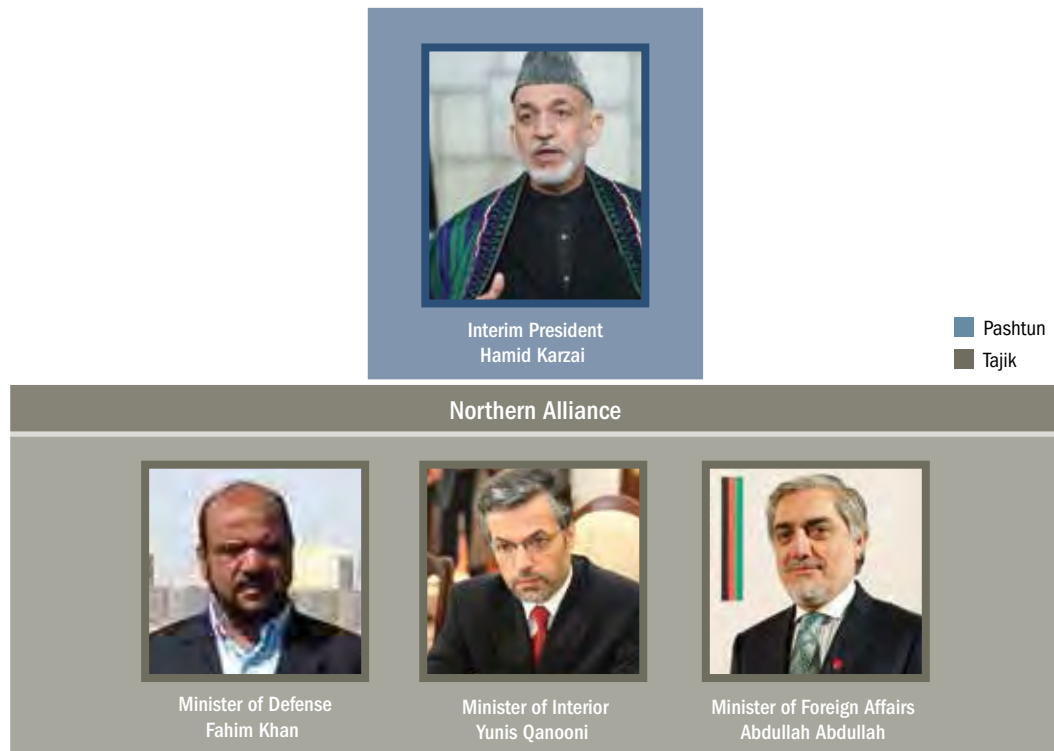
UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1386 established ISAF in 2001.³³ ISAF was a NATO-led military mission responsible for stability and peacekeeping operations. According to the 2001 Bonn Agreement, ISAF was initially given the responsibility to assist and consult with the Afghan Interim Authority to maintain security in and around Kabul so that Afghan and UN personnel could work safely.³⁴ ISAF’s other primary objectives were to build capacity in governance, reconstruct and develop the country, and conduct counternarcotics efforts.³⁵ To this day, the United States continues to operate an independent counterterrorism mission (Operation Freedom’s Sentinel) in parallel with the NATO train, advise, and assist mission of Resolute Support.

THE AFGHAN SCRIMMAGE FOR POWER

After the Taliban’s removal from power, anti-Taliban factions—predominantly the Shura-e Nazar (SEN) faction of the Northern Alliance—exploited this moment and quickly moved to control key security leadership positions (figure 1). With U.S. government support or, at best, indifference, the Northern Alliance stepped deftly into positions of authority across Kabul, forming a new government composed mostly of heavily armed, former Northern Alliance power brokers.³⁶ In Bonn, Germany, Afghan factions selected Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun tribesman from southern Afghanistan, as the leader of the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA). Hamid Karzai lacked a robust personal security force and relied heavily on U.S. Special Forces to move throughout Afghanistan. In exchange

FIGURE 1

NORTHERN ALLIANCE DOMINATES SECURITY MINISTRIES



Source: Hamid Karzai (DOD photo by Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo); Fahim Khan (photo by Maj. William S. Wynn); Yunis Qanooni (photo by Michał Koziczyński); Abdullah Abdullah (photo by Jessica Lea/DFID).

for political support at Bonn, Karzai appointed Northern Alliance leaders as the interim Ministers of Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs, resulting in their monopoly of power over the national security apparatus.

“Insecurity and the lack of law and order continue to impact negatively on the lives of Afghans every day, whittling away at the support for the transitional process.”

—UN Security Council

From 2002 to 2003, the scrimmage for power among Afghan elites and competing local and regional militias posed the greatest threat to Afghan stability. In the north, Jumbesh-e Milli leader Abdul Rashid Dostum and Northern Alliance commander Atta Mohammad Noor engaged in regular armed clashes over control of Mazar-e Sharif and other key territories. In the west, Ismail Khan’s fighters clashed with Amannullah Khan’s militia for control over Herat City.³⁷ In an act of particularly brazen defiance, militia commander Pacha Khan Zadran shelled

Gardez City in Paktia Province, killing dozens of civilians after a local shura refused Karzai's appointment of Zadran as the provincial governor.³⁸ Karzai, lacking his own national security forces, was unable to intervene and quell conflicts that affected the daily lives of the population, resulting in a loss of local support and momentum gained after the collapse of the Taliban government.³⁹ In early 2003, a UN Security Council report stated that "insecurity and the lack of law and order continue to impact negatively on the lives of Afghans every day, whittling away at the support for the transitional process."⁴⁰

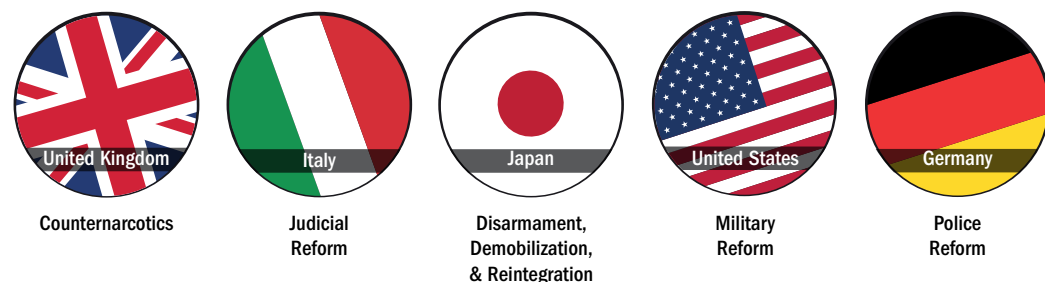
LEAD NATION SILOS: INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT TO SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

In early 2002, the United States and its coalition partners concluded that the development of an internationally trained and professional Afghan national security force could serve as a viable alternative to the expansion of international forces in Afghanistan.⁴¹ An indigenous force would also serve to expedite the reduction of international forces already in country. In April 2002, the Group of Eight (G8) nations met in Geneva, Switzerland, to map out divided responsibilities for security sector reform (SSR) in Afghanistan. Five independent silos with an appointed lead nation were created: military reform (United States), police reform (Germany), judicial reform (Italy), counternarcotics (United Kingdom), and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (Japan) (figure 2).⁴² At a 2003 SSR conference in Kabul, Karzai announced that "security sector reform, in short, is the basic prerequisite to recreating the nation that today's parents hope to leave to future generations."⁴³

Despite the U.S. government's commitment to help build the ANA, the U.S. national security team held divergent views on the required level of U.S. financial support. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld—an opponent of

FIGURE 2

LEAD NATIONS OF SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN AFGHANISTAN



Source: GAO, *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police Have Made Progress, but Future Plans Need to Be Better Defined*, GAO-05-575, June 2005, p. 5.

nation building—argued that the United States was spending billions of dollars “freeing Afghanistan” and that the U.S. position on financial support to the Afghan army “should be zero.”⁴⁴ Secretary of State Colin Powell disagreed, arguing that “there can be no reconstruction in Afghanistan without security.”⁴⁵ Powell even went so far as to say the United States should plan to be “heavily involved” in both the army and police reconstruction.⁴⁶

Security Sector Coordinator

In October 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld selected General Karl Eikenberry to serve as the head of the Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan (OMC-A) and as Security Sector Coordinator (SSC). His job was to integrate Ministry of Defense (MOD) and ANA development and to synchronize the five-pillar international SSR process. Eikenberry would report through both DOD and State channels. His primary task was to “accelerate the development of a Security Sector Reform working group that would include the five lead nations, the Afghan government, and the [United Nations].”⁴⁷ Describing his initial planning for and execution of the SSC role, Eikenberry stated, “Overall, it might be termed exploratory learning because the many uncertainties of the Afghanistan mission added to the steepness of the learning curve. They included: (1) lack of doctrine for nation building on this level of destruction; (2) lack of cooperative agreements among the lead nations as to the scope of their efforts and willingness to



Security Sector Reform Senior Working Group at the British Embassy, summer 2003. (Photo by Jason Howk)

cooperate; and (3) the unprecedented nature of building security sector in a nation that is so damaged after 30 years of civil war and humanitarian disaster.”⁴⁸

AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

Deciding on the Initial Design

With the Taliban removed from power, senior Afghan security officials—principally interim Minister of Defense Marshall Fahim Khan—advocated for a 200,000- to 250,000-member national transitional army staffed by “those who have participated in the liberation wars and have played a significant role in the defeat of the Taliban and al-Qaeda.”⁴⁹ According to Khan’s initial design in January 2002, the transitional Afghan Militia Force (AMF) would eventually be supplanted by a smaller, professionally trained force of 60,000 soldiers.⁵⁰ However, as security deteriorated, senior Afghan officials abandoned the smaller force design and sought a larger force to counter threats originating from Pakistan.

The U.S. design of the new national army did not match Khan's or that of other Afghan leaders. The U.S. goal was to minimize time, energy, resources, and commitment in Afghanistan by developing a smaller, Afghan-sustainable national security force. The United States believed that the greatest threat to Afghanistan's stability was factional fighting, not Pakistan, a country the United States viewed as a key ally in the Global War on Terrorism. The United States, therefore, believed Afghanistan needed a small, light infantry force that could be rapidly deployed by the national government to intervene in internal affairs.⁵¹ According to an ANA design team chief, the initial U.S. plan was to develop one army corps, secure the upcoming presidential elections, and withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2004.⁵²

The Afghan Militia Force

After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, armed groups began to increase throughout Afghanistan. Each of these groups claimed a stake in the new Afghan Interim Government.⁵³ In 2002, private militias served as a transitional army called the Afghan Militia Force, under minimal control of the MOD.⁵⁴ The AMF was intended to provide security until a formal army could be created and supported.

The AMF faced numerous difficulties after its creation. Its military capability was poor due to lack of equipment, low discipline, and inefficiency.⁵⁵ AMF soldiers remained loyal to local warlords, commanders, and political parties.⁵⁶ Additionally, the AMF was under strength and most of the resources provided by the MOD were pocketed by the appointed commanders or redistributed among the troops.⁵⁷ There was also inflation of military ranks. According to Afghan army scholar Antonio Giustozzi, "The transitional army has one of the highest officer to soldier ratios in the world, estimated at 1 to 2.... Most armies are in the 1 to 12 or 13 range."⁵⁸ Because international donors did not want to keep the transitional army and refused to fund it, there was an attempt to move soldiers out of the AMF and into the ANA.

Given its position as the lead nation for military reconstruction, the United States was in a position to ensure that its preferred design for the new national army would take root. In December 2002, an agreement was finalized for a Ministry of Defense and an all-volunteer national army, with an eventual end-strength capped at 70,000 soldiers.⁵⁹ Furthermore, stakeholders agreed to a mandatory ethnic balance within the ANA that would be representative of the country as a whole.⁶⁰

Despite agreeing to lead the development of the new Afghan army, the United States lacked an active and readily available military force, interagency doctrine, or model for reconstructing a foreign military at the scope and scale that Afghanistan required. Therefore, sticking with what they knew, senior U.S. military officers initially modeled the ANA on the U.S. Army's light infantry

forces, despite the fact that Afghanistan lacked the infrastructure and logistical capabilities required for such a model.⁶¹ The United States pushed for a standards-based, volunteer, ethnically diverse national army composed of civilian leaders, an officer corps, enlisted soldiers, and noncommissioned officers (NCO).

Civilian control of the military and a Western-style NCO corps were not a part of the history of the Afghan military forces, however, and were initially difficult for Afghan leaders to accept. The historical Soviet and Turkish influences had emphasized the development of officers, while neglecting the development of NCOs due to a draft or levy system that only required two-year assignments. Given this influence, many Afghan officials believed that only senior Afghan uniformed officers had the necessary background for leadership roles. U.S. General Eikenberry noted that Afghan leaders believed, “I have to be wearing a uniform. I don’t like this idea of wearing civilian clothes and being in the Ministry of Defense.”⁶² Despite this tradition, the Afghans—capitulating to U.S. pressure for civilian military leadership—ultimately found a workable solution with the appointment of the former Northern Alliance commanding general Marshall Fahim Khan as the civilian Minister of Defense.

Training Commences: Focus On Light Infantry Brigades (May 2002–May 2003)

In May 2002, U.S. Special Forces officially commenced training the ANA. The first phase of training emphasized developing operational forces, specifically one light infantry corps in Kabul—the Central Corps—with expanded development to be determined at a later time (figure 3 on the next page).⁶³ The U.S. Special Forces trainers were fully prepared to execute their core competency, foreign internal defense (FID), to train small and inexpensive units of indigenous forces on light infantry tactics.⁶⁴ Thus, the Central Corps was designed to have limited combat power while relying on U.S. and international air power for missions requiring more lethal capabilities.⁶⁵ According to General Eikenberry, the Central Corps was intended to have “enough combat power that it would be able to act [at] the behest of the central government and move forward into an area of Afghanistan and impose its will upon any contending factional force.”⁶⁶

From the start of the training mission, international partners agreed to support U.S. efforts to build the ANA, beginning in early 2002 with the French, who teamed with U.S. Special Forces to train the first infantry battalions of the new Afghan army.⁶⁷ In the fall of 2002, the British agreed to establish an NCO training program and an officer candidate school. At this point, the French committed to assuming responsibility for training Afghan officers and establishing a Command and General Staff College. The United States focused on basic training for enlisted soldiers and constructing a National Military Academy, in partnership with Turkey.⁶⁸ By the end of 2002, the development of the ANA was officially a multinational coalition mission with the United States as the lead nation. This

FIGURE 3

INITIAL ANA PLANS: KABUL-CENTRIC

Source: Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, interview by Dr. Lisa Beckenbaugh in *Eyewitness to War*, Combat Studies Institute, Volume III, ed. Michael G. Brooks, November 27, 2006, p. 17; U.S. Army Center of Military History, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, March 2002–April 2005, p. 29.

division of labor created challenges for the new ANA as the French, U.S., and British visions of the roles and responsibilities of soldiers and officers differed.

In late 2002, senior U.S. officials acknowledged the limitations of Special Forces' FID doctrine and determined that the reconstruction of an entire army and its defense institutions was beyond the Special Forces' capabilities and core mission. Aside from the doctrinal limitations of FID, Special Forces were stretched thin balancing global counterterrorism operations and building the ANA. According to Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley, a trained Special Forces officer, Special Forces "have limited capability to train beyond small unit tactics.... [Special Forces] guys are great at smaller unit tactics at the squad and platoon level and even up to the company level, but once you start getting up into that level, it really gets beyond their mission profile or mission set."⁶⁹ Thus, the U.S. approach began to shift away from Special Forces' FID toward the use of conventional forces as trainers.

Conventional Forces Take Over (May 2003–October 2003)

In early 2003, DOD decided that U.S. Army conventional forces would take over responsibility for ANA training. While conventional forces were capable of training larger military units, they lacked doctrine and training on reconstructing foreign militaries of the size and scope required in Afghanistan, much like Special Forces. In May 2003, a brigade from 10th Mountain Division—commanded by then-Colonel Milley—deployed to Afghanistan and assumed the lead role of training the ANA under the newly created Task Force (TF) Phoenix.

TF Phoenix's mission was to take army training and development to the next level by expanding the program from small-units of infantry to company and battalion operations. It was also tasked with establishing institutions, such as school systems and logistics networks, and improving combat tactics.⁷⁰ TF Phoenix trained the ANA from individual soldier to corps levels, while ministerial-level development was deferred to Military Professional Resources, Incorporated (MPRI), a DOD contractor.⁷¹ For expediency in ANA development, a train-the-trainer framework was adopted; eventually, 10th Mountain handed over the four-week basic course to the Afghans, who were supported by U.S. advisors.⁷² This new framework met training target numbers and on August 30, 2003, the Central Corps was formally activated. The corps consisted of thousands of internationally trained soldiers assigned to three brigades.⁷³

In a display of proficiency and capability, in January 2004 the Central Corps successfully provided security for the high-level *jirga* in Kabul in which the new Afghan constitution was ratified. In addition, the Central Corps secured the

A *jirga* is a traditional assembly of leaders who make decisions by consensus.



The first Afghan National Army battalion is honored as it readies to depart the Kabul Military Training Center. (Photo by Jason Howk)

opening ceremony for the Bagram-to-Kandahar section of the Ring Road that same year.⁷⁴

Invasion of Iraq Impacts Training Mission: National Guard Assumes Responsibility

In 2003, OMC-A Chief and Security Sector Coordinator General Eikenberry requested another active duty combat brigade to backfill the 10th Mountain Division as it redeployed, but his request was denied. Eikenberry was instead informed that the U.S. Army National Guard would now assume responsibilities for ANA development in order to free up active duty combat forces for Iraq. Eikenberry noted, “In the fall of 2003, before my departure [from Afghanistan], I think the war was already starting to reflect the stress on the force.”⁷⁵ In September 2003, a White House progress report on the Global War on Terrorism said, “With the help of our friends and allies, we have eliminated Afghanistan as a safe haven for al-Qaida and disrupted terrorist cells around the world. Iraq is now the central front for the war on terror.”⁷⁶

In December 2003, a unit from the 45th Enhanced Separate Brigade of the Oklahoma National Guard, commanded by Brigadier General Thomas Mancino, assumed duties for TF Phoenix II.⁷⁷ From this point forward, rotational National Guard units of several hundred soldiers—augmented with coalition support—assumed the responsibilities of training and developing the ANA.⁷⁸

Pre-deployment training for the first National Guard unit consisted of 30 days at Fort Carson, Colorado, where altitude and weather conditions closely resembled those in Afghanistan. The unit was trained in basic weapons tactics, convoy procedures, and local culture. Some of the training was beneficial and related to the mission, but one advisor noted, “Culture training would have been good if it ... covered Afghanistan instead of Iraq.”⁷⁹ Such anecdotes underscored the poor quality of mission preparation some National Guard soldiers received before deploying to Afghanistan.

Initial Focus: Infrastructure, Equipment, and Recruiting

Despite these early training efforts, ANA development was severely limited due to the lack of infrastructure, equipment, and human capital. According to multiple senior U.S. officers involved in ANA development from 2002 to 2003, questions dominating discussions at OMC-A and within the ANA design team included where to deploy units, whether current infrastructure and sustainability pipelines could serve those locations, and what equipment units would receive.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the U.S. military largely underestimated the critical role the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers would play in the early ANA reconstruction efforts. The ANA lacked the required local and regional bases and the critical infrastructure necessary for military logistics and transportation requirements. Yet, in October 2002, there were only three or four U.S. Army engineers responsible for

planning and implementing reconstruction programs worth hundreds of millions of dollars.⁸¹

Infrastructure Challenges

U.S. and international trainers, as well as Afghan army recruits, faced extremely poor infrastructure conditions. General Eikenberry referred to the situation as the “Valley Forge of the Afghan National Army.” Telecommunications coverage was unpredictable, forcing U.S. officers and trainers to travel on under-developed roads to talk to senior ANA officials in person.⁸² Afghan, U.S., and international leaders would travel nationwide every week to “recruitment shuras” to convince local village leaders to volunteer fighting-age males to join the new national army.⁸³ Traveling by road from Kabul to Kandahar—a four-hour trip in 2016—could take 12 hours or more in 2002.⁸⁴

The international coalition effort to develop the ANA paralleled and relied upon a complete reconstruction of the country’s major infrastructure. Despite the United States’ preferred minimalist approach to ANA development, it dramatically increased the budget for ANA development during this era, from \$79.2 million in FY 2002 to \$347.6 million in FY 2003.⁸⁵ Part of the focus of this funding was on reconstruction of supporting infrastructure, such as training facilities, barracks, and roads.⁸⁶ Critically, the primary ANA training site at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC) was in abysmal condition. By the winter of 2002, the center still had no heat for new recruits on the Afghan side of the compound. In a sign of solidarity, U.S. Special Forces refused to place heaters on their side of the compound until their Afghan counterparts received heat. The road from KMTC to



Damaged infrastructure at KMTC in Kabul that needed to be repaired before basic infantry training for new Afghan recruits could start. (Photo by Jason Howk)

downtown Kabul was also in such terrible condition that travelers could only drive 5–10 mph.⁸⁷ During a 2007 interview, General Milley highlighted how TF Phoenix had to start from the ground up in Kabul, stating, “When we got there, Task Force Phoenix didn’t exist.... We went into a parking lot behind a warehouse, we looked around, and we said ‘This looks like a pretty good place to establish a base camp,’ and there was nothing but trash, but that was what we did.”⁸⁸

In addition to the physical infrastructure challenges, Afghanistan’s banking infrastructure was almost nonexistent. Most new Afghan recruits did not have bank accounts—and receiving their monthly pay and providing it to their families took days or even weeks, resulting in increased levels of absenteeism from the force.⁸⁹

Equipment

In 2002, the United States decided to arm the ANA with equipment and weapons seized during military operations or donated by former Soviet-bloc nations.⁹⁰ Given Afghanistan’s history, older soldiers and members of the Northern Alliance were familiar with Soviet-style weapons systems, whose ruggedness allowed them to function well in the rough Afghan terrain. In addition, Soviet-style weapons required less maintenance than more modern NATO-standard weapons and were less expensive. According to ANA scholar Antonio Giustozzi, “The technology level of the new army [was] deliberately kept low, mainly in order to make it sustainable in the long-term for the Afghan state.”⁹¹

U.S. trainers had relatively little experience with Soviet-style military equipment and therefore had to rely on former Soviet-bloc nations to provide trainers to support ANA development. For example, Mongolians, who had used Soviet



A weapons cache discovered by ANA soldiers in Bamyan. (Photo by Jason Hawk)

artillery such as D-30 122 mm howitzers, deployed to Afghanistan as members of embedded training teams. Romanians offered support to work on the T-55 and T-62 tanks, and Bulgarians provided assistance on the use of Soviet armored personnel carriers.⁹²

According to General Eikenberry, “There was a hodgepodge of all kinds of vehicles that were being donated, but the donation of these various kinds of equipment caused great difficulties in terms of standardization for the ANA.”⁹³ Donated equipment also prevented planners from forecasting when equipment would arrive and determining how that would affect the training schedule for the force.⁹⁴ Additionally, when countries made these donations, they generally did not provide a sustainment package, including in-theater training and a pipeline for spare parts. Thus, the decision to rely on donations would eventually be revisited in 2005, when U.S. trainers recognized that the unreliability of donor supply and lack of uniformity of weapons was undermining ANA development.

“The technology level of the new army was deliberately kept low, mainly in order to make it sustainable in the long-term for the Afghan state.”

—Antonio Giustozzi, King’s College London

Even when the United States provided weapons, vehicles, and other equipment to Afghan forces, in the rush to get the equipment to Afghanistan, operator manuals, parts manuals, and technical training were often not provided. Equipping became the focus, rather than developing the capability needed to train operators and sustain the equipment. As a gap filler, contracts were established for the maintenance of the equipment, highlighting the importance of having a system in place to adequately oversee the performance of contractors, particularly those performing technical tasks. Unfortunately, the system for monitoring and evaluating contractor performance was often deficient.⁹⁵

Recruiting

New ANA recruits were obtained through three primary means: (1) the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration program transitioned former militia fighters into the officially sanctioned national army, (2) recruitment shuras convinced local tribal leaders to volunteer fighting-age males to join the ANA, and (3) the MOD delivered quotas of new recruits to KMTC. U.S. trainers vetted the new recruits to ensure an ethnic balance and occasionally delayed or refused to train the new unit until diversity standards were met.

At first, interim Minister of Defense Fahim Khan exploited his position by placing loyalists in senior positions in the MOD and ANA. Any notion that he and



ANA soldiers practice using rocket-propelled grenades. (Photo by Jason Howk)

his followers would proactively balance the national army was deeply mistaken: Khan appointed 100 generals in 2002, 90 of whom belonged to his Shura-e Nazar faction of the Northern Alliance.⁹⁶ With his strongmen in leadership positions, Khan manipulated the early development of the ANA by controlling recruitment. Initially, most recruits were affiliated with Khan's political party and allies, and were primarily northern Tajiks, resulting in an ethnically and politically unbalanced ANA.⁹⁷ Furthermore, because the United States and its allies were not familiar with the Afghan countryside, they were not in a position to influence recruitment from the districts; U.S. trainers could only affect recruitment at KMTC.

In 2002, a high percentage of initial recruits were men experienced in fighting the Taliban and, in some cases, the Soviets. Although this contributed to a seasoned fighting force, it also created unique challenges. One such challenge was managing the charismatic leaders of former mujahedeen factions who commanded the loyalty of many, yet lacked the required skills to serve as a commander in a conventional military force.⁹⁸ Integrating these armed factions into the ANA further swung the composition of the ANA toward political and ethnic members of the Northern Alliance factions and away from Pashtun groups in the east and south, reinforcing the imbalance.⁹⁹

Starting in 2003, it was widely recognized that the recruiting profile needed to be changed. The ANA was dominated by legacy mujahedeen leaders, whose Soviet-style or irregular warfighting techniques and leadership styles did not suit the new Western model of the ANA. Because of the existing ethnic and political



Afghan leader welcomes new recruits to the Kabul Military Training Center. (Photo by Jason Howk)

imbalance, the United States decided to reconstitute the ANA and imposed a recruitment board at the MOD.¹⁰⁰ In March 2003, donor countries planned to disband the transitional AMF in an effort to reduce patronage in the MOD. By September 2003, the United States overhauled ANA recruitment to overcome the structures that undermined the ethnic and political balance of the ANA and promoted corruption and internal struggle.¹⁰¹ The United States cut funding for the AMF and mandated that only 15 percent of recruits could come from the AMF.¹⁰² Though this strategy sidelined members of the AMF, it did not prevent Tajik over-representation and the sustained under-representation of southern Pashtuns in the ANA in the long-term.¹⁰³

From this point on, U.S. ANA training programs had to deal with an increasing number of recruits lacking prior military experience. According to General Eikenberry, in the summer of 2003, 30-40 percent of recruits had no prior fighting experience.¹⁰⁴ This was a tradeoff intended to result in ethnic balance within the ANA. Sometimes, training would not begin on time because the recruiting pool was too unbalanced. Often, training had to begin at a more basic level to accommodate inexperience. Training also had to address non-kinetic aspects of modern military culture, such as personal hygiene standards and daily duties like cleaning dining facilities.¹⁰⁵ At one point in 2002, U.S. Special Forces trainers recognized that one of the reasons Afghans were not shooting straight was because they could not see their targets. The United States deployed an optometrist to help outfit ANA soldiers with glasses, if needed.¹⁰⁶ Finally, early training focused on overriding ethnic and political divisions by emphasizing the new Afghan nation. As General Milley noted, U.S. efforts were designed to

change a soldier's outlook from that of a tribal member to, "I am beyond my tribe and I am part of a nation state."¹⁰⁷

As the 2004 Afghan elections neared, the new ANA was successfully taking shape. Despite attrition, recruiting and force strength numbers were largely met, and initial assessments of the ANA's capabilities were positive. By end of this early era, force strength reached 6,000 "on-duty soldiers" whose primary role was to patrol in and around Kabul.¹⁰⁸ Security in the capital was good, and the coalition forces looked forward to the establishment of the new Afghan constitution and government, as well as the anticipated end of military operations in Afghanistan.

AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE

The German Approach

Building on a strong historical relationship, including previous German assistance to the Afghan police before World War II, Germany was officially designated as the lead nation for ANP reconstruction at the Geneva Conference in April 2002.¹⁰⁹ Anticipating its official involvement, Germany conducted a fact-finding mission in Afghanistan in January 2002, followed by an international planning conference for ANP support the following month.¹¹⁰ The conference was attended by representatives from 11 international organizations and 18 countries, including the United States.¹¹¹ During the conference, Germany pledged €10 million (\$8.6 million) toward police reform efforts for 2002 alone.¹¹²

In March, the German government introduced its comprehensive plan for developing the ANP titled the "German Project for Support of the Police in Afghanistan." The plan outlined five focus areas: advise on the structure of the organization of the force, rehabilitate the Kabul Police Academy, reconstruct police buildings and institutions (focused mainly on the rehabilitation of the officer academy in Kabul), provide equipment such as police vehicles, and coordinate all other donor activities related to policing.¹¹³ According to a former German Special Representative for Police Sector Reform, the German program intended to "start with the backbone."¹¹⁴

Based on fiscal sustainability considerations and European force model calculations of police-to-population ratios, Germany, Afghanistan, and the international community agreed to a final ANP force size of 62,000 police (44,300 uniformed police, 12,000 border police, 3,400 highway patrol, and 2,300 counternarcotics police).¹¹⁵ During a July 2002 meeting between the Minister of Interior, Taj Mohammad Wardak, and both U.S. and German representatives, Wardak declared his intention to have a "fully professional, well-trained, modern police force within six months," however, no specific deadlines were officially



German Police Project Team member overseeing Afghan National Police training. (Photo by Sandra Arnold)

set.¹¹⁶ At the time, Afghanistan had an interim police force of 50,000–70,000 men who were largely untrained and severely lacking in equipment.¹¹⁷ Moreover, “between 70 and 90 percent” of the force was illiterate, and the force included many “former fighters who were loyal to warlords and local leaders rather than to the new central government.”¹¹⁸

According to Amnesty International, only 120 of 3,000 police officers in Kandahar Province had received formal police training and lacked basic education; Amnesty International also noted an extensive record of human rights abuses among these officers.¹¹⁹ Minister Wardak acknowledged these impediments to reaching his goal, including the lack of educated recruits, and further noted that low police salaries were disincentives for recruiting the right people.¹²⁰ Further, the dearth of literate police recruits compromised the very basis of the German police plan, which required senior officers and NCOs to receive university-level training.¹²¹

In 2002, Germany launched its official police reform program by deploying 40 civilian police advisors to Kabul. This was widely criticized as being insufficient and only enough to train several hundred police officers in the capital itself.¹²² For Germany, police training and reform were seen as a civilian mission, not a military one. Their efforts were further constrained by **national caveats** restricting movement and activities of German personnel. For example, German advisors were required to train Afghan police on civilian policing methods within the confines of German bases, and thus were not exposed to the realities of actual Afghan urban and rural policing environments.¹²³ Furthermore, as

A **national caveat** is a restriction countries place on the use of their military forces and civilian personnel.

the German effort focused only on officers and NCOs in Kabul, field training for the forces already in place across the country was neither conducted, nor planned.¹²⁴ At the ministerial level, efforts to develop and reform the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) were nearly nonexistent. Only one German advisor was assigned to the ministry, despite the ministry being described as deficient in even the most basic systems and inadequate to oversee and govern the ANP.¹²⁵

German officials would later report they believed their role as the lead nation was to be the lead advisor and coordinator for police development activities; they did not believe this entailed full responsibility for developing or retraining the entire ANP.¹²⁶ The German view ran counter to the U.S. assumption that Germany would be responsible for police reform in its entirety, to include local patrol officers, and would serve as the majority contributor of training personnel, resources, and funding.

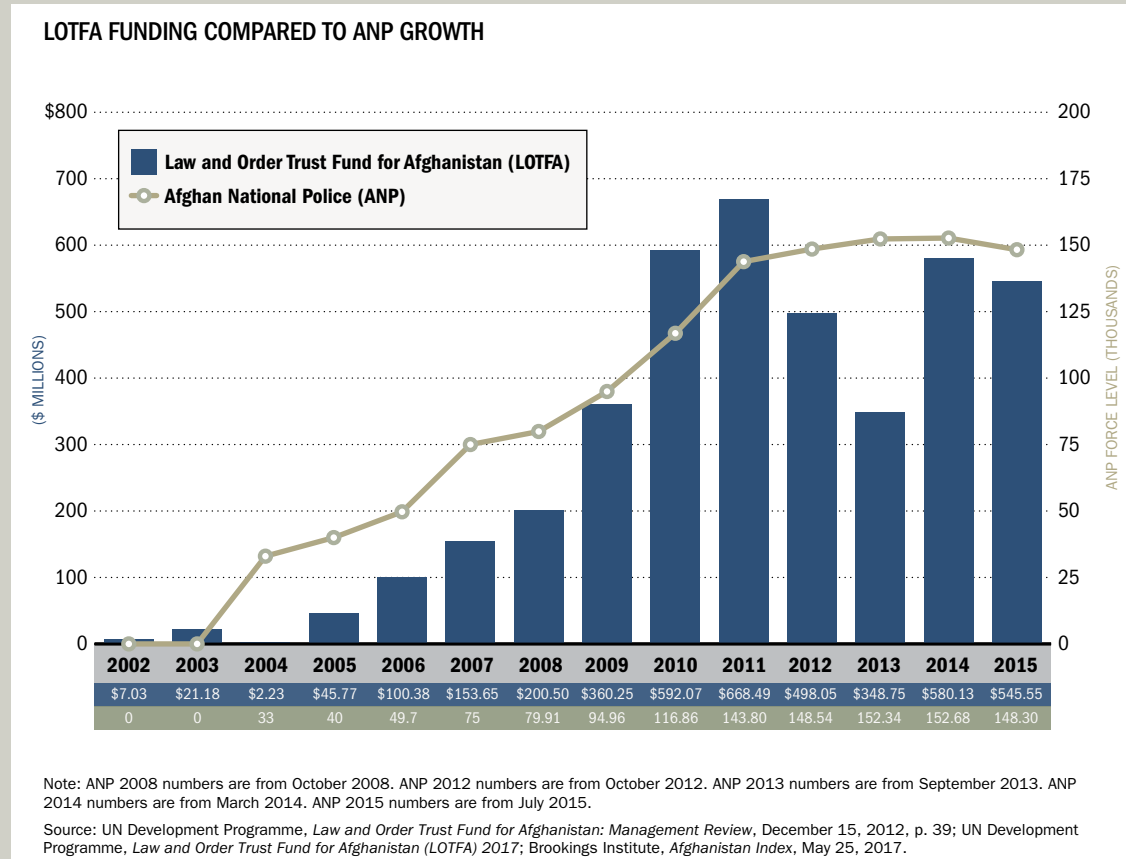
While the Germans made progress in the five focus areas of their police support project, most of Germany's funding focused on building infrastructure, primarily the Kabul Police Academy.¹²⁷ The academy officially opened in August 2002 with 1,500 police recruits enrolled.¹²⁸ Although it is possible a few hundred NCOs may have graduated near the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004, based on the Germans' three-year officer curriculum, the first trained police at the officer level would not have graduated until 2005. Taking into consideration the stated 62,000 force size goal, one expert noted that "the German approach would have taken decades."¹²⁹ This restricted effort left local security outside of Kabul largely under the control of untrained police officers affiliated with militias and predatory warlords.¹³⁰

Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan Struggles to Support Afghan Police

The Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA)—which became the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) largest project—was created in 2002 to provide international financial assistance to Afghanistan's police force (figure 4).¹³¹ At its core, LOTFA is a payroll system that provides direct funds to the Afghan Ministry of Finance (MOF) and MOI for regular payment of ANP salaries.¹³²

Since its creation, LOTFA has faced many challenges. Despite long-term international political support for the ANP, LOTFA has been unable to “attain a multi-year planning framework due to the short-term funding horizon of donors.”¹³³ According to an independent evaluation by Atos Consulting, the UN has been unable to provide a consistent source of financing to the Afghan police force through LOTFA.¹³⁴ For example, from 2003 to 2004, as the ANP was increasing in size, LOTFA funding decreased from \$21 million to \$2 million.¹³⁵ Variable rates of funding also occurred during the U.S. and coalition surge and the transition to Afghan-led security. From 2011 to 2013, for example, LOTFA funding decreased from \$668 million to \$348 million.¹³⁶ The instability of funding has likely been a contributing factor to the Afghan government's inability to provide consistent salaries to police officers operating on the front lines against a growing insurgent threat, which, in turn, has affected retention and quality of life for these officers and their families.

FIGURE 4



To properly manage and allocate LOTFA funds, UNDP requires the Afghan government to have human resource management, record keeping, and accounting practices in place throughout the country, including areas that are not easily accessible.¹³⁷ However, the Afghan government failed to meet these requirements, resulting in an environment where corruption became ingrained in LOTFA. For example, there were reports of embezzlement and skimming of salaries within the MOI and ANP since LOTFA's creation; the lack of conditionality placed on the funds allowed corrupt officials to operate with impunity.¹³⁸ A 2013 UN report confirmed mismanagement of the fund and stated that UNDP's failure to provide the necessary oversight had resulted in procurement fraud.¹³⁹ While UNDP denied the allegations, it launched an internal investigation and attempted to address these concerns.¹⁴⁰

A January 2015 SIGAR audit concluded that the ANP lacked the necessary capability—and oversight—to accurately report attendance and payroll, which led to inconsistent data and misuse of LOTFA funds.¹⁴¹ According to the audit, ANP provincial headquarters without internet connectivity sent attendance data via radio through the chain of command. This verbal transfer of information “increase[d] the risk that present-for-duty numbers could be erroneously reported or recorded, or successfully manipulated by unsupervised or colluding individuals at lower levels within the ANP.”¹⁴² In addition, the audit noted that the two main electronic systems the ANP used to collect personnel and payroll data—the Afghan Human Resource Information Management System (AHRIMS) and the Electronic Payroll System (EPS)—were not fully functional as of January 2015, further impeding verification of data.¹⁴³ The audit highlighted that, as the drawdown of U.S. forces continued, the U.S. government would have less oversight of ANP data collection.¹⁴⁴ MOI verification of the accuracy of the personnel and payroll data would increasingly be relied upon, and, as a result, more LOTFA funds were at risk of being wasted or abused if systems and processes were not improved. The audit found that more than \$300 million in U.S. government funding for ANP salaries was at risk of being wasted or abused.¹⁴⁵ UNDP disagreed with this finding after the audit was published; however, UNDP did acknowledge that more could be done to improve LOTFA's oversight, accountability, and transparency.¹⁴⁶

U.S. Impartiality Turns to Impatience

As the lead nation for developing the ANA, the United States played a limited role in police development through 2002, mostly confined to some funding channeled through State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) for counternarcotics efforts in the country.¹⁴⁷ By the end of 2002, however, U.S. senior officials were becoming increasingly concerned by the lack of trained Afghan police officers, with many believing the resulting security void would threaten the planned 2004 Afghan presidential election.¹⁴⁸

In 2003, General Eikenberry met with the newly installed Minister of Interior Ali Jalali (table 3) to discuss ways for the United States to help accelerate police training and make the program more comprehensive, using the U.S. training of the ANA as an example.¹⁴⁹ By May 2003, State had initiated a training program focused on non-officer patrolmen that was independent of, but parallel to, the German effort.¹⁵⁰ State contracted with DynCorp International, a company that, while having trained police in Bosnia and Haiti, faced scrutiny over past police development program employee misconduct.¹⁵¹ The contract for Afghan police development included the construction of a Central Training Center (CTC) in Kabul and seven Regional Training Centers (RTC). Construction of the CTC was completed in May 2003, and the RTCs were finished in 2004.¹⁵² The initial State police training program was designed as a "train-the-trainer" model where "experienced" Afghan police officers would attend a three-week refresher course taught by DynCorp contractors; the police officers would then train new Afghan recruits at basic training. Like the Germans, DynCorp advisors did not provide for any post-training field mentoring.¹⁵³

TABLE 3

MINISTERS OF THE INTERIOR, 2001–2005			
Years in Service	Ministers	Ethnicity	Reason for Removal/Leaving
2001–2002	Yunis Qanooni	Tajik	Coalition pressure on Karzai to diversify the Afghan security ministries and lessen the Northern Alliance's monopoly of control
2002–2003	Taj Mohammad Wardak	Pashtun	Unsuccessful in reforming the MOI and improving security
2003–2005	Ali Jalali	Pashtun	Desire to return to academic career

Source: CRS, *Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy*, May 2, 2003, p. 10; Amin Tarzi, "Afghanistan: Top Security Official Resigns Amid Controversy," RadioFreeEurope/Radio Liberty, September 28, 2005; Khaama Press, "Mohammad Yunis Qanooni," September 24, 2010; Khaama Press, "Ali Jalali," September 25, 2010.

Imbalance: Ethnic and Political Challenges

With the United States focused primarily on the ANA, and Germany focused at the ANP officer level in Kabul, militia leaders, power brokers, and warlords easily controlled and manipulated local police forces. Malign power brokers and warlords were allowed to reestablish themselves as the controlling force, and their militias were quickly reflagged as police at sub-national levels.¹⁵⁴ By

the end of 2003, these political and factional control problems threatened the coalition's and Afghan government's goals of establishing a strong, central government and a sustainable, professional police force capable of supporting and protecting the populace.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, the German and U.S. efforts were insufficient to succeed against the power brokers and their militias already in place.¹⁵⁶

As with the MOD, former Northern Alliance leaders assumed control of the MOI after the fall of the Taliban.¹⁵⁷ Yunis Qanooni, a close ally of fellow Shura-e-Nazar member and interim Minister of Defense Fahim Khan, used his involvement in the Bonn Conference to obtain the powerful position of Minister of Interior, though not without controversy. At the Loya Jirga in 2002, under pressure to diversify the Afghan security ministries and lessen the Northern Alliance's monopoly of control, Karzai removed Qanooni as Minister of Interior and replaced him with Taj Mohammad Wardak, an ethnic Pashtun. Although Qanooni was initially described as conceding gracefully, rumors of a coup by Qanooni and his Tajik-dominated MOI spread in the days following the official announcement. U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad observed "soldiers armed with grenade launchers and police in full riot gear" standing by the ministry "preventing Wardak, the new minister, from assuming office."¹⁵⁸ Karzai would later give Qanooni the position of a new "special advisor on national security" as a way to appease "powerful ethnic Tajik leaders" unhappy with Qanooni's removal.¹⁵⁹ Wardak's tenure was short and described as unsuccessful in reforming the ministry and improving security. By early 2003, he was replaced by a former ANA colonel, Ali Jalali, who would hold this position through 2005.¹⁶⁰

There were "daily reports of abuses committed by gunmen against the population—armed gangs who establish illegal checkpoints, tax farmers, intimidate, rob, rape, and do so—all too often—while wielding the formal title of military commander, police, or security chief."

—Senior UN Official Lakhdar Brahimi

Ethnic disparities and tensions were not limited to senior positions; for example, 12 of the 15 police stations in Kabul were led by Panjshiri Tajiks.¹⁶¹ Ethnic and tribal imbalances began fostering "intense tension and animosity" across the country, undermining the authority of the central government and police force.¹⁶² In July 2003, senior UN official Lakhdar Brahimi said that "skirmishes between local commanders ... continue to cause civilian casualties in many parts of the country where terrorism is no longer an issue" and there were "daily reports of abuses committed by gunmen against the population—

armed gangs who establish illegal checkpoints, tax farmers, intimidate, rob, rape, and do so—all too often—while wielding the formal title of military commander, police, or security chief.”¹⁶³ In 2003, Amnesty International reported on human rights abuses by Afghan police across the country.¹⁶⁴

TRANSITIONAL FORCES AND ERODING SECURITY

Despite a number of reports from the UN, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), think tanks, and the media warning of eroding security caused by transitional security forces, the United States failed to respond appropriately.¹⁶⁵ The United States remained focused on rapidly training and creating new, lightly armed professional security forces to deal with Afghanistan’s internal security needs, despite initial forecasts that a force capable of securing the country was not imminent. In 2003, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz commented, “There is on one hand the sort of left-over army that’s quite large and is a bit of a security problem, and there’s the new army which we’re training which is very different.”¹⁶⁶

While the United States and other lead nations focused on the nascent national security forces, factional leaders inside and outside the national government took advantage of the security void by appointing loyalists and empowering local militia leaders to serve as interim security providers. As a result, security suffered. By the end of 2003, the UN reported that “in too many areas of the country, the arbitrary control exercised by local commanders and factional armies has resulted in heavy casualties.”¹⁶⁷ The UN also noted in 2003 that over one-third of the country was off-limits to its personnel and that many NGOs had left these high-risk areas.¹⁶⁸

A photograph of U.S. Army soldiers in camouflage uniforms and helmets, holding rifles, in a desert environment. The soldiers are in various poses, some aiming their weapons. The background shows a clear blue sky and some distant figures.

CHAPTER 3

2004–2008: RAPID EXPANSION OF THE FORCE TO ADDRESS GROWING INSECURITY

U.S. Army photo

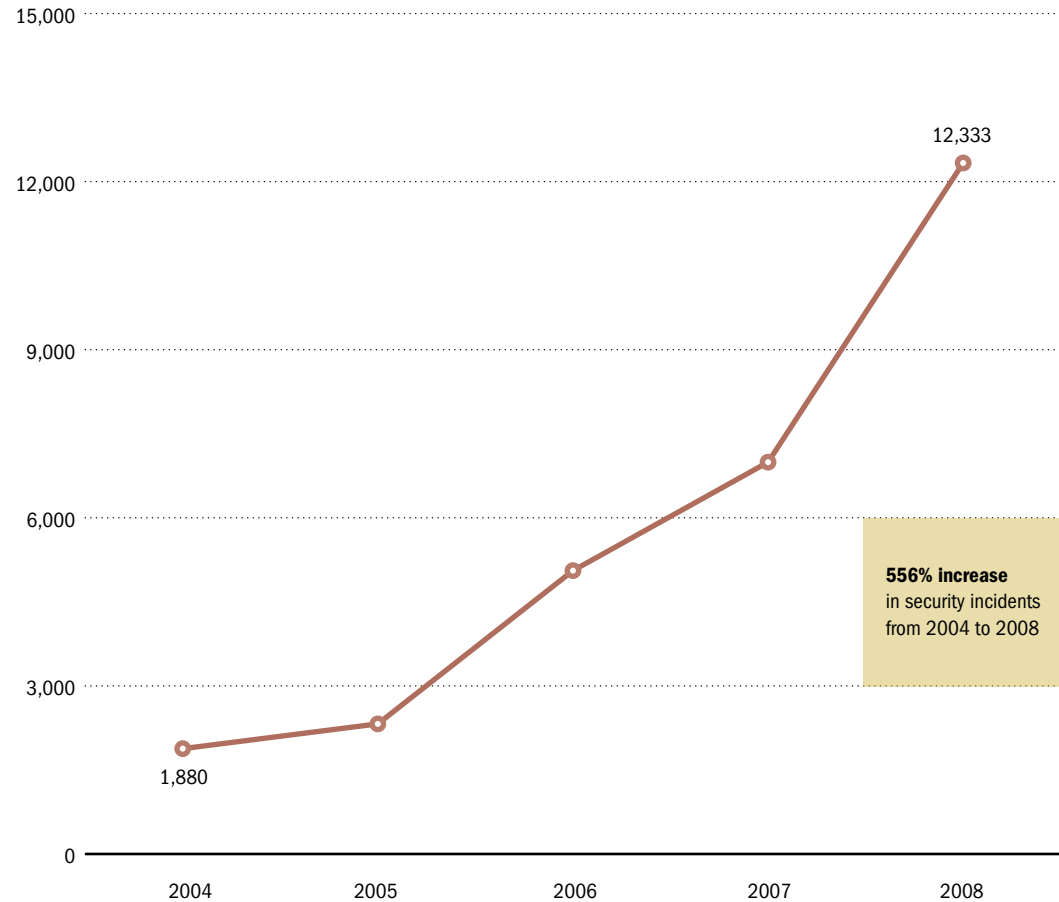
RECONSTITUTION OF THE TALIBAN

In early 2004, a Taliban-led insurgency reconstituted in Pakistan and strengthened in Pashtun-dominated areas of south and east Afghanistan where government officials and security forces were largely absent. In February 2004, the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Vice Admiral Lowell Jacoby, reported that enemy attacks had reached “their highest levels since the collapse of the Taliban government.”¹⁶⁹ In August 2004, the UN characterized security as “volatile, having seriously deteriorated in certain parts of the country.”¹⁷⁰ Due to the confinement of senior U.S. and international officials mostly to military bases in northern Afghanistan and Kabul, the slow re-emergence of Taliban forces was largely out of sight of most senior officials. With the exception of U.S. Special Forces, U.S. personnel primarily operated above the conflict at the regional and headquarters levels.

As ISAF expanded its footprint in 2005, the entrenchment of the insurgency became obvious. Portions of the local population became increasingly discontented with declining levels of security and insufficient development, which created an environment ripe for insurgent forces to exert influence. For example, enemy-initiated attacks increased by over 500 percent from 2004

to 2008 (figure 5).¹⁷¹ As violence rose, it posed a significant concern for U.S. and coalition officials as security requirements for the October 2004 Afghan presidential election and September 2005 Afghan parliamentary election were rapidly increasing.

FIGURE 5

AFGHANISTAN SECURITY INCIDENTS (2004–2008)

Note: Numbers on graph indicate the total number of security incidents recorded that year. Incidents include suicide bombings, indirect attacks, IED/mine incidents, IED/mine direct attacks, and direct attacks.

Source: Defense Intelligence Agency, "Afghanistan Security Incidents Database: 15 April 2016."

EROSION OF LOCAL SUPPORT

At the same time, the UN noted that "factional feuds, rivalries, and increasingly, drug-related incidents continued to affect the lives of the population," compounding the security threat.¹⁷² Until mid-2005, U.S. Special Forces maintained partnerships with local and regional warlords to target Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders. Such partnerships ultimately empowered the same corrupt and oppressive strongmen from the early 1990s that led to the initial rise of the Taliban movement in 1994. The establishment of a capable national military was

necessary to get locally independent factions under the control of the national government. This effort, however, was slow to progress.¹⁷³

Corruption within the Karzai administration added to the erosion of local support for the newly elected government. Regional warlords—now serving as members of Karzai’s cabinet—and local security commanders instituted parallel and informal chains of command that further damaged the integrity of the national government. According to a 2006 field report from senior DOD official Marin Strmecki, most Afghan and international interviewees shared the following view that, “It is not that the enemy is so strong, but that the Afghan government is so weak.”¹⁷⁴

*“It is not that the enemy is so strong, but that
the Afghan government is so weak.”*

—Senior DOD Official Marin Strmecki

UNITED STATES TAKES OWNERSHIP OF ARMY AND POLICE DEVELOPMENT

The United States recognized that dividing the responsibility of security sector reform among the United States and its coalition partners was not producing the desired results, requiring the Bush administration to increase the U.S. commitment.¹⁷⁵ To better streamline and expedite ANDSF development, in July 2005 DOD expanded its role in police development efforts and assumed responsibility for the coordination, training, and advising of both the army and police.¹⁷⁶

In April 2006, the United States renamed OSC-A the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), emulating General David Petraeus’ model for training the Iraqi security forces. CSTC-A assumed full command of the training program and follow-on embedded field training teams under TF Phoenix. In February 2007, CSTC-A’s command unit, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A), was deactivated and CSTC-A began to report directly to U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) leadership. CSTC-A’s authority expanded as the organization assumed responsibility for political-military interaction with U.S. Embassy Kabul and the Afghan government, in addition to training and developing the ANDSF.¹⁷⁷

The 2006 CSTC-A Campaign Plan identified three lines of operation: build and develop ministerial institutional capability, generate fielded forces, and develop the fielded forces.¹⁷⁸ These lines of operation were conditions-based, sequential phases that overlapped, as needed.¹⁷⁹ Phase I sought to generate and field effective national military and police forces, to include ministries, institutions,

and intermediate commands. CSTC-A noted that substantial U.S. assistance would be required during this phase. Phase II was intended to develop the Afghan national security capability through joint planning, coordination, and operations. The end state of Phase II would be achieved when most ANDSF organizations reached Capability Milestone 1 (CM1), which meant they could plan and operate with limited international assistance. Phase III was to be the “Transition to Strategic Partnership” and “Afghan Security and Police Reorientation.” This phase would occur when the Afghan government assumed full responsibility for its security needs. At this phase, the United States would transform CSTC-A to a traditional Office of Security Cooperation in the U.S. Embassy and “continue to provide financial and training assistance.”¹⁸⁰ While the overall campaign plan was conditions-based, initial forecasts had Phase II completed by mid-2011 and the start of Phase III scheduled to begin in mid-2009.¹⁸¹ According to a State and CFC-A directive drafted by Ambassador Ronald Neumann and then-Lieutenant General Eikenberry, U.S. plans to begin troop withdrawals could begin as early as FY 2006, with a completion date between FY 2011 and FY 2012, assuming an ANA force capable of independent operations in FY 2011 and an ANP capable of independent operations in FY 2012.¹⁸² These timelines were not met.

AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

Change of Command

Under pressure from the ISAF coalition, President Karzai removed First Vice President and Minister of Defense Fahim Khan from both the presidential ticket and the MOD in 2004. President Karzai announced Ahmad Zia Massoud—the younger brother of the former Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Massoud—as his candidate for first vice president. In response to his removal, Fahim Khan supported the candidacy of fellow Tajik political contender and former Minister of Interior Yunis Qanooni. After Karzai’s October 2004 victory, he appointed Abdul Rahim Wardak, a professional military officer with international training and credentials as a Pashtun mujahedeen commander, to succeed Khan as the new Minister of Defense. The international community, including the United States, welcomed this move and viewed Wardak as a credible and respected partner.

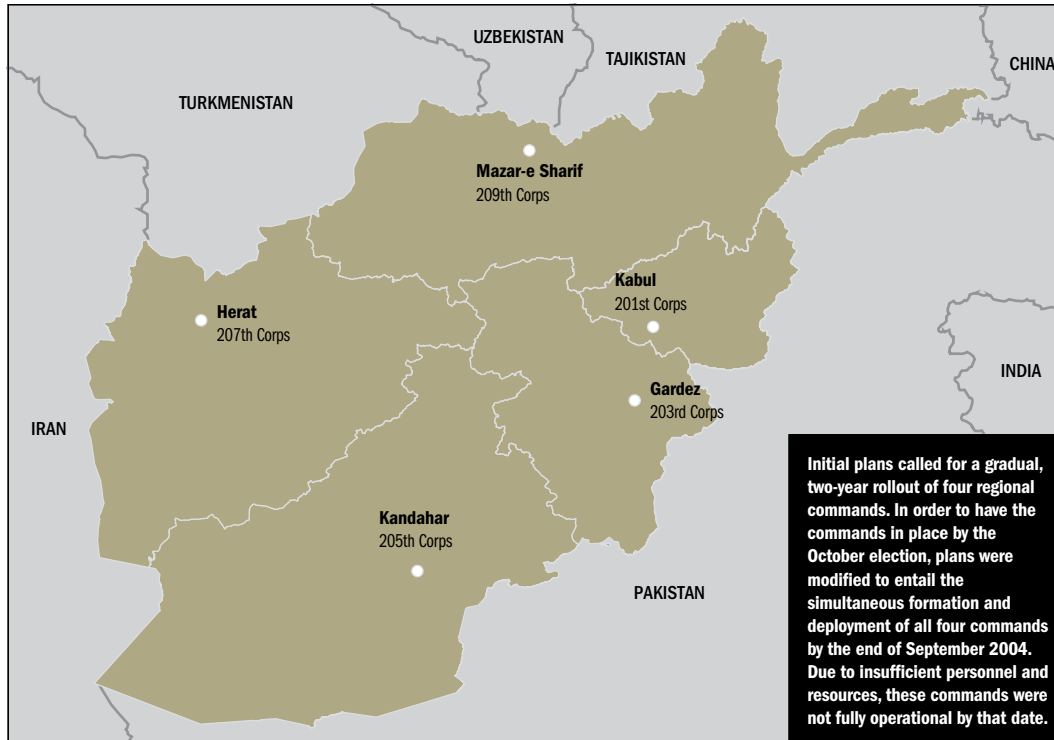
In the United States, President Bush replaced Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld with Robert Gates in late 2006. Secretary of Defense Gates supported U.S. efforts to build the ANA and proved to be a key supporter of the U.S. military surge and requests to expand the ANA under the Obama administration.

Expansion in Size and Capabilities

In 2004, with the training of the Central Corps under way, the United States and its coalition partners transitioned into a new phase: the rapid expansion of the ANA and the creation of four regional corps across Afghanistan.¹⁸³

FIGURE 6

ANA EXPANSION: IN TIME FOR 2004 ELECTIONS



Source: GAO, *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police Have Made Progress, but Future Plans Need to be Better Defined*, January 2005, p. 13; RAND, *Security Force Assistance: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts*, 2011, pp. 32-33; GAO, *Afghanistan Security: Further Congressional Action May be Needed to Ensure Completion of a Detailed Plan to Develop and Sustain Capable Afghan National Security Forces*, GAO-08-661, June 2008, p. 22.

Initially, the coalition's plan to expand the ANA outside the Central Corps and Kabul region included a staggered, two-year rollout of four regional ANA commands.¹⁸⁴ This plan was modified and made more ambitious in May 2004 when senior U.S. military officials decided that the four commands would form and deploy simultaneously in order to have them established by the 2004 election (figure 6).¹⁸⁵ Having four regional corps operational by that time was not possible because the ANA development effort was severely understaffed in U.S. training personnel and Afghan soldiers. For example, some of the commands were only able to recruit and train 150 troops by election day, when thousands more were required to fully staff the regional commands.¹⁸⁶

In line with the 2006 Afghanistan Compact, the United States and its coalition partners moved forward to expand the ANA to the desired end-strength of 70,000.¹⁸⁷ To accommodate the accelerated growth, the United States constructed and opened regional training centers and specialist schoolhouses that aided in dramatically recruiting and training up to 35,000 troops by the end of 2006.

In 2007, senior Afghan, U.S., and international leaders agreed that a more rapid expansion of the Afghan military was required in terms of both size and capabilities, transitioning from small, light infantry brigades to a combined arms force with Afghan combat enablers.¹⁸⁸ In July 2008, Minister of Defense Wardak proposed expanding the ANA from a force size of 80,000 to 122,000, with an additional training pool. This proposal was approved by the Afghans and international community without financial arrangements for how the larger force would be funded. Minister Wardak reasoned that the ANA had to be expanded because the Taliban was “stronger, better trained, and better equipped than expected.”¹⁸⁹ All participants agreed that expansion was necessary to ensure security and development. In the end, the United States ended up covering most of the new expenses.

Air Capability

In 2005, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld directed the U.S. Army to formally rebuild an Afghan presidential airlift capability as part of the Afghan National Army Air Corps (ANAAC).¹⁹⁰ In 2006, the Afghan government subordinated the ANAAC as a unit under the larger ANA, rather than creating a separate air force. By the end of 2006, the Afghanistan Compact officially called for an Afghan Air Corps (AAC) of 7,000 members to be carved out of the ANA. With this mandate, the United States and its coalition partners developed a plan for the ANAAC, to include three wings: presidential airlift, rotary wing, and fixed wing.¹⁹¹

In 2007, responsibility for the development of the ANAAC shifted from the U.S. Army to the U.S. Air Force (USAF).¹⁹² In the spring of 2007, five years after the start of the initial military training mission, the Combined Air Power Transition Force-Afghanistan (CAPTF-A) was activated with a mission to “set the conditions for a fully independent and operationally capable” air corps to meet Afghanistan’s security needs.¹⁹³ Much like the plans for building the ANA, Afghans and U.S. officials took different view of the details of an independent Afghan air corps. In 2007, media reporting cited Afghan Colonel Khei Mohammad as stating, “We are grateful for what America and the West are doing, but we need to rebuild our air corps faster.... We should have jets, helicopters, and cargo planes, so that we can defend our borders ourselves.”¹⁹⁴ At the same time, U.S. Brigadier General Jay Lindell was cited as calling for meeting “the immediate critical need ... [for] air mobility capability,” focusing less on providing fighter jets and attack helicopters to the Afghans.¹⁹⁵

With differences unresolved, CAPTF-A began work on training the fledgling air corps with around two dozen aircraft.¹⁹⁶ The coalition agreed to provide more aircraft by 2008: the UAE and Czech Republic agreed to provide 13 Mi-17 helicopters, while Ukraine donated three An-32 fixed-wing transports.¹⁹⁷ The U.S. government committed to spend \$20 million to purchase spare parts and other supplies to keep existing Afghan aircraft flying.¹⁹⁸ The Afghan government



U.S. soldier unloads a refurbished Mi-17 helicopter from the Czech Republic. (Photo by David Votroubek)

wanted more: Afghan officers felt they could not defend their country without fighter jets and attack helicopters, so Minister of Defense Rahim Wardak requested A-10 ground-attack planes and Apache helicopters from the Bush administration, which was denied.¹⁹⁹

By 2008, the plan for developing the Afghan air corps was underway and becoming more organized. CENTCOM designated the 435th Air Expeditionary Wing as the USAF organization responsible for providing air advisors in support of the Afghan Air Force.²⁰⁰ The 438th also became the NATO Air Training Command–Afghanistan (NATC-A), which was established to “solidify NATO’s commitment to the mission of building a sustainable air force.”²⁰¹ NATC-A fulfilled the training, equipping, and capacity-building function for Afghan air power developed by CSTC-A.

Special Forces

Creating a special operations force within the ANA was first explored in 2002; however, the first Afghan commando battalion was not fully trained until 2007. U.S. Special Forces, French Special Forces, and MPRI contractors were responsible for training the ANA commandos at the Camp Morehead Training Center south of Kabul. Initial recruiting efforts focused on culling promising and literate soldiers from the struggling conventional forces and putting them through a rigorous screening and training process.

The initial 12-week training, based on the U.S. Army Ranger model, was divided into three elements: the fighting force, headquarters support, and battalion staff. After graduation, ANA commando battalions were assigned to one of the four regional ANA command headquarters where the battalion was partnered with a

U.S. Special Forces team to begin 18 weeks of field training, including six weeks of training, six weeks of mission, and six weeks of rest and recovery.²⁰²

The Afghan Special Forces maintained a close, long-term relationship with their U.S. Special Forces trainers.²⁰³ Unlike the relationship with the conventional forces, the training relationship with the Afghan Special Forces was not restricted by withdrawal deadlines or other aspects of the war. Moreover, Afghan Special Forces were better paid than their conventional force counterparts. They received higher pay (\$50 more per month) and more food rations (50 percent more than the conventional ration).²⁰⁴ Better training and living conditions improved retention and morale; the commandos were reported to have the lowest absent-without-leave (AWOL) rate and the highest retention rate in the ANA.²⁰⁵

In September 2007, the initial commando unit conducted its first operation, resulting in the capture of two large weapons caches, 80 kilograms of heroin, and the detention of a known Taliban improvised explosive device (IED) maker. By the end of 2008, four commando battalions, with a total of 3,500 soldiers, had completed initial training at Camp Morehead.²⁰⁶ For a comparison of key elements of the ANA and ANA Special Forces, see table 4.

TABLE 4

COMPARING KEY ELEMENTS OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY		
	Afghan National Army (ANA)	Afghan National Army Special Forces (ANASF)
Recruiting	- Initially recruited from established militias - Attempted to ethnically balance recruitment - Established ANA Recruiting Command - Recruits remain mostly illiterate	- Targeted recruiting and a competitive selection process - Recruited from the most promising soldiers in the ANA
Training*	- Basic Warrior Training: 10-14 weeks - Advanced Warrior Training: 6-8 weeks for select individuals, after completion of Basic Warrior Training	- Basic: 12 weeks - Additional 6-week rotations of training, then missions with U.S. Special Forces advisers, plus 6 weeks of recovery - Additional training opportunities provided, such as driving skills and leadership
Training Description	- Focused on infantry tactics - Embedded Training Teams mentor and advise in the field - Comparison of marksmanship training: Average ANA soldier fires 60 rounds in training each year	- Focused on training forces to resemble U.S. Army Rangers - Live and train <i>shoulder-to-shoulder</i> with U.S. Special Forces - Comparison of marksmanship training: Average ANASF soldier fires 6,000 rounds of ammunition in initial training
Salary**	- Comparatively low pay - Starting as low as \$165/month	\$50-100 more per month than conventional forces - Receive better equipment and double the food rations compared to conventional forces
Equipment	- Initially, provided former Soviet-bloc rifles, both light and heavy machine guns, and rocket propelled grenade launchers - Eventually began transitioning to U.S. and NATO weapons systems	- From the start, equipped with U.S. and NATO weapons systems. Not subject to the donations-based, Soviet-era supplies like conventional ANA - Equipped with M4 and 81mm mortars
Attrition***	2% per month (roughly 24% per year)	1% per month (roughly 12% per year)
Reenlistment	Ranging from 35%-52% reenlistment	Recently as high as 88.5% reenlistment

Note:

* Training - Ranges show various lengths of the main, U.S.-initiated training programs over time. Does not include enabling or auxiliary training, such as literacy.

** Salary - Refers to base pay only. Amounts listed do not account for losses over time from corrupt leaders skimming salaries, which has improved with the implementation of more advanced systems to account for and transfer pay electronically to personnel.

*** Attrition - Percentage is an approximation of attrition rates by month and year, over time.

Source: RAND, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan*, 2011, pp. 21, 25, 33, 40-41, 52, 56, 76; RAND, *The Long March: Building an Afghan National Army*, 2009, p. 18; DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, December 2016, pp. 51, 63-64; U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, "Q&A with Brigadier General Edward M. Reeder Jr." in *Afghanistan: The Road Ahead, Special Warfare*, vol. 24, issue 4, October-December 2011, p. 20; Ann Scott Tyson, "Afghan Commandos Emerge," *Washington Post*, April 19, 2008; DOD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, June 2008, pp. 16-17; NTM-A, "ANA Base Pays and Incentive Pays," April 20, 2011; DOD, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, January 2009, pp. 39, 41.

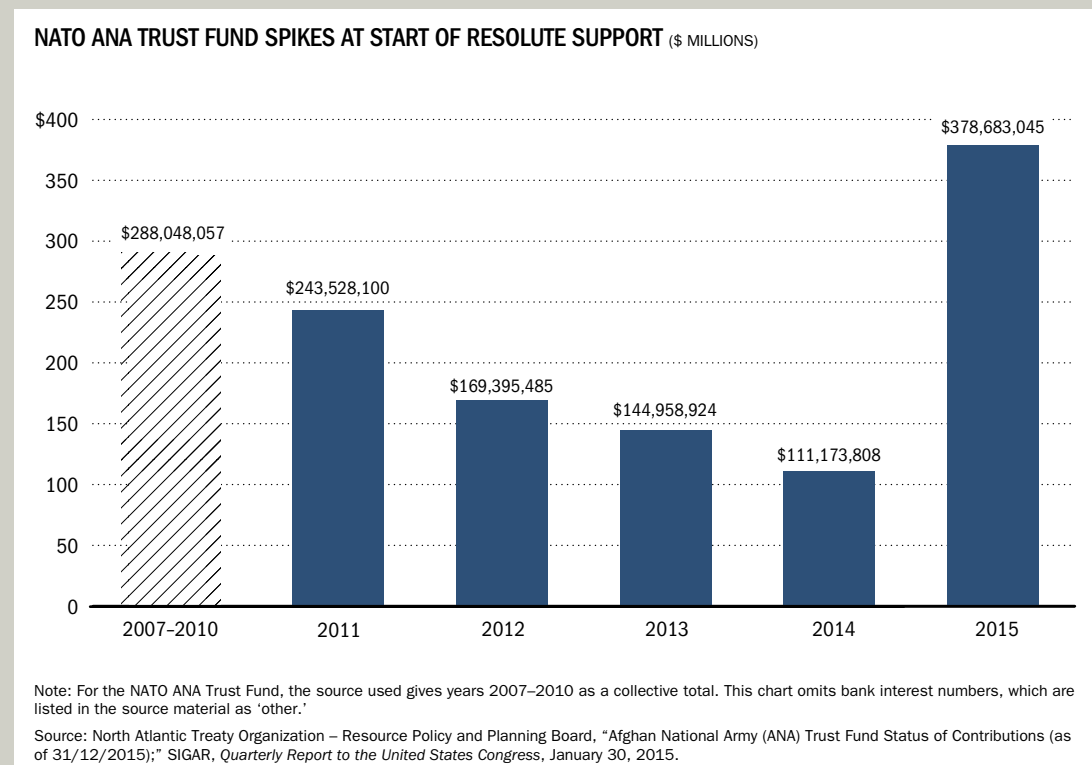
NATO's ANA Trust Fund: The First of Its Kind

In 2007, NATO created the ANA Trust Fund to provide financial assistance for the transport and installation of military equipment donated to the ANA by ISAF members. As the size of and requirements for the ANA increased, NATO agreed to expand the fund to include recurring sustainment costs, as well as additional items such as literacy training and professional military education (figure 7).²⁰⁷

Since NATO's creation in 1949, "consensus" has been a fundamental principle of the organization and historically included an agreement to use "common funding."²⁰⁸ Common funding requires all NATO members to initially agree on the purpose and mission of a fund and then requires each member nation to equally share the fiscal burden associated with that fund.²⁰⁹

As a first of its kind, the ANA Trust Fund deviated from this principle and currently allows member nations to contribute voluntarily.²¹⁰ The ANA Trust Fund did not adopt Article 5 to compel member countries to contribute and allows nations to refuse to participate altogether. For example, Albania and Poland have not donated to this fund, to date.²¹¹ In addition, the fund allows contributions from non-NATO donors, which was unprecedented within NATO. This policy was implemented to take the financial burden off NATO nations and spread it broadly across the entire international donor community. Ten non-NATO nations have contributed to the fund since its inception: Australia, Azerbaijan, Finland, Georgia, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Arab Emirates.²¹² During the 2016 Warsaw Summit, NATO agreed to continue working with the international community to secure necessary pledges through the end of 2020.²¹³

FIGURE 7



The United States does not directly contribute to the ANA Trust Fund. However, despite NATO overseeing the daily management of the fund, the United States collects NATO contributions, merges NATO funds into the U.S. Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), and manages the distribution of funds to meet ANA requirements.²¹⁴

Inadequate Pre-Deployment Preparation for Rotational U.S. Trainers

U.S. embedded training teams were teams of U.S. military forces assigned to train ANA and ANP units in the field.

National Guard units and individual military augmentees frequently received little notification of their deployment to Afghanistan, precluding effective pre-deployment training and preparation for the mission.²¹⁵ For some, pre-deployment training consisted of only a week of preparation at one of the military's CONUS Replacement Centers.²¹⁶ Interviews with members of TF Phoenix and embedded training teams (ETT) highlighted the poor pre-deployment training for trainers and advisors, as well as the perception that the United States was focused on the war in Iraq.²¹⁷ According to a senior U.S. Army officer, "Afghanistan is one of the best kept secrets. Everything is Iraq, Iraq, Iraq." He further remarked that he was unable to familiarize himself with the specific mission before deployment because he and his unit did not know to which location within Afghanistan they were headed. Ultimately, when the team arrived in Afghanistan, despite pre-deployment training as a unit, individual members were split among five different locations.²¹⁸

Given the complexity and nuances of Afghan society, particularly its localized nature, abbreviated or generic training on Afghanistan would likely have little impact on deployed trainers' knowledge of local dynamics. Furthermore, the ad hoc nature of assigning trainers to units and locations throughout Afghanistan undermined any attempts pre-deployed trainers could make to understand specific regions or locations in Afghanistan. Thus, the pre-deployment training model for ANA trainers from the United States did not serve to properly prepare trainers for their mission. Much was instead learned "on the job" during the 6–12 month deployment, and also while working beside new ANA recruits in theater. Most of this learning was lost as personnel rotated out and were replaced by fresh personnel. Often, new coalition trainers and new ANA recruits were equally unprepared for their mission in Afghanistan's war.

U.S. Inputs Increase, But Not Enough to Meet New Requirements

Funding

Though the United States took on much of the responsibility for funding the expanded army, challenges in estimating and allocating the necessary funds hampered ANA development. For example, funding more than quadrupled from \$362.7 million in 2003 to \$1.7 billion in 2005 to meet the growing requirements of fielding the force.²¹⁹ Yet, with the rapid expansion and continued focus on countering the insurgency, the significant increase in funding was



A USAF airman mentors an ANA military policeman during training at Kabul Military Training Center. (U.S. Air Force photo by Cecilio M. Ricardo, Jr.)

disproportionately allocated toward combat capabilities within the force, and consistently underfunded enablers (such as air capabilities) and MOD governing institutions. Partly as a result of this focus, by April 2005 the commands responsible for communications, logistics, recruiting, education, training, and acquisition were staffed at only 10 percent of authorized levels.²²⁰

Later, the budget would expand again: CSTC-A's ASFF budget request for FY 2008 was \$2.7 billion, including \$1.7 billion for the ANA alone. Yet, increased funding did not seem to help with the challenges of estimating costs. In a June 2008 assessment report, DOD admitted that, based on constantly changing operational and security realities, it was not possible to reliably estimate long-term costs for developing the ANDSF.²²¹

Training and Force Strength

To counter rising violence and instability, the United States rapidly expanded training capacity for the ANA as a way to quickly increase the size of the force to secure the country for the 2004 and 2005 elections, as well as for the eventual expansion of the force outside the Kabul region. From January 2004 to January 2005, training capacity at the KMTC increased from two to five *kandaks* trained simultaneously.²²²

A *kandak* is the ANA equivalent of a U.S. Army battalion.

In 2005, all new ANA recruits received 14 weeks of training. In 2007, this training was replaced with a 10-week Basic Warrior Training program, and the option for qualified candidates to attend an additional six- to eight-week Advanced Warrior Training course. This expanded training required a dramatic increase in training

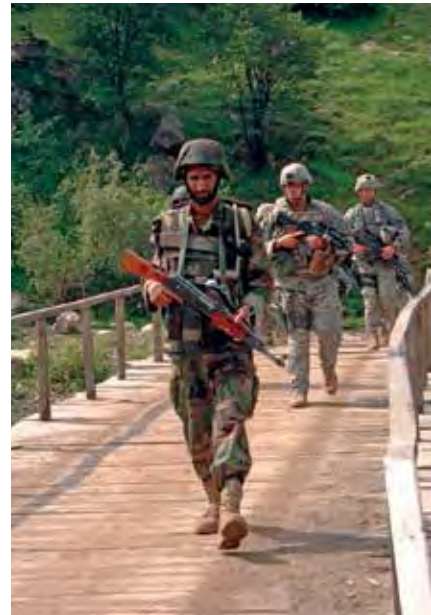
capacity at KMTC, which eventually reached 24,000 new recruits a year. Due to limited resources and trainers, the advanced training was capped at 8,000 soldiers per year, which meant that two-thirds of the new recruits would receive only the 10 weeks of basic training, compared to the 14 weeks recruits were receiving in 2005.²²³

Recruiting and attrition issues impeded the U.S. ability to achieve force end-strength numbers, which, in turn, increased pressure to process more recruits through the U.S.-led training. Recruiting proved volatile. In 2004, for example, 15,790 recruits joined the ANA, while a year later, only 11,845 recruits joined.²²⁴ Recruiting increased to 21,287 in 2006.²²⁵ Persistently high attrition rates eroded end strength, as well. In 2005, the United States forecast that 50 percent of the first class of ANA recruits eligible for reenlistment would do so; however, only 35 percent reenlisted.²²⁶ Soldiers who went AWOL posed another attrition challenge; MOD replaced deserters, but not AWOL soldiers, in the hopes the soldiers would eventually return. This had the effect of leaving units understaffed.

Other issues affecting the force included the declining quality of recruits over time. For example, the proportion of illiterate recruits jumped from 71 percent in early 2005 to 80 percent by December 2005.²²⁷ In addition, the Afghan government was unable to balance the force ethnically. Southern Pashtuns, the Taliban's traditional recruiting pool, remained underrepresented, while factions of the Northern Alliance were overrepresented.²²⁸

Shortages of Training Teams

The United States' push to rapidly expand the force resulted in dramatic shortfalls in U.S. and international ANA trainers, forcing the United States to decrease the size and capabilities of the training units. The increase in training capacity from two to five kandaks at KMTC created requirements for the embedded training mission to increase from 410 to almost 700 personnel. Until additional trainers were deployed in February 2005, ETTs were reduced in size from 16 to 12 personnel.²²⁹ To offset the decreased size of the ETTs and build rapport earlier in the military partnership, training teams were paired with Afghan units on the first day of training, rather than at graduation.²³⁰ U.S. ETTs completed training with the ANA units and deployed downrange to provide field training, as well.²³¹



An ANA soldier and U.S. military advisors on patrol in Nuristan Province. (DVIDS photo by Isaac Graham)

In 2006, ISAF established its equivalent to U.S. ETTs called Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT). The first OMLT was deployed by the UK to Helmand in May 2006. OMLTs followed the NATO deployment cycle, as advisors were deployed to train an Afghan unit for as little as six months, while U.S. ETTs were initially assigned to a unit for one year.²³² National caveats attached to some OMLTs prevented embedded units from engaging in combat alongside their Afghan partner units, limiting the level of field training and mentoring provided.²³³

With the establishment of ETTs and OMLTs, the United States and its coalition partners were unable to meet the associated personnel requirements. From August to December 2007, CSTC-A determined that around 2,400 ETT personnel were required; however, only about 1,000 were assigned, a shortfall of over 50 percent.²³⁴ During that same period, the required number of personnel for OMLTs was 70; however, fewer than 20 were assigned, a shortfall over 70 percent.²³⁵ Thus, in addition to coalition differences in national caveats and approach to training the ANA, a simple inability or unwillingness to fully staff ETTs and OMLTs contributed to ANA training gaps. Even with these known gaps in trainers and advisors, the issue did not elicit a reassessment of ANDSF capability milestones or a U.S. reevaluation of political timelines set for ANDSF development.

Equipment

Despite increases in financial resources, there were persistent shortages in equipment, including weapons, ammunition, vehicles, uniforms, boots, and communications equipment.²³⁶ Following a visit to Afghanistan in June 2006,



Members of the ANA learn how to maintain and operate Humvees in a five-month course at Kabul Military Training Center. (Photo by Douglas Mappin)

retired General Barry McCaffrey concluded that the ANA was “miserably under-resourced” and that such circumstances were becoming a “major morale factor for their soldiers.”²³⁷ Furthermore, the donation-based equipment supply system was beginning to take its toll: Minister of Defense Wardak asserted that the condition of the equipment received was far worse than the equipment received during the mujahedeen fighting days of the 1970s and 1980s.²³⁸ Afghan field commanders reported that Afghan units tried to seize Taliban caches because the Taliban’s equipment was better.²³⁹ When the growth of the ANA began to accelerate substantially, U.S. and coalition leaders began to rethink the merits of donated equipment and shift toward new, more modern equipment.²⁴⁰

Even with changes to the equipment procurement process, the ANA still suffered from chronic under-resourcing in 2008. According to some measures, the developing army had only 60 percent of mission-critical items, at a time when the United States required Afghan units to have 85 percent of critical items to be deemed ready for independent operations.²⁴¹ In October 2006, CSTC-A commander Major General Robert Durbin submitted a request for an increase in ANDSF funding to address some of these shortfalls, which was met with an FY 2007 increase to \$4.88 billion.²⁴² These funds were largely used to procure U.S.-standard weapons and equipment, which reduced equipment variation and improved capability in the ANA.²⁴³ CSTC-A continued to accept internationally donated equipment, but in 2007 received permission from the Afghan government to vet all donated items to ensure they matched ANA mission requirements.²⁴⁴



A U.S. Army soldier mentors an ANA recruit as he learns to use his new M16. (Photo by Guy Volb)

Shifting the ANA equipment procurement system to NATO standards provided minimal, short-term relief to the problem of under-resourcing the ANA. This process would, in fact, become a part of a larger movement to transition the ANA into a Western-style force. Starting in 2007, ANA kandaks were restructured to mirror Western forces, transitioning from light infantry units to motorized infantry units equipped with small arms, support weapons, Light Tactical Vehicles, and High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (Humvee). In 2008, the United States began to equip ANA units with U.S.-standard weapons, including M16 assault rifles from excess U.S. Marine Corps stock. Mortar units and machine gun teams were also re-outfitted with new U.S.-grade equipment, while older, Soviet-era equipment was phased out.²⁴⁵ This transformation, while seemingly benefiting the ANA through the standardization and modernization of its weapons and equipment, would ultimately foster increased long-term dependency on international donors for both funding and maintenance.²⁴⁶ These NATO-standard weapons and equipment marked the beginning of the ANA's history of increasing complexity of systems and its unsustainability.

Complexity and Sustainability

Throughout 2004 to 2008, ANA development saw the continued expansion of the force outside Kabul, attempts to standardize the ANA's weaponry and equipment, and modifications to the training framework.²⁴⁷ All of these changes, while seemingly benefiting the ANA, also served to make the institution increasingly complex and expensive, thereby delaying sustainability and Afghan ownership. Additionally, while one of the coalition's original goals was to stand up an army capable of preventing Afghanistan from falling to the Taliban and becoming a safe haven for terrorists—so coalition troops could transition security quickly to the Afghans—the systems chosen inherently delayed the drawdown of coalition forces. Furthermore, these systems and modifications appeared a mismatch to Afghan culture and society: Western-style management systems, an all-volunteer light infantry force (including artillery, armor, commando, combat support, combat service support, and the requisite intermediate commands and sustaining institutions), and a budding air corps capability were imposed upon a largely illiterate population with a history of tribal conflict.

“The logistics system in the ANA was broken when we got there. It's getting better, but it's still broken. That's the Achilles heel of the ANA right now.”

—Lieutenant Colonel John Schroeder

Complicated logistics systems were an example of this mismatch. These systems often required higher levels of literacy than available in the army or the Afghan population at large. At the same time, however, logistics management

was a capability the ANA desperately needed. When asked in 2007 what the Afghan kandak staff needed most from him, Lieutenant Colonel John Schroeder responded, “The biggest thing [the Afghans] wanted from the United States was resource management. The logistics system in the ANA was broken when we got there. It’s getting better, but it’s still broken. That’s the Achilles heel of the ANA right now.”²⁴⁸

Force Readiness Assessment Challenges

Despite monumental adversity, the ANA had begun to take form in 2004, increasingly projecting national power as a multi-ethnic, albeit ethnically unbalanced, fighting force. According to CFC-A commander Lieutenant General David Barno, no ANA formations were defeated or broke from combat engagements from 2003 to 2005, and the army showed notable improvements in discipline during civil disturbance operations.²⁴⁹

The ANA also flexed its ability to function as an extension of Kabul’s central authority. In 2004, the ANA was deployed outside of Kabul on behalf of the national government to provide security for the Afghan presidential election and subdue factional fighting.²⁵⁰ Following heavy fighting between governor of Herat Ismail Khan and General Zahir that resulted in significant civilian casualties, Karzai deployed the ANA to restore peace. In Faryab Province, factional tensions escalated between the governor and Abdul Rashid Dostum’s Jumbesh faction that again required ANA intervention. In Ghor Province, the ANA was deployed to intervene following factional fighting between the head of the main transitional military unit and supporters of the government.²⁵¹

Despite these early successes, by 2008 the reliability of the Capability Milestone (CM) system to gauge the quality of the ANA was beginning to come into question (see essay on pages 51–54). These doubts stemmed, in large part, from the CM rating’s focus on training level rather than battlefield performance. In 2008, for example, 16 units had a CM1 rating, the top rating level, despite declining security conditions.²⁵² One expert questioned the quality of the ANA, asserting that the ANA lacked important capabilities and that the CM ratings were not a realistic or adequate system for demonstrating ANA proficiency on the battlefield.²⁵³

Assessment methodologies further created a misleading picture of ANA readiness. Assessments did not account for the impact of intangible inputs, such as corruption and poor leadership, on ANA development.²⁵⁴ These intangibles were often underappreciated by the United States, despite experts’ insistence that corruption was undermining the readiness of the ANA.²⁵⁵ The focus on measurable inputs, such as amounts of money and numbers of personnel, distracted from assessing equally important, but often unmeasurable, factors.

Assessing the ANDSF

In July 2005, the United States implemented capability assessment mechanisms to evaluate the ANDSF. Since then, the ANDSF assessment methodology has changed at least three times. The first mechanism used was the four-point Capability Milestone (CM) rating system, which was replaced in April 2010 by the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT).²⁵⁶ The CUAT was replaced by the Regional ANDSF Assessment Report (RASR) in July of 2013.²⁵⁷ The RASR changed to the Monthly ANDSF Assessment Report (MAAR) in January 2015.²⁵⁸ Each of these assessment mechanisms is described below (see table 5).

Capability Milestone

In June 2008, a DOD report to Congress outlined the CM ratings, as applied in Afghanistan.²⁵⁹ The highest rating, CM1, described a “unit, agency, staff function, or installation” that was capable of conducting its primary operational missions. Depending on the mission, CM1 units could still require specified assistance from international partners. The CM2 rating described units that were mission capable with routine assistance from international partners. The CM3 rating described units that were “capable of partially conducting primary operational missions,” but were still reliant on coalition support. The lowest rating, CM4, described a unit or agency that was capable of portions of operational missions, but needed significant assistance from the international community.²⁶⁰

While CM ratings were widely reported in DOD's reports to Congress, there were many inconsistencies. According to the June 2009 DOD report, for example, 83 ANA units were evaluated in May 2009 using the CM methodology. This number differed from the April 2010 DOD report, which stated that only 50 units were evaluated in May 2009 using the CM system.²⁶¹ Outside of DOD reporting, there was limited publicly available rating information.

The CM rating system produced inconsistent results and created disincentives for the ANDSF to improve because the coalition prioritized supporting units with lower ratings.²⁶² Units that achieved top ratings lost their mentors and partner support, along with valuable protection, expertise, supplies, funding, and prestige. CM ratings were also noted to be inconsistent

TABLE 5

INCONSISTENT MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

	Capability Milestone (CM) Jul 2005–Apr 2010	Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT) Apr 2010–Jul 2013	Regional Afghan National Security Forces Status Report (RASR) Sep 2013–Jan 2015	Monthly ANDSF Assessment Reports (MAAR) Jan 2015–Present
Highest Rating(s)	CM1: Mission capable, may require specified assistance	(1) Independent with advisors	(1) Fully capable	(1) Sustainable
	CM2: Mission capable only with routine assistance	(2) Effective with advisors	(2) Capable	(2) Fully capable
	CM3: Capable of partially conducting missions, reliant on assistance	(3) Effective with partners (4) Developing with partners	(3) Partially capable (4) Developing	(3) Capable (4) Partially capable
Lowest Rating(s)	CM4: May be capable of conducting portions of missions, reliant on support	(5) Established (6) Not assessed	(5) Established (6) Not assessed (7) Awaiting fielding	(5) In development

Note: Capability Milestone (CM) ratings are abbreviated versions of longer definitions found in DOD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, June 2008, pp. 6–7.

Source: DOD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, June 2008, pp. 6–7; SIGAR, *Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Efforts*, SIGAR 14-33-AR, February 2014, p. 6; DOD, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, November 2013, p. 75; DOD, *Report on Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2015, pp. 21–22.

in that they did not measure the ANDSF's ability to sustain its capabilities. For example, according to a 2010 SIGAR audit, 38 percent of ANA units and 66 percent of ANP units were shown to have regressed at least one level in capability over a 12-month period.²⁶³ Additionally, the reliability of data reported by the ANA was often called into question. RAND reporting from 2011 cites a lack of U.S. personnel to verify data and the fact that Afghan units were not under U.S. command as hindrances to the U.S. attempt to verify reported data.²⁶⁴ The accuracy of ANP assessments was also noted to be problematic, as reports from some districts indicated that even CM1-rated units required constant reinforcement.²⁶⁵

Discrepancies were also observed among different units with the same CM rating. For example, some CM1-rated units were more capable than others, indicating the relativity of the assessment. As a result of these differences, "one could not assume that units with similar ratings would have similar capabilities."²⁶⁶ Inconsistencies were also noted between army units that were partnered with the coalition and those that were only mentored by the coalition, despite having the same CM rating.²⁶⁷

Finally, CM rating measurement tools emphasized quantitative inputs, which masked qualitative measures of readiness. For example, the capability checklists for the ANP consisted of 70 percent of quantitative input measures, such as levels of staffing and equipment.²⁶⁸ This methodology masked performance-degrading factors, such as poor leadership and corruption, and emphasized readiness, mostly in terms of a unit being fully staffed or supplied. Given these weaknesses, and complaints from commanders in the field, the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) decided to replace the CM rating system, and in late March 2010, told SIGAR that plans were underway to do so.²⁶⁹

Commander's Unit Assessment Tool

Since IJC's creation in late 2009, it had been responsible for U.S. and coalition forces working with fielded ANDSF forces. IJC was therefore also responsible for the assessment of these ANDSF forces. Aware of the flaws with the CM system, IJC introduced a new process by which Regional Commands reported on governance, development, and security for priority areas of Afghanistan.

In April 2010, IJC rolled out its new ANDSF assessment framework: the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool.²⁷⁰ The CUAT framework included both quantitative and qualitative components: Quantitative data included force strength numbers and equipping levels, and qualitative data included overall descriptions of leadership quality, competency, and unit morale. This new assessment framework, together with battlefield reporting, informal commander's assessments, and ISAF's separate assessments of the MOD and MOI, created the assessment methodology for the security apparatus.²⁷¹

Despite the CUAT being considered a more detailed, stronger assessment tool for measuring ANDSF readiness, flaws in the model continued to mask the true nature of the ANDSF's ability to secure the country. Though the new assessment tool showed that the ANDSF was improving, there remained significant inconsistencies in the quality of data used to assign rating levels. Again, establishing longitudinal trends remained a problem. A 2012 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report noted that the CUAT suffered from changing definitions, which DOD attributed to a reported increase in the number of ANDSF units rated at the highest level, and problems applying the CUAT to ANP capability.²⁷² For example, between

TABLE 6

EVOLUTION OF CUAT RATINGS				
April 2010	July 2010	September 2010	October 2010	August 2011
Effective with advisors	Independent	Independent	Independent	Independent with advisors
Effective with assistance	Effective with advisors	Effective with advisors	Effective with advisors	Effective with advisors
Dependent on coalition forces for success	Effective with assistance	Effective with assistance	Effective with assistance	Effective with assistance
Barely effective	Dependent on coalition forces for success	Dependent on coalition forces for success	Developing	Developing with partners
Ineffective	Ineffective	Ineffective	Established	Established
Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed

Note: IJC color-coded the CUAT rating levels. This table shows the changes in IJC's coding over time.

Source: SIGAR, *Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Efforts*, SIGAR 14-33-AR, February 2014, p. 6.

the CUAT's inception in 2010 and its end in 2013, IJC changed the assessment rating definitions four times (table 6).

According to IJC officials, these changes were made in response to inflated ratings and the fact that officials conducting the assessments had limited understanding of the differences between rating levels. Although assessment levels remained mostly consistent, the definitional changes made it difficult to assess improvements in the ANDSF over time.²⁷³

Finally, the CUAT system was more complex than the CM rating system. In response to projected ISAF force reductions, the CUAT ratings were amended to be assessed and reported in bi-monthly cycles; however, ISAF force reductions occurred on varying timelines, resulting in ISAF's inability to assess the required units every cycle. At times, CUAT data was recorded in cycles without proper dates, which further clouded the accuracy of the data.²⁷⁴ Moreover, the CUAT required additional training and guidance on rating definitions. Many ANDSF advisors did not receive this training, rendering the ratings largely inconsistent and often inaccurate.²⁷⁵

Regional ANDSF Status Report

In July 2013, IJC replaced the CUAT framework with the Regional ANDSF Status Report. Three different DOD reports to Congress captured detailed RASR evaluations before the system was deemed classified by IJC.²⁷⁶ In the previous CM and CUAT assessments, the ANA and ANP were recorded separately and, specifically in the CUAT, down to the kandak level (ANA). In the October 2014 DOD report to Congress, IJC changed the names of the sub-levels it was evaluating from the previous April 2014 and November 2013 DOD reports to Congress, creating difficulty in determining improvement. Moreover, as noted in SIGAR's October 2014 Quarterly Report, IJC determined that future ANDSF capability assessments would be classified, removing public transparency.²⁷⁷

The RASR framework was designed to improve upon the CUAT by enabling IJC to better track the degree to which ANDSF units were able to use their staffing, equipping, and training

numbers (similar to the CUAT) to successfully engage the enemy in combat, change advisor teams to match resource constraints, and better measure the capabilities of the various branches of the ANDSF.²⁷⁸ The RASR rating levels were fully capable, capable, partially capable, developing, established, not assessed, and awaiting fielding.²⁷⁹

The RASR framework marked another change in the levels and definitions used to assess the ANDSF, which again made any longitudinal analysis of the ANDSF's improvement challenging. Furthermore, the new framework measured the ANDSF's capabilities on a monthly, rather than quarterly, basis.²⁸⁰ IJC also designed RASR to assess, in a more targeted fashion, fewer units with greater consistency every month. This design, in theory, allowed IJC to focus on specific units of critical importance or interest. To improve upon the guidance previously provided for the CUAT system, IJC issued a fragmentary order (FRAGO) with more specific instructions on the data that advisor units should include in the comments supporting their ratings in each category, for each unit assessed.²⁸¹ Additionally, quality control checks were put in place to ensure a higher quality of data.²⁸²

Essential Functions and the Monthly ANDSF Assessment Report

After the 2014 security transfer and subsequent ISAF drawdown, in early 2015 U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) adopted a broad assessment framework with eight essential functions (EF) for the entire Resolute Support mission. The EFs were measured according to a 5-point scale with the highest score, 5, signaling that the "Afghan systems are in place, functioning, and being used effectively, and that the associated processes will be carried forward by Afghans without any advising or other coalition involvement."²⁸³

In addition to this broad assessment framework, commanders accounted for train and advise efforts at the ANA corps and ANP headquarters level via the Monthly ANDSF Assessment Report. As of May 2016, the MAAR also included a 5-point scale in which the top rating, 5 ("sustainable"), signaled that a unit had sustained a rating of "fully capable" for three continuous months, had demonstrated "effective mission planning, successful utilization of unit processes, and coordination across essential functions," and required coalition support "only for integration of new systems or for advanced operations."²⁸⁴

The current MAAR reporting system remains limited and problematic. The MAAR assesses the ANA and ANP only at the headquarters level and, as noted by the U.S. military itself, it is not intended "to be used as an assessment or evaluation of the entire ANDSF."²⁸⁵ Such a methodology and lack of coverage of the ANA and ANP below the headquarters level suggests that any evaluation is capturing only superficial and potentially misleading details of current readiness.

AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE

Europeans Continue Civil Policing Effort

From 2004 to 2007, the German Police Project Team (GPPT) continued to focus time, attention, and personnel on university-level training for NCOs and officer cadets, a program that took nine months to three years, respectively.²⁸⁶ Senior Afghan MOI officials recognized the dual-track police development initiatives by the United States and Europe and wanted to ensure a balanced approach was implemented. In meetings and correspondence between U.S. and Afghan officials at the end of 2003 and beginning of 2004, U.S. leaders drafted and pushed forward plans to further accelerate ANP training. MOI leaders were resistant, stressing the need for a balanced police development program. Minister Jalali and Deputy Minister Helal agreed to move forward with a plan to train 12,000 patrolmen and 8,000 officers to meet the June 2004 goal of 20,000 trained police.²⁸⁷ By January 2005, only 41 officers and 2,583 NCOs—less than 5 percent of the 62,000 final force strength required at that time—had been trained through the German program, which focused on civil policing, rule of law missions, and building a defensive and reactive force.²⁸⁸

In June 2007, the EU assumed lead responsibility for the European efforts to support police reform, and established the EU Police Mission for Afghanistan (EUPOL). The EUPOL team was composed of several member states, including Germany. Although the agency changed, police training efforts continued along the same track as the German effort, toward a civil policing model focused on professional development of police officers and NCOs.²⁸⁹ During a meeting with U.S. Ambassador William Wood in Kabul, EUPOL leaders outlined their plans



German Police Project Team mentors host a graduation ceremony for 63 newly commissioned Afghan National Police officers. (IJC Photo by Sandra Arnold)

and mission to support the ANP. EUPOL mentors would work at the “strategic level” mentoring ministry officials, police chiefs at the national, regional, and provincial level, and the attorney general’s office. EUPOL would not provide field training or basic training for lower-level police officers. EUPOL leaders promised 160 to 190 police mentors by November 2007.²⁹⁰

State Struggles, DOD Takes Over

By 2004, U.S. interest in police development increased significantly. State was ultimately responsible for the U.S. police development program. Because it lacked an institutional capability with the necessary resources and trained law enforcement professionals to conduct the mission, State was forced to rely almost exclusively on its contract with DynCorp International to meet the mission requirements.

Until 2005, DynCorp was unable to conduct essential follow-on field training, mentoring, and evaluation required outside of Kabul, largely due to force protection concerns inherent in civilian-led missions.²⁹¹ State considered expanding the program’s field training but decided the expansion would be too costly and could possibly increase security threats to the police trainers.²⁹² GAO cites State INL officials as noting high costs, security threats to personnel, and the inability to recruit a significant number of international police as reasons for not implementing a “countrywide field-based program.”²⁹³

Although State’s training program was meeting numeric output goals, for example, reaching 20,000 police trained by mid-2004, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was increasingly worried about the minimal capabilities of the Afghan police and was interested in DOD assuming control of police development.²⁹⁴ Rumsfeld felt that despite State’s efforts, security was worsening and that DOD was better suited to provide field partnering and tactical support.²⁹⁵ In April 2005, the United States officially transitioned police development responsibility to DOD under the Office of Security Cooperation (the predecessor organization to CSTC-A). State, however, maintained contracting management authority over police training, mentoring, and MOI reform, which created oversight and contractual hurdles.²⁹⁶

Placing police development under DOD brought unique challenges. DOD largely failed to assess its congressional authorities and restrictions related to foreign police development prior to assuming the role of the lead U.S. organization. When confronted with the U.S. recommendation for the U.S. military to assume the lead for police development, Afghan Minister of Interior Ali Jalali agreed, but warned that he did not want his police militarized, or trained by soldiers. At this time, OMC-A leaders assured Jalali that trainers would only be drawn from law enforcement personnel.²⁹⁷ Jalali also noted that he did not want to sacrifice quality for quantity.²⁹⁸ Despite Afghan reservations, U.S. soldiers became an integral part of the new DOD police training mission, leading to a militarization of the force.²⁹⁹



U.S. Army military police demonstrate riot control techniques to members of the ANP. (105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Darren D. Heusel)

According to U.S. Ambassador Ronald Neumann, in 2005 early DOD efforts to equip the ANP were halted when DOD was informed it could not use its Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds for police development. And, despite the ANP often having to serve as the frontline defense against the rising Taliban threat, the U.S. government prohibited providing heavy weapons to foreign police officers, including the ANP.³⁰⁰

Prioritizing Quantity Over Quality

Similar to the U.S. position on developing the ANA, senior U.S. officials believed that a rapid deployment of trained police officers was a necessary alternative to expanding international forces, allowing the international community to maintain a light footprint and withdraw on shorter timelines. The insufficient number of trained and equipped police operating in the provinces was a major obstacle to the expansion of government authority and international development. Based on these factors, the United States dramatically expedited the police training program for patrol officers as a means to significantly increase the quantity of active police, ultimately jeopardizing the quality of the force.

Under DOD's lead, the DynCorp ANP training program evolved and expanded slightly from its original version. Training focused on the individual patrol officer and continued the pattern of deploying newly trained recruits into an environment ripe with incentives to engage in corruption. Training was still largely restricted to the capital and according to a 2005 GAO report, only 12 trainers were sent to areas outside of Kabul.³⁰¹

A 2006 fact-finding mission by General McCaffrey assessed the ANP was in “disastrous condition: badly equipped, corrupt, incompetent, poorly led and trained, riddled by drug use, and lacking any semblance of a national police infrastructure. There is very little oversight at province or district level.”³⁰² Embassy cables and other U.S. government reports at this time further confirmed and detailed the “disastrous condition” of the police forces.³⁰³ According to a 2005 CFC-A report, of the 34,000 “trained” police officers, only 3,900 had been through the eight-week course; those who did not go through the eight-week course went through a two-week transition course.³⁰⁴

The ANP was in “disastrous condition: badly equipped, corrupt, incompetent, poorly led and trained, riddled by drug use, and lacking any semblance of a national police infrastructure. There is very little oversight at province or district level.”

—General Barry McCaffrey

By 2006, training requirements increased; literate ANP recruits were to attend a nine-week training program, while illiterate recruits were to complete a five-week literacy program, followed by the nine-week basic training.³⁰⁵ In reality, however, this did not occur.³⁰⁶ For example, RAND reported that “many of the 60,000 ANP personnel who were designated as having officially completed their training by June 2006 had only attended the three-week course developed for



ANP recruits recite oath of honor at a graduation ceremony in Kabul. (U.S. Air Force photo by Beth Del Vecchio)

officers already in service, despite the fact that their backgrounds, experiences, and suitability for police work varied considerably.”³⁰⁷ In comparison, previous U.S. foreign police training efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which drew from a pool of cadets who were “much more literate” and were conducted in a “less violent society,” provided 25 weeks of initial training.³⁰⁸ And, in the United States, police recruits—who are generally pulled from a highly literate pool of high school graduates into a fully developed and established national and sub-national police bureaucracy—attend an average of 21 weeks of basic training, followed by weeks of field training.³⁰⁹

The U.S. inability to track and monitor training and development of ANP units or individual police officers prevented the United States from performing the necessary follow-up professional training or remedial retraining required under the enhanced program.³¹⁰ Furthermore, according to one expert, the effectiveness of the Afghan basic police training was questionable, as police officers who attended a basic training course were subsequently deployed into the field to work alongside untrained and often corrupt officers and patrol officers, resulting in training that was viewed as “largely wasted.”³¹¹

With DOD now leading the charge for police development, militarization of the force began to occur in various forms. One manner in which this occurred was via the significant lack of focus on civilian policing essentials, such as crime prevention. Ambassador Neumann affirmed this, noting, “We never focused on crime prevention. For us, this was in one box and insurgent activity in another. We never collected crime statistics on any regular basis. Yet, for an Afghan, violence [was] all part of insecurity. If the government cannot protect against both, then it does not provide security; [this was] a major problem for winning loyalty and trust of the people.”³¹²

By the end of the 2006 fighting season, the United States independently decided that the ANP needed to rapidly expand to 82,000 police and threatened to withhold funding if the Afghans did not approve.³¹³ In May 2007, the ANP’s official end strength was formally increased to 82,000, which was to be reached by 2010.³¹⁴

Increased Attention and Resources Still Missed the Mark for an Expanding Force Funding

In May 2004, international donors attended a conference on Afghan police reconstruction co-hosted in Doha, Qatar, by Germany, Qatar, the UN, and the Afghan government. Donors pledged \$350 million for police reform over the next several years. Despite these pledges, in 2004, LOTFA—a funding source responsible for paying police salaries and equipment—suffered a shortfall of over \$72 million.³¹⁵

U.S. financial support for police development drastically increased to a cumulative total of roughly \$6 billion from 2004 to 2008, a number far below the ANA development budget of roughly \$10 billion during that same time period (figure 8 on page 67).³¹⁶ In October 2006, there was a significant increase in requested funding for FY 2007; the approved ANP budget of \$2.7 billion was larger than all U.S. funds provided for police development to date.³¹⁷ In addition to U.S. funding, Germany invested roughly \$12 million a year through its tenure as lead nation from 2002 to 2007.³¹⁸

Problems related to funding and salaries plagued the ANP, including the issue of “ghost police,” or nonexistent police. Afghan police leadership was accused of exploiting internationally funded police salaries by inflating rosters with ghost personnel in order to receive more funds. Inflated numbers corroded combat readiness of police units, as actual staffing levels were unknown. During a 2006 U.S. military site visit to Kama District, Nangarhar Province, only 28 of the 60 personnel on the roster actually worked at that location. Some of the absent police officers assigned to Kama District were actually working in the provincial capital of Jalalabad.³¹⁹ From August to September 2007, TF Phoenix conducted a survey of 81 percent of Afghan districts to confirm uniform, border, and civil order police against MOI payroll lists. The survey was conducted in response to ongoing concerns regarding the actual number of police on the ground. According to CSTC-A, “MOI personnel and payroll offices have reported varying figures for the same district, often seriously at odds with claims by local chiefs of police, the 2007 *tashkil* (list of personnel and equipment), and observations of PRT officers.”³²⁰ Survey findings verified only 76 percent of the 45,731 police listed on the payroll.³²¹

Equipment

Equipment limitations undermined ANP mission readiness.³²² In 2002, German assessments had indicated that less than 10 percent of the ANP was adequately equipped.³²³ Although there was an increase in financial support for the ANP to purchase weapons, GAO cited DynCorp officials in early 2005 as estimating that the ANP was still short “48,500 side arms, 10,000 automatic rifles, and 6,250 machine guns” for a force size of less than 40,000.³²⁴ Due to this shortfall, GAO noted that through March 2005, trainees were no longer receiving firearms training.³²⁵ The GAO report further described the effects of the equipment shortfall by noting, “Most police do not perform routine patrols because they lack adequate numbers of vehicles and the fuel to operate them. State/INL officials reported that police often rely on civilian complainants for transportation during law enforcement investigations.”³²⁶ In 2005, CFC-A reported that during a recent operation, ANP units deployed without food, water, sufficient ammunition, cold weather clothing, or blankets. Three years after the 2002 German assessment, CFC-A reported the ANP still had less than 15 percent of the required weapons and communication systems.³²⁷



Afghan police trainees learn “cover down” tactics at the Jalalabad Regional Training Center. (U.S. Army photo by Reeba Critser)

While significant progress was made in resourcing the ANP, by June 2006 most ANP units had less than half of their authorized equipment. To make matters worse, 95 percent of the equipment on hand was donated from coalition partners and labeled both “nonstandard” and “low quality.”³²⁸ By mid-2008, GAO reports indicated “the ANP has not received about one-third of the equipment items [DOD] considers critical and continues to face shortages in several types of equipment, including vehicles, radios, and body armor.”³²⁹

Personnel

While the United States and coalition partners increased advisors, mentors, and trainers during this period, police development programs were consistently noted as being understaffed and the quality of those assigned was routinely questioned.³³⁰ Secretary Gates said, “Our main challenge is increasing the competence and reliability of the force, and that requires large numbers of mentors and trainers. So far we have been unable to fill most of what is required.”³³¹ DOD replicated its ANA development model by assigning field training teams called Police Mentoring Teams (PMT) to provide follow-up instruction and mentorship. Having military personnel serve on the PMTs contributed to what was widely criticized as an increasingly over-militarization of the U.S. police mission.

With the police mission secondary to ANA development, PMTs suffered from significant personnel shortages, leading to coverage of less than 25 percent of ANP units and organizations.³³² Similar to the army training mission, NATO mirrored the U.S. ANA model and developed police operational mentoring and liaison teams (POMLT) to further assist with the advising and mentoring mission.

Similar issues of under-resourcing plagued the POMLTs; coalition partners' input continued to be limited, with consistent shortfalls. For example, in 2008 the EU provided only 80 of its pledged 215 mentors (less than 40 percent) toward ANP mentorship at the ministerial, regional, and provincial levels.³³³ In addition to numerical deficiencies, the quality and experience of the military personnel assigned to the police training mission was inadequate. Many of the trainers were described as people with a wide variety of military backgrounds, but not necessarily any police experience or expertise.³³⁴

Creation of New Units to Supplement ANP Deficiencies

As projected end dates for ANP force readiness targets drew nearer and security continued to deteriorate, the United States began to explore options to rapidly enhance policing capabilities.³³⁵ From 2004 to 2008, the United States supported multiple supplemental police force initiatives, including the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP) and Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP).

Afghan National Auxiliary Police

The ANAP program was created by the United States in September 2006 as a way to temporarily expedite the expansion of local security in areas under threat from the Taliban.³³⁶ ANAP started on a small scale with a pilot program in Zabul Province. In theory, police officers were vetted and chosen locally—by governors, shuras, and community elder leadership—and were responsible for staffing checkpoints and providing local police patrols.³³⁷

In reality, however, incoming police officers were rarely vetted. According to an Afghanistan Analysts Network report, “Recruits were not selected locally and were ill-suited to do community-based policing.”³³⁸ Additionally, the report noted



Members of the Afghan National Auxiliary Police train with wooden rifles during their two-week training program. (NTM-A photo by Scott Cohen)

that police were not representative of the communities they were policing, noting, “Out of 200 recruits in the second class of ANAP trainees in Zabul, 80 were from Kandahar, 26 were from Kunduz, 23 from Uruzgan and 17 from Ghazni. Only 16 were from Zabul.”³³⁹ The allegiance of the ANAP recruits was also questionable.³⁴⁰ One analyst added, for example, that a “significant number of ANAP recruits openly stated they were ‘Gul’s men,’” referring to a known local strongman.³⁴¹ Furthermore, ANAP recruits received less training but were paid salaries comparable to uniformed police and were employed closer to home, negatively affecting recruiting for the regular ANP.³⁴²

The ANAP had limited, if any, Afghan or international oversight or accountability mechanisms.³⁴³ Corruption, human rights abuses, and parallel chains of command negatively influenced both the public perception of the police force and the larger force organization.³⁴⁴ These factors contributed to the ANAP quickly becoming a predatory force, more strongly aligned to local power brokers than to the government, and a net detractor from security in most areas.

Ultimately, the ANAP initiative failed. Although it was true that the ANAP had been able to expand rapidly, it was only effective in a limited number of areas. In May 2008, the United States and Afghan governments decided the ANAP would be dissolved entirely by the end of the year. Some ANAP members became part of the ANP, but only if they had “served for at least one year, had been trained for at least five weeks, and were recommended by their district chief.” The rest were terminated by September 30, 2008.³⁴⁵ The ANAP was widely criticized as an incompetent and ineffective force that undermined disarmament and demobilization programs such as the 2005 Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) initiative.³⁴⁶ An inadvertent, secondary effect described by U.S. Embassy Kabul was that the ANAP also began providing an avenue for Taliban insider attacks, as poor recruit vetting allowed for easier insurgent infiltration.³⁴⁷

Afghan National Civil Order Police and the Focused District Development Program

In May 2006, the Afghan National Civil Order Police were established in response to riots in Kabul after a traffic accident—involving a U.S. Embassy vehicle—killed four Afghan civilians. ANCOP was initially designed to be a regionally stationed, small, rapid reaction force available to help quell civil unrest, operating as a quasi-gendarme unit for Afghan policing. ANCOP units would be able to rapidly respond to emergencies that other units were neither trained nor equipped to handle.

ANCOP members were trained by U.S. Special Forces units and received better training, advanced equipment, and more in-depth leadership development than regular ANP units. ANCOP training was 16 weeks, as opposed to the standard



Afghan National Civil Order Policeman fires an AK-47 assault rifle during a marksmanship competition at Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar City. (U.S. Army photo by Carol A. Lehman)

five to eight weeks for ANP recruits. In comparison, U.S. Army military police training lasts 20 weeks.

According to a 2007 U.S. Embassy Kabul report, ANCOP was composed of both urban units and patrol units. ANCOP members received armored vehicles, unlike the unarmored Ford Ranger pickup trucks provided to ANP, as well as better pay and quicker rank increases based on good performance.³⁴⁸ In May 2007, the first ANCOP class graduated from training in Mazar-e Sharif. According to a police mentor, the first class of recruits was ethnically balanced, worked well together after training as a unit, and was 95 percent literate.³⁴⁹

Regardless of initial plans for ANCOP's function, its main application shifted from rapid reaction to that of support for a new U.S. initiative known as Focused District Development (FDD). The FDD program was designed to deploy ANCOP units to replace local ANP units, which would then receive additional training and professionalization. After this training, the ANP units would return to their local area and the ANCOP unit would move on to the next district. The United States hoped this would mitigate earlier problems of training individual police who were then sent into larger units across the country, many of which suffered from corruption and employed police who had not yet received any training at all.³⁵⁰

Through FDD, police spent eight weeks at a Regional Training Center, while ANCOP personnel backfilled their posts.³⁵¹ Initial reports from early 2009 were positive as a number of police units' capability ratings increased, according

to DOD assessments.³⁵² Public perceptions of ANCOP's professionalism and expertise contributed to an optimistic outlook for the program's efficacy. Problems began to arise in later months, however, as shortages of personnel and unrealistic timelines significantly restricted the program's outcomes.³⁵³

Some Reforms Made Progress

During this period, the MOI lacked the basic fundamentals of planning, programming, budgeting, and execution (PPBE) essential to governing and sustaining a Western-style security force with a demand-driven logistics system.³⁵⁴ One of the biggest challenges for the ministry during this period was pay and rank reform, as the ratio of high-ranking officer positions to lower officers and NCOs created structural imbalances that limited recruitment and retention for the MOI and ANP.³⁵⁵ In 2006, the MOI implemented pay reform through a distribution system which made it possible for police officers to receive their pay directly from a local bank. Prior to the reform, pay was delivered by middlemen, and according to the embassy, most of the funds were siphoned off by corrupt officials.³⁵⁶ In 2007, CSTC-A began issuing police salaries electronically to further reduce the opportunities for corruption.³⁵⁷

In 2006, with U.S. assistance, the Minister of Interior, Ahmad Moqbel Zarar, undertook rank reform. This reform reduced the number of generals to an appropriate level based on a 62,000-person police force. For example, 120 two- and three-star generals and 235 brigadier generals were reduced to 31 and 86, respectively.³⁵⁸ The MOI partnered with CSTC-A to complete the design and vetting process for the rank reform program. The vetting process included reviews by the international community, including a review by the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) for any human rights violations. The rank reform process was critical for the success of pay reform, which established new salaries based on the new rank structure. Following rank and pay reform efforts, the international community worked with the MOI to create parity in salaries between the ANP and ANA. International donors to LOTFA agreed to raise salaries for patrol officers from \$70 to \$100 a month.³⁵⁹

Afghanistan Security Forces Fund

Created in 2005, the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) has been the primary means of U.S. financial support for manning, training, and equipping the ANDSF (figure 8).³⁶⁰ While the ASFF has provided the Afghan government with a sustained source of funding, it is a congressionally authorized fund that requires routine reauthorization based on ANDSF requirements.³⁶¹ ASFF's budget is often a two-year appropriation cycle, which limits flexibility to account for on-the-ground changes to ANDSF development. Due to that lack of flexibility, supplemental funding has often been required to address these changes.

In 2011, OSD authorized the expansion of ASFF resources to allow CSTC-A to use ASFF to sustain the ANDSF and provide funds directly to the Afghan ministries.³⁶² Through this action, the "goal was to develop ministerial capability and capacity in the areas of budget development and execution, payment of salaries, acquisition planning, and procurement."³⁶³ However, on-budget assistance to the Afghan government removed U.S. oversight and accountability mechanisms.

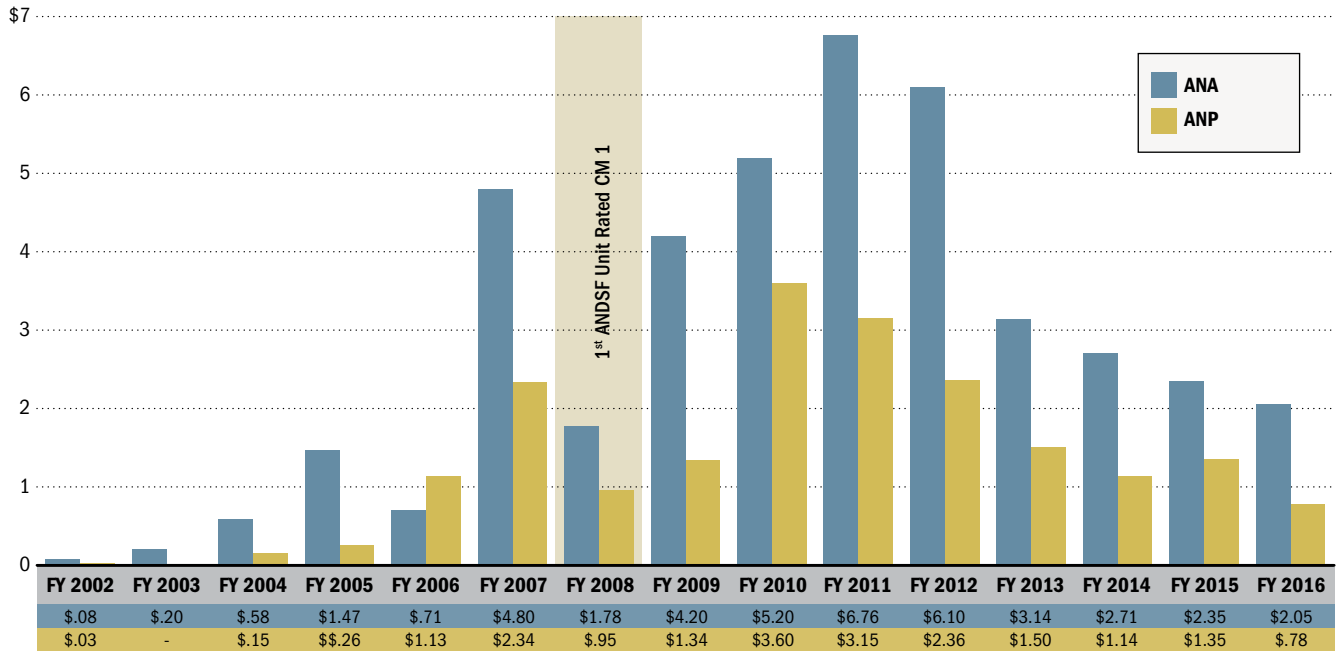
The Afghan MOF, MOD, and MOI are responsible for developing, validating, and justifying requirements, as well as accounting for ASFF direct contributions from DOD.³⁶⁴ This means the success of the ASFF relies on the government of Afghanistan's ability to acquire accurate payroll and personnel data to ensure accountability of U.S. funds.³⁶⁵ As noted in an April 2014 report by the DOD Inspector General, the MOD and MOI used ASFF direct contributions for \$82.7 million of unauthorized expenditures in FY 2013, including for miscellaneous items such as land purchases or allowances for uniformed employees.³⁶⁶ As a consequence of oversight failures, both the MOD and MOI spent approximately \$60.2 million more than they were authorized for designated budget codes.³⁶⁷ CSTC-A failed to ensure the Afghan government had the proper internal controls over its operations and reporting functions that could have provided transparency and accountability of ASFF direct contributions.³⁶⁸ As a result, CSTC-A could not verify that ASFF direct contributions were properly spent or used for predetermined purposes, and the Afghan government could not be held accountable.

An April 2015 SIGAR audit revealed ANA attendance data lacked proper oversight, resulting in inconsistent numbers.³⁶⁹ In consultations with CSTC-A and ANA officials, SIGAR was unable to identify direct oversight during attendance data collection and reporting.³⁷⁰ This was due, in part, to a lack of personnel, which left CSTC-A reliant on reporting from ANA officials. Additionally, poor data collection practices may have contributed to some ANA personnel receiving incorrect salaries.³⁷¹ The challenges associated with CSTC-A and ANA personnel collecting data, verifying its accuracy, and informing the proper channels resulted in weaknesses in the ASFF.

To mitigate the threat of ghost soldiers, in January 2017 the United States withheld financial support for 30,000 ANDSF salaries and stipulated it would pay salaries only to soldiers who were biometrically enrolled in the Afghan personnel system.³⁷² Additionally, the United States required the Afghan government to remove several top Afghan Air Force leaders who were weak and corrupt, in exchange for more than 100 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters procured through ASFF. Initial reflections from USAF advisors indicated the change in Afghan Air Force leadership was a positive development.³⁷³

FIGURE 8

TOTAL U.S. FUNDING FOR THE ANA COMPARED TO THE ANP (\$ BILLIONS)



Note: ANA funding above is composed of Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) budget; DOD Train and Equip; DO International Military Education and Training (IMET); DOS Foreign Military Financing (FMF); and DOS Voluntary Peacekeeping (PKO). ANP funding above is composed of ASFF budget account two and DOS International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE). ASFF funding for the ANP was calculated from disbursements. State's IMET funding was calculated from expenditures. State's PKO funding was calculated from expenditures. State's INCLE funding was not available for FY 2003, as confirmed by SIGAR data calls.

Source: GAO, *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police Have Made Progress, but Future Plans Need to Be Better Defined*, GAO-05-575, June 2005, p. 9–10; SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 30, 2009, p. 40; SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 30, 2010, pp. 140–141; DOD, response to SIGAR data call, April 14, 2011; SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2014, pp. 212–213; DOD, response to SIGAR data call, December 31, 2016; State, response to SIGAR data call, December 31, 2016; State, response to SIGAR data call, January 6, 2017; DOD, response to SIGAR data call, January 17, 2017; SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 30, 2017, pp. 212–213.



CHAPTER 4

2009–2014: U.S. SURGE AND TRANSITION

U.S. Air Force photo

U.S. STRATEGIC REVIEW

After President Obama’s January 2009 inauguration, the White House undertook a strategic review of the effort in Afghanistan. In March 2009, President Obama outlined the first phase of his new Afghanistan strategy in five “realistic and achievable objectives.” The objectives were to disrupt terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan; promote a more capable, accountable, and effective Afghan government; develop an increasingly self-reliant Afghan security force; assist efforts to enhance civilian control of a stable government in Pakistan; and involve the international community to actively assist in addressing the Afghanistan-Pakistan objectives.³⁷⁴

In August 2009, the newly appointed commander of U.S. and ISAF forces, General Stanley McChrystal, published his multidisciplinary assessment of the situation in Afghanistan. For the first time, a U.S. commander in Afghanistan publicly described the situation as “serious” and “deteriorating” and recommended a complete overhaul in strategy to a comprehensive and fully resourced counterinsurgency (COIN) mission focused on protecting the population. The assessment outlined the first stage of the new mission

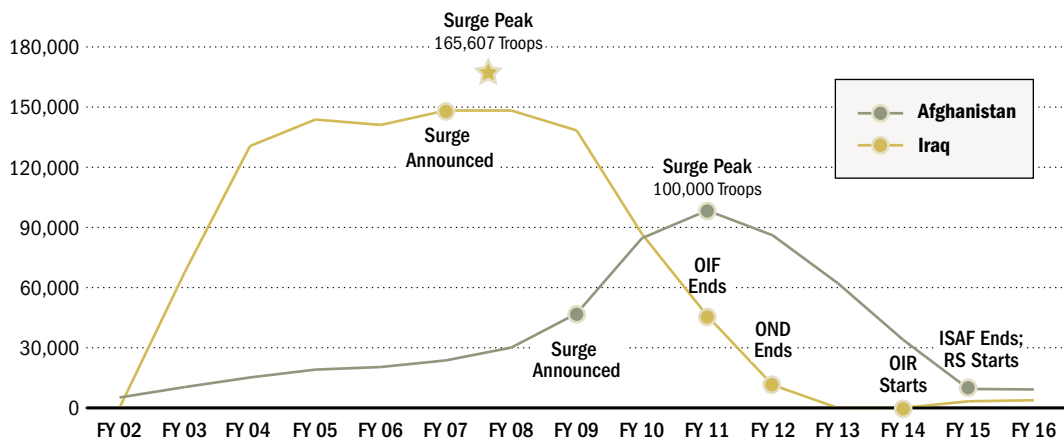
as requiring the United States and Afghanistan to regain the initiative and “definitively check the insurgency.”³⁷⁵

McChrystal warned that a failure to reverse the Taliban’s momentum would not only prevent success, but would also result in a loss of international support. He recommended an increase of international forces and a dramatic increase in the ANDSF to 400,000 members.³⁷⁶ The White House ultimately supported an international surge of military and civilian forces, as well as an increase in the size of the ANDSF to 352,000, an increase from the previous force strength target of 220,000.³⁷⁷

President Obama’s December 2009 West Point speech concluded that year’s strategic review of Afghanistan. The president announced a surge authorization of 30,000 U.S. troops—increasing U.S. force strength from 67,000 to over 100,000—and set a mid-2011 date for transferring security to Afghan forces (figure 9).³⁷⁸ The goal of the military surge was to reverse the Taliban’s momentum and set security conditions to a level the ANDSF could handle, within the known limitations of the force. President Obama said, “Commanders in Afghanistan repeatedly asked for support to deal with the reemergence of the Taliban, but these reinforcements did not arrive.”³⁷⁹ This time, the White House would deliver the requested troop increase.

FIGURE 9

AVERAGE U.S. FORCES IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN, FY 2002–FY 2016



Note: For FY 2002–2007, the annual total is derived from average monthly troop levels. For FY 2008–2016, the annual total is derived from average quarterly troop levels. While the 2007 total (from monthly averages) in Iraq was 148,300 troops, troop levels surged to 165,607 in the fourth quarter. U.S. troop numbers in Iraq for FY 2012 (11,445) represent the number of troops in the first quarter; there were no U.S. troops in Iraq by the end of the second quarter beyond a residual force that remained to provide embassy security and other security cooperation assistance. Starting in June 2014, additional U.S. military personnel were sent to Iraq in Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) to advise and train Iraqi forces and support U.S. military operations against the Islamic State.

Source: CRS, *Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001–FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues*, July 2, 2009, p. 9; CRS, *Department of Defense Contractor and Troop Levels in Iraq and Afghanistan: 2007–2017*, April 28, 2017, pp.4–11; CRS, *Overseas Contingency Operations Funding: Background and Status*, February 7, 2017, p. 19

New U.S. Strategy Creates Tension within the Coalition

While agreeing to the need for a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign, some members of the coalition—Australia, Canada, and France—refused to extend timelines for combat troops, while others were reluctant to accept General McChrystal's request to reduce force protection measures. In the Netherlands, support for the new U.S. strategy resulted in a no-confidence vote and eventual collapse of the Dutch government in 2010.³⁸⁰

TRANSITION SECURITY TO AFGHAN LEAD

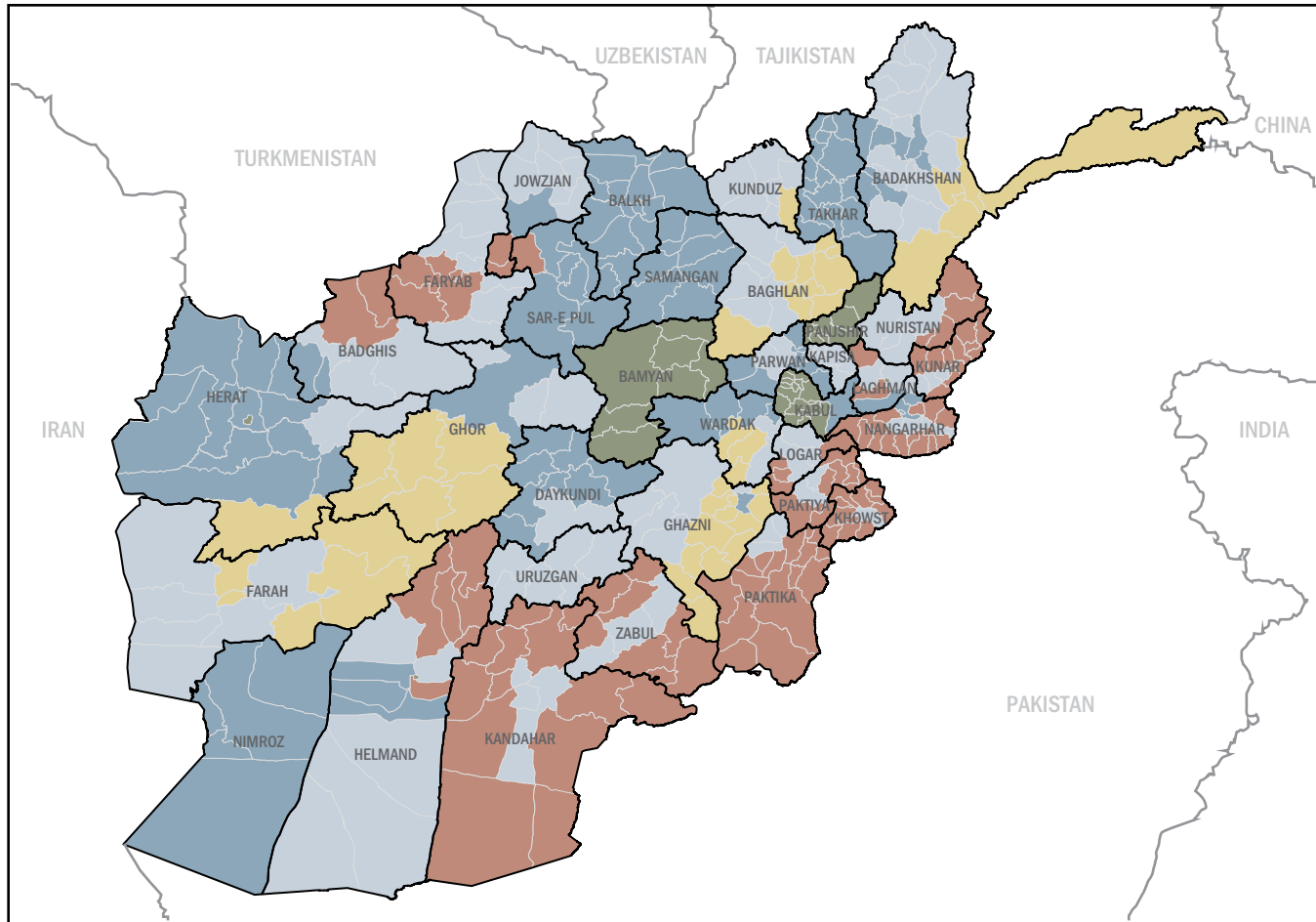
Inteqal—the Dari and Pashtu word for transition—was the process by which the Afghan security forces gradually assumed lead responsibility from international forces. In July 2010, the Kabul Conference created the Joint Afghan-NATO Inteqal Board (JANIB), designed as a “mechanism to assess districts and provinces ready for transition” based on security, political, and economic progress.³⁸¹ In November 2010, the NATO Lisbon Conference formally agreed to the inteqal process and a transition that would be “conditions-based, not calendar driven,” and that would “not equate to a withdrawal of ISAF troops.”³⁸² Vanda Felbab-Brown, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, noted in 2012 that while the international community provided comprehensive assessments of potential transition areas, “ultimately, the transfer decision [lay] with President Hamid Karzai and his principal advisor for transition, Ashraf Ghani. Complex political considerations, including ethnic balancing, at times influence[d] the transfer decisions, despite ISAF’s advice.”³⁸³

In March 2011, President Karzai announced the first tranche of Afghan provinces and districts to start the transition process. These areas were in relatively secure areas of ethnic-minority regions of the north and west. From November 2011 to December 2012, President Karzai announced three more tranches for transition that included more than 75 percent of the population.³⁸⁴ During Karzai’s January 2013 meeting with President Obama, both presidents reaffirmed their commitment to a previously agreed-upon acceleration of the military transition timeline from December 2013 to June 2013. Obama noted that ANDSF growth was “on track” and had reached a force size of 352,000, as planned.³⁸⁵ On June 18, 2013, President Karzai hosted a ceremonial event announcing the launch of the fifth and final tranche, marking the completion of “Milestone 2013,” and the official transfer of nationwide security to the ANDSF (figure 10 on the next page).³⁸⁶ According to a November 2013 DOD report, “areas that reach[ed] the final stage of transition [would] remain at that stage until December 2014, when all provinces and districts in Afghanistan [would] graduate from transition, regardless of what stage they [had] achieved.”³⁸⁷ On December 28, 2014, a formal ceremony was held in Kabul to mark the end of ISAF’s mission and the transition to a train, advise, and assist role under NATO Resolute

Support.³⁸⁸ This occurred despite the fact that elements of the army, police, and associated ministries had not achieved the highest capability milestone ratings and continued to require coalition assistance to accomplish their mission.³⁸⁹

FIGURE 10

NATO TRANCHES



Transition Tranche 1	Transition Tranche 2	Transition Tranche 3	Transition Tranche 4	Transition Tranche 5
On March 22, 2011, President Karzai announced the first set of Afghan provinces, districts, and cities to begin transition. This decision was based upon operational, political, and economic considerations, drawing on the assessments and recommendations of the Afghan government and NATO/ISAF through the Joint Afghan-NATO Inteqal Board.	On November 27, 2011, using the same decision-making process, President Karzai announced the second set of Afghan provinces, districts, and cities for transition implementation.	On May 13, 2012, President Karzai announced the third set of areas to enter the transition process, covering over 75% of the Afghan population. This decision marked the beginning of transition in every one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan, including every provincial capital, covering almost two-thirds of the country's districts.	On December 31, 2012, President Karzai announced the fourth group of Afghan provinces, cities, and districts to begin the transition process. With this decision, 23 of 34 provinces had fully entered transition and 87% of the population lived in areas where the ANDSF had the lead for security.	On June 18, 2013, President Karzai announced the launch of the fifth and final tranche for transition. Once this was fully implemented, the 11 remaining provinces fully entered into transition and Afghan forces were in the lead for security across the country.

Source: SIGAR, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 30, 2013; NATO, *Inteqal: Transition to Afghan Lead*, January 7, 2015.

The NATO Training Mission for Afghanistan

NATO efforts in Afghanistan consistently suffered from shortages of personnel to train, advise, and assist the ANDSF. From 2009 to 2014, nations contributing troops to the NATO Training Mission for Afghanistan (NTM-A) struggled to fill the personnel requirements set forth in the NATO Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR), NATO's capabilities-based document that identifies requirements for NATO operations. These shortfalls hindered ANDSF development, undermined NATO credibility, and curtailed ISAF-led train, advise, and assist operations.

NTM-A was created at the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April 2009 to oversee NATO training of the ANDSF, parallel to the U.S. train, advise, and assist effort led by CSTC-A. Headquartered at Camp Eggers in Kabul, NTM-A became fully operational in February of 2010 under the command of U.S. Lieutenant General William Caldwell, who was dual-hatted as the commander of both organizations.³⁹⁰ With NTM-A and CSTC-A focused on training recruits and developing institutional training capacity, IJC assumed responsibility for training Afghan forces in the field and conducting combat operations.³⁹¹

Trainer Shortfalls: The Inability to Meet Requirements or Fulfill Pledges

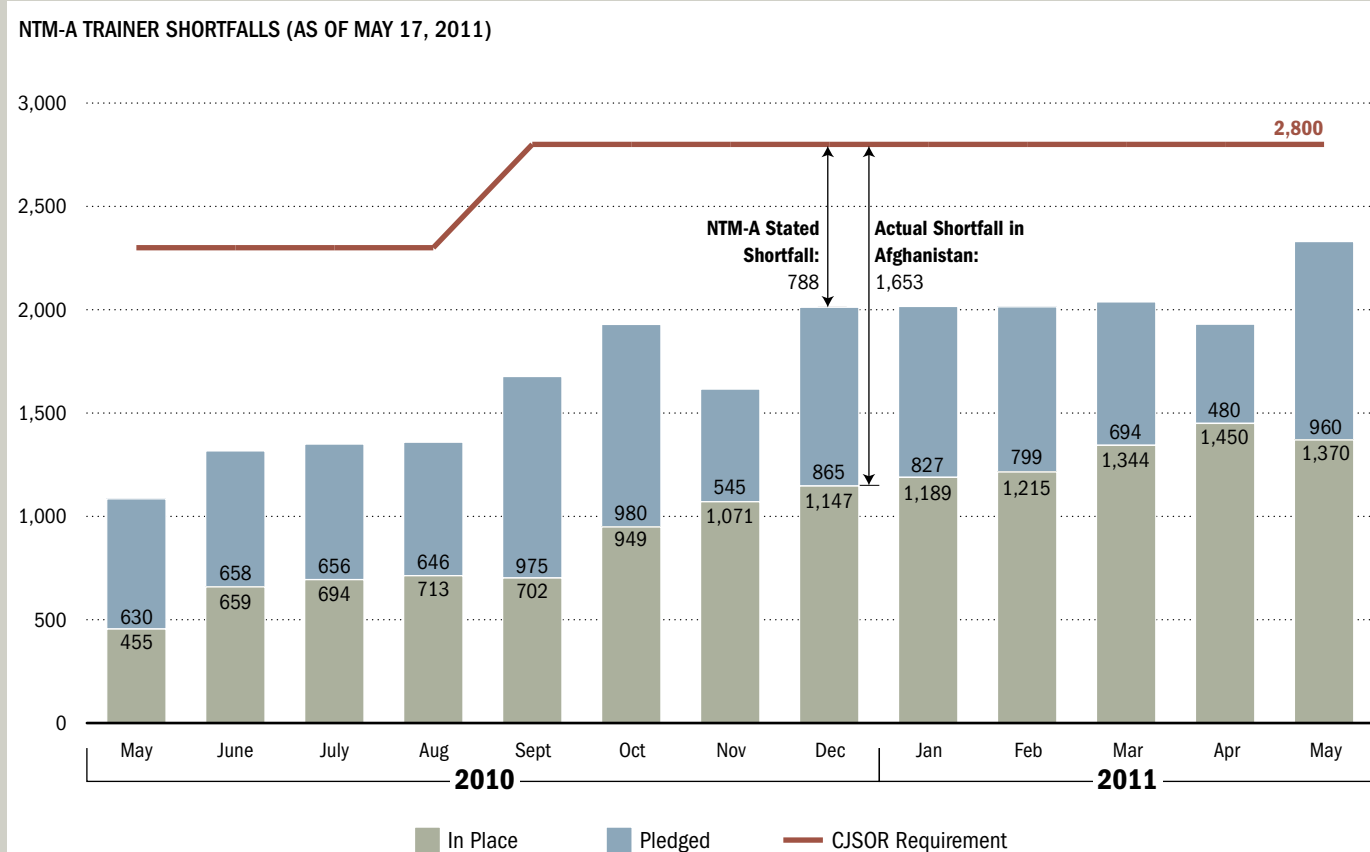
According to U.S. officials interviewed by the GAO, NTM-A was created, in part, to encourage increased NATO contributions to developing the ANDSF.³⁹² Similar to previous years, however, the new NATO mission struggled to meet personnel requirements and contributing countries routinely failed to fulfill their personnel pledges. In February 2010, for example, when NTM-A/CSTC-A became fully operational, only 1,810 of the required 4,083 trainers were in place.³⁹³ Similar shortages remained as time went on. In September 2012, only 1,752 of the required 2,612 trainers had been provided, and in July 2013, 1,941 of the required 2,135 trainers were in place.³⁹⁴ Even in those areas deemed critical priorities, NTM-A struggled to meet personnel requirements. In November 2010, for example, about 36 percent (101 of 281) of instructor positions seen as critical priorities were unfilled or lacked pledges.³⁹⁵ At a time when the ANA was rapidly expanding toward a force strength goal of 171,600, these staffing shortfalls at both training facilities and in the field negatively affected planned ANDSF development.³⁹⁶

Trainer shortfalls were made worse by the inability, or unwillingness, of contributing member countries to fulfill personnel pledges made during NATO force generation conferences, the mechanism used by NATO to staff operations. According to a May 2011 NTM-A update (figure 11 on the next page), NATO's inability to fulfill personnel pledges contributed to staffing levels that were almost always below 50 percent. In May 2011, for example, only 1,370 of the required 2,800 NTM-A trainers were in place, a staffing level of 49 percent and a shortage of 1,430 trainers.³⁹⁷ If all 960 personnel pledged for that month had shown up, the staffing level would have exceeded 80 percent.

Furthermore, reported shortfalls often did not accurately reflect the actual number of personnel in country. For example, NTM-A reported a shortfall of only 788 trainers for December 2010 because it counted pledged personnel. However, the pledged personnel were not in Afghanistan in December 2010. The true number of trainers actively involved in training the ANDSF that month was only 1,147, a shortfall of 1,653 people. The reality was, of the 2,800 personnel required, NTM-A was staffed at only 41 percent.

Shortfalls in NATO training personnel for Afghanistan were not new. According to General John Craddock, Supreme Allied Commander Europe from 2006 to 2009, "NATO nations have never

FIGURE 11



Note: CJSOR stands for NATO's Combined Joint Statement of Requirements. In-place personnel are those currently in Afghanistan assigned to NTM-A. Pledged personnel are NATO trainers assigned to the mission but not yet in Afghanistan.

Source: NTM-A, DCOM-ISC Update, May 17, 2011.

completely filled the agreed requirements for forces needed in Afghanistan” since mission inception.³⁹⁸ Staffing shortages have been attributed to low levels of political support for the Afghan mission among some NATO countries and the difficulty of financing a troop presence abroad during a global economic recession.³⁹⁹ Without a mechanism in place to compel NATO partners to meet their staffing pledges, the train and advise effort suffered.

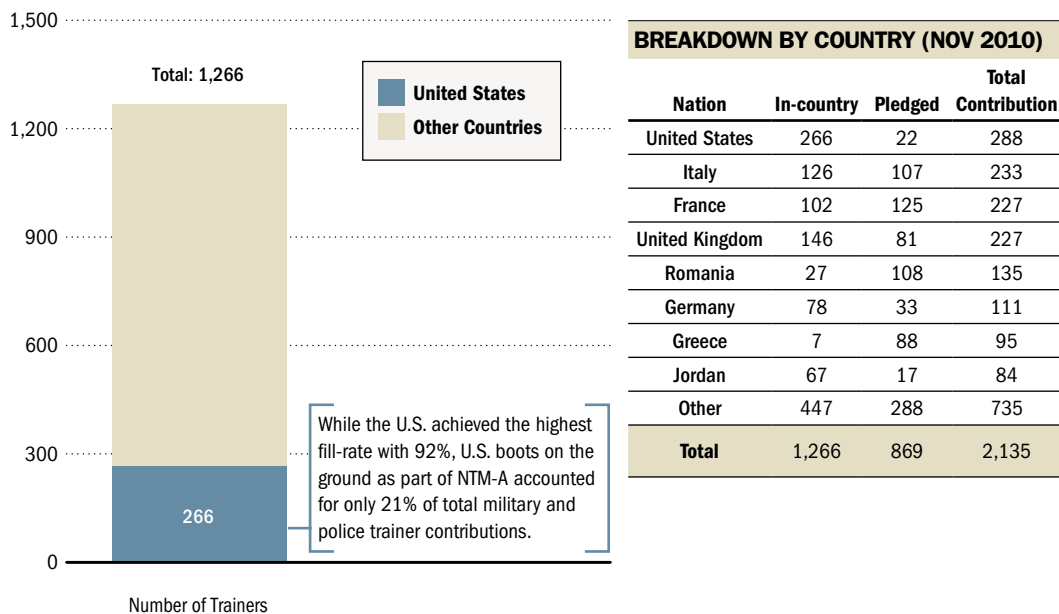
The U.S. Role

While the U.S. military maintained a strong presence in the field and provided mentoring during combat operations, the U.S. contribution to NATO for the NTM-A mission remained low. According to a November 2010 ANDSF progress report, total U.S. contributions of personnel to NTM-A amounted to only 288 of the total 2,135 personnel pledged by all nations, or 13 percent of the effort (figure 12).⁴⁰⁰ While the United States achieved the highest fill-rate of troops, with 266 of 288 troops in country, U.S. deployed personnel assigned to NATO accounted for only 21 percent of military and police trainers in country.

The United States was ultimately unable, or unwilling, to compensate for NATO staffing shortfalls caused by other nations, or find ways to ensure compliance with agreed-upon personnel contributions.

FIGURE 12

U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO NATO TRAINING MISSION-AFGHANISTAN (NOV 2010)



Note: Pledged trainers are additional trainers assigned to NATO requirements but not yet in country. Total is the combination of in-country and pledged personnel.

Source: NTM-A, ANSF Monthly Progress Report, November 15, 2010

National Caveats: A Further Limiting Factor

The overall NTM-A effort was further hindered by the national caveats placed on deployed personnel by contributing nations. National caveats, described by one NATO commander as having “the same practical effect as having fewer forces deployed,” restricted the types of activities advisors could perform while training and advising the ANA and ANP.⁴⁰¹ Caveats that were particularly inhibiting included those that “ban night-time operations, restrict the geographical mobility of national forces, require consultations with national capitals when making tactical decisions, and exclude specific categories of activity.”⁴⁰² Considered one of the greatest threats to operational success and alliance unity, national caveats negatively affected the scope and impact of training activities. By mid-2009, for example, nearly half of all troops under ISAF command had caveats in place that restricted their operational and maneuverability capabilities, as well as their use of force.⁴⁰³

Germany, at times the third-largest troop contributor behind the United States and UK, was known to have some of the most rigid restrictions in Afghanistan. German troops, and thus trainers, were confined to the relatively stable northern areas and were required to go to great lengths to avoid initiating combat operations or engaging with insurgents. As such, German troops were only authorized to fire weapons in self-defense and could not travel on security patrols with Afghan partner units in high-threat environments.⁴⁰⁴

AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

U.S. Support Increased, but Not in Size and Scale for New Force Strength

President Obama's and General McChrystal's assessments of the war in Afghanistan dramatically accelerated the ANA development effort. Force strength numbers increased significantly, at a higher rate, with tighter deadlines. Instead of increasing the force strength to 134,000 by the end of 2011 as scheduled, General McChrystal argued those numbers needed to be reached by October 2010.⁴⁰⁵ Though the dramatic increase in ANA force strength was designed to counter a resurgent Taliban, it would also help make the ANA self-sufficient and, in theory, enable the coalition to move closer to its goal of turning over security responsibility to the ANDSF.

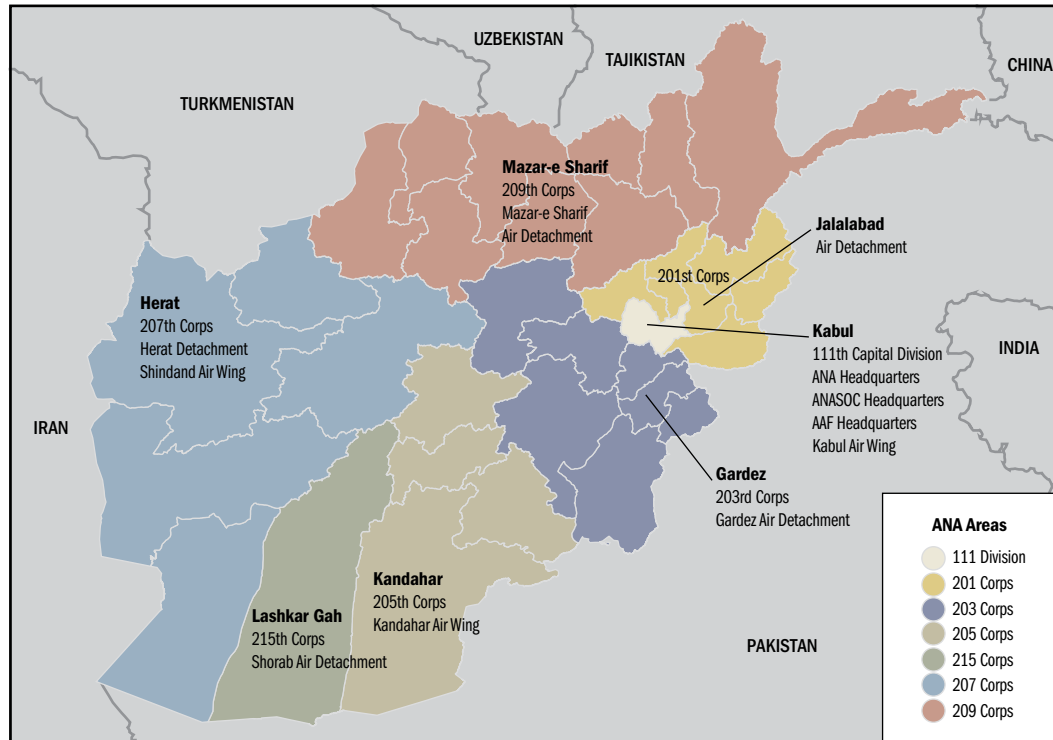
This new strategy suggested there would be a short period of intense activity to weaken the Taliban and improve the ANDSF before the level of effort by the United States and ISAF would begin to decrease, until the transition start date of July 2011.⁴⁰⁶ Similar to the Bush administration, the Obama administration viewed the development of the ANA as a key enabler to dramatically reduce U.S. combat forces.⁴⁰⁷

In order to achieve these goals, the U.S. government surged both military and civilian resources to Afghanistan. This surge became commonly known as the new U.S. COIN strategy, which shifted focus toward stabilizing the local population through significant civilian and military programming. In his March 2009 speech on the new strategy, President Obama voiced high hopes that U.S. trainers would dramatically increase their role, stating, "Every American unit in Afghanistan will be partnered with an Afghan unit, and we will seek additional trainers from our NATO allies to ensure that every Afghan unit has a coalition partner."⁴⁰⁸ Unfortunately, with the expanded training and advising mission, the United States and its NATO partners were never able to fulfill this.

The influx of U.S. and international advisors and increase in resources for ANA development made ANA structures increasingly complex and, some would argue, increasingly reliant on international donors for financing and international troops for enabling support (figure 13). The new approach to ANA development created bureaucratic systems that required the U.S. military and civilian surge personnel to operate them, rather than Afghans who still largely lacked the training and literacy to execute these systems. Despite the surge, the new strategy created a paradox: Although there were dramatic increases in coalition resources for the train, advise, and assist effort, including equipment, trainers, advisors, and funding, there was still significant understaffing for the expanded mission. The ANA was increasing in size at a rate faster than the United States and its coalition partners could keep pace, especially in training and providing the institutional backbone to sustain the force, for example, in logistics, human resources, and oversight.

FIGURE 13

ANA AND AAF FORCE POSTURE (2014)



Note: Located in Kabul, AAF headquarters commands and controls three wings: the Kabul Air Wing, the Kandahar Air Wing, and the Shindand Air Wing. Additionally, AAF headquarters commands and controls eleven detachments, five of which have aircraft assigned. Detachments with assigned aircraft include Mazar-e Sharif, Jalalabad, Shorab, Gardez, and Herat.

Source: DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, December 2016, pp. 52–53; The Long War Journal, "Afghan National Security Forces Order of Battle," <http://www.longwarjournal.org/multimedia/ANSF%2000Bpage3-ANSF.pdf>.

Trainers and Advisors

Increasing the size of the ANA required more U.S. and international trainers. Compared to previous years, the training mission was better staffed and included new programs, such as the Ministry of Defense Advisors (MODA), an initiative led by DOD to professionalize ministerial-level governing and managerial capabilities.⁴⁰⁹ Before MODA, efforts to build capacity in the Afghan security forces had focused almost entirely on tactical proficiency.⁴¹⁰ MODA placed DOD civilians in the Afghan MOD in order to provide expertise in ministerial functions, such as finance, logistics, personnel, communications, and intelligence.⁴¹¹

An independent evaluation by USIP in February 2012 highlighted the program's strengths and weaknesses.⁴¹² Among the noted weaknesses was the tension MODA created between DOD civilian and military personnel which resulted from MODA advisors focusing on increasing governing capacity while military personnel were largely focused on current military operations and fighting capabilities.⁴¹³ In addition, advisors found a discrepancy between their pre-deployment training and

the actual nature of their jobs in Afghanistan.⁴¹⁴ Despite this, USIP noted that the vetting of potential MOD advisors and the nature of their training curriculum were considerably more rigorous than the pre-deployment training for other advisors.⁴¹⁵ Other observers noted that, despite the advisors' expertise, they were not always slotted into MOD jobs that suited their skill sets.⁴¹⁶ Nevertheless, the MODA program was a significant step toward institutionalizing U.S. efforts focused on improving ministerial capabilities.

During this time, the United States also turned to the newly created Security Force Assistance Teams (SFAT), composed of carefully selected U.S. military officers who were assigned to ETTs that emphasized COIN training and operations with their partnered ANA units.⁴¹⁷

Insider Attacks Led to Guardian Angel Program and Reduced Advisor Numbers

U.S. and NATO advisor numbers were, in part, affected by an increase in the number of insider attacks after 2011.⁴¹⁸ Forty-four insider attacks were reported to have occurred in 2012, a dramatic increase from the five attacks in 2010 and 16 attacks in 2011.⁴¹⁹ DOD cited a number of reasons why insider attacks occurred, including insurgent infiltration and influence, cultural conflicts, personal grievances, social pressure, and psychological distress.⁴²⁰ Further, a series of actions by U.S. and international service members in 2012 likely contributed to the spike in insider attacks that year.⁴²¹ These events included the burning of Korans outside of Bagram Air Base, the killing of Afghan civilians in Kandahar by a U.S. Army sergeant, and the circulation of photographs of U.S. military personnel defiling bodies of deceased Taliban fighters.⁴²²

In response to this surge of insider attacks, the United States and NATO temporarily reduced the number of advisors on the ground and suspended some partnered operations in Afghanistan.⁴²³ Following this temporary suspension, ISAF and the Afghan government began implementing a series of countermeasures to mitigate the risk of insider attacks, with specific attention falling on the ANDSF recruit vetting process.⁴²⁴ In written testimony provided to the Senate Armed Services Committee in November 2012, General Joseph Dunford described enhanced recruitment and supervisory requirements, including the revalidation of 17,000



A guardian angel provides support during a security shura in Uruzgan Province. (U.S. Army photo by Luke Talbot)

ALP members. Additional countermeasures included “strengthening vetting and screening processes for new recruits and those returning from leave; increasing the number and training for [ANDSF] counterintelligence agents; and enhancing force protection for ISAF troops operating in small units or in remote areas.”⁴²⁵

A “guardian angel” program was also implemented to ensure the protection of ISAF soldiers while in certain locations and during specific tasks and activities.⁴²⁶ The guardian angel program reduced the number of military advisors directly supporting ANDSF development by transitioning them to a security over-watch role.

Despite the influx of additional resources and new programs, staffing shortfalls persisted for SFATs. Though NATO determined that 446 SFATs were required to fulfill the SFA training model, by December 2012, 13 percent of SFATs, or 60 teams, remained unfilled, with no plans to fill them.⁴²⁷ Shortages of SFATs forced the coalition to prioritize some ANA units over others for training. In general, SFATs went to ANA units that needed more operational or enabling support. Thus, ANA units in the north and west, where the security situation was relatively stable, often lacked a coalition partner.⁴²⁸

Funding

In 2009, U.S. funding to ANA development doubled, increasing from \$2.75 billion in FY 2008 to \$5.8 billion in FY 2009. Inputs reached a high of \$11 billion in FY 2011.⁴²⁹ From FY 2011 to the end of 2014, financial support to the ANA gradually declined as U.S. surge forces began to draw down.

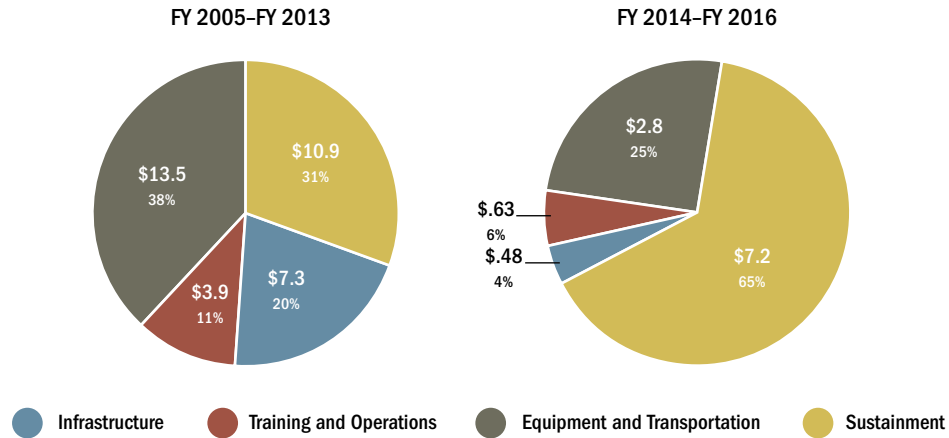
In February 2009, NATO agreed to expand its ANA Trust Fund to include funds for sustainment costs. Prior to this, the ANA Trust Fund could only be used for ANA development efforts.⁴³⁰ In May 2011, NTM-A conducted a program update to project ASFF costs from FY 2013 to FY 2017. The resulting brief outlined key assumptions, including that by December 2014, the insurgency would be sufficiently contained so that ANDSF operational requirements could begin to slow, which in turn would reduce costs and allow for a rebalancing of the police-to-army ratio. These assumptions were based on improved security and the increasing need for civil policing at the expense of a large counterinsurgency army. These assumptions failed to factor in the increasing violence and the resiliency of the Taliban-led insurgency.

Though financial support increased dramatically, the larger plan was to shift finances away from ANA development and toward ANA sustainment, which in theory would be less costly. Under the assumption that the ANA was close to full combat readiness, the coalition effort could switch to bolstering sustainment functions, for example, human resources and logistics. Consequently, DOD's FY 2013 appropriated ASFF funding decreased by almost half from the FY 2012 appropriation.⁴³¹ In 2014, requested sustainment funds for ASFF increased by 8 percent compared to 2013, while requested training funds decreased by 17 percent.⁴³² These requests signaled the shift in emphasis as the building and equipping phase drew to a close and as the focus turned toward sustaining the ANDSF (figure 14 on the next page).

Additionally, the coalition hoped to increasingly draw the funds for the ANA budget from the Afghan government, not the international community. For the first time, new language in the April 2009 DOD report to Congress suggested that the long-term ANA strategy would be "increasingly funded from Government of

FIGURE 14

ASFF SUSTAINMENT FUNDING INCREASES (\$ BILLIONS)



Source: DOD, FY 2005 Supplemental Request for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and Operation Unified Assistance, February 2005, p. 79; DOD, FY 2006 Supplemental Request for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), February 2006, pp. 62-63; DOD, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense Budget Military Personnel Programs (M-1) and Operation and Maintenance Programs (O-1) Fiscal Year 2009, February 2008, p. 26; DOD, Afghanistan Security Forces Fund: FY 2009 Overseas Contingency Operations Supplemental Budget Request, March 2009, p. 1; DOD, Budget Amendment to FY 2010 Supplemental Request Operation Unified Response, March 2010, p. 23; DOD, (Comptroller), Department of Defense Budget: Military Personnel Programs (M-1), Operation and Maintenance Programs (O-1), Revolving and Management Funds (RF-1) Fiscal Year 2011, February 2010, p. 13; DOD, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense Budget: Operation and Maintenance Programs (O-1), Revolving and Management Funds (RF-1) Fiscal Year 2013, February 2012, p. 10; DOD, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2014: Justification for FY 2014 Overseas Contingency Operations Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF), May 2013, p. 2; DOD, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense Budget, Budget Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2014 President's Budget Request for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO): Operation and Maintenance Programs (O-1), Revolving and Management Funds (RF-1), May 2013, p. 10; DOD, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense Budget, Budget Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2017 President's Budget Request for Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO): Operation and Maintenance Programs (O-1), November 2016, p. 10.

the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan revenue” and would “set the conditions for the eventual withdrawal of international forces.”⁴³³

Equipment

One of the major weaknesses of the donations-based equipment procurement system was the extensive coordination process required to obtain proper equipment, which often created a lag in acquisition. CSTC-A considered several possible programs and procurement options for upgrading the ANA's mechanized and armor capabilities, from the donated Soviet-bloc equipment to more modern Western equipment aimed at bolstering the ANA's COIN capabilities.⁴³⁴ Yet, the new effort to standardize equipment lagged due to the dramatic increase in ANA force strength and challenges with U.S. acquisition and contracting. The acceleration of ANA numbers created delays in the standardization of weapons as U.S. foreign military sales lagged compared to ANA fielding schedules.⁴³⁵ While the transition to U.S.-model equipment ensured Afghan security forces were reliant on the United States for military support and partnership in the long-term, the underdeveloped Afghan economy ensured that weapons modernization efforts also resulted in long-term financial dependence on the United States.



An ANA armored security vehicle from 2nd Company, 4th Mobile Strike Force, participates in an exercise at the ANA Armor Branch School in Kabul. (Photo by Alexandre Cadieux)

The process of equipping a growing national army also underscored the challenges of complex supply and logistics requirements in a reconstruction effort. For example, as ANA troop numbers increased, equipment funding decreased. CSTC-A noted that the decrease was due to corrections in accounting and equipment costs after internal auditing.⁴³⁶ Furthermore, DOD equipment reporting during this era simply noted inputs and outputs, without any assessment of the new equipment's effects on the readiness or battlefield performance of the ANA.⁴³⁷

Retention and Attrition

The years 2008 to 2014 marked the most dramatic increase in ANA force strength since the ANA's inception in 2002. In 2008, according to DOD reporting, force strength hovered just under 80,000. By mid-2013, ANA numbers had more than doubled, topping 185,000, with an end goal of 195,000.⁴³⁸ ISAF assessed that recruitment efforts would suffice to meet this new, higher target.⁴³⁹

Though force strength numbers increased, persistently high attrition and the difficulty of recruiting educated Afghans for more sophisticated enabler unit positions (such as aviation and intelligence) undermined the growth and sustainability of the ANA. From 2004 to 2014, monthly attrition rates hovered between 2–3 percent, despite a goal of only 1.4 percent.⁴⁴⁰ With this rate, one-quarter to one-third of the army was depleted every year. Attrition most severely impacted the NCO corps and more junior enlisted soldiers, undermining efforts to develop a trained and experienced cadre of NCOs.⁴⁴¹ At times, the focus shifted toward backfilling soldiers from fielded units rather than developing more advanced warrior skills.⁴⁴² Furthermore, to keep up the pace of combat

operations, specialist soldiers and educated recruits were frequently assigned to units that could not use their expertise.⁴⁴³

Various programs and methods were employed to try to stem attrition. For example, soldiers were sometimes allowed to take leave to support the harvest season, and in 2012, a leave policy was formalized to include 20 days of annual leave for all new recruits.⁴⁴⁴ Still, attrition remained high. Experts noted that policy changes, while welcomed, did not address the main causes of attrition. Despite commonly held beliefs that attrition was due to high operational requirements, an increasingly kinetic environment, or poor living standards, high attrition was most strongly correlated to poor or corrupt leadership, an element of the ANA in which the United States and its coalition partners were reluctant to become involved.⁴⁴⁵

Retention efforts were not only undermined by high attrition, they were hampered by other factors, as well. There were increasing concerns over the vetting of new recruits after a spike in insider attacks, which served as a damper on the working relationship between Afghans and members of the international community.⁴⁴⁶ In addition, efforts to ethnically balance the ANA continued to suffer; the number of Pashtuns in officer and soldier ranks stagnated overall.⁴⁴⁷ Because of these and other factors, force strength numbers would not reach their goals for the rest of this time period and, in fact, began decreasing between 2012 and 2014.⁴⁴⁸

Growing Reliance on Combat Enablers Created Capacity Substitution Dilemma

To streamline command and control of the battlefield, ISAF activated its Joint Command in October of 2009.⁴⁴⁹ After achieving full operational capability in November 2009, the IJC commander oversaw all military operations, including exercising command authority over Regional Commands and the ETTs of TF Phoenix.⁴⁵⁰ From this point forward, regional commanders were responsible for both coalition military operations and the ANA field training missions. Pressure to improve local security through mandated Afghan-led missions with developing ANA forces created an environment ripe for **capacity substitution** by coalition military leaders and advisors.⁴⁵¹

Capacity substitution occurs when U.S. and coalition advisors fill critical gaps in Afghan capability to achieve mission objectives.

Several factors contributed to the ANA's increased dependence on coalition forces during this transition period. ISAF tactical directives mandating Afghan-ISAF partnered operations resulted in the Afghan army units' reliance on combat enablers—such as close air support, casualty evacuation and intelligence—to conduct offensive operations. The implementation of operational capabilities and organizational doctrine, preferred by the U.S.-led coalition, was ill-suited to the competencies of the ANA and largely stemmed from the tendency to develop the ANDSF in the likeness of U.S. force structure and doctrine.



U.S. Army soldiers and Afghan National Army troops exit to a waiting UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from 101st Combat Aviation Brigade following a partnered force protection patrol in Laghman Province. (U.S. Army photo by Jarrod Morris)

In 2010, for example, U.S. Army Major David Park wrote, “Like it or not, [ANA] doctrine is a carbon copy of U.S. doctrine.... The ANA is a highly centralized, top-down, leader-centric, consensus-seeking organization, mirroring the culture from which it originates.”⁴⁵² While U.S. mentors have often spoken of the need to create an independent and self-sufficient ANDSF, the long-term trend of structuring and organizing the ANDSF as a mirror image of the U.S. military contributed to Afghans’ increased dependence on U.S. and NATO enabling capabilities over time.⁴⁵³

A U.S. advisor to the Afghan Air Force confirmed this trend, noting that U.S. military planners designed the AAF to resemble the USAF. The advisor explained that force development planning was often conducted with little regard for what the Afghans desired or were capable of.⁴⁵⁴ Training Afghan forces on and conducting offensive operations with close air support—despite an under-developed AAF and a dearth of trained pilots—was an example of this.

Unsurprisingly, the integration of close air support largely contributed to an environment where many Afghan officers became “addicted to close air support” over time, viewing it as essential to success on the ground and calling for it when operations were not running as planned.⁴⁵⁵ Moreover, because many Afghan army units were “trained and mentored to rely on close air support when fighting,” the delayed development of the AAF furthered Afghan dependence on and increased calls for U.S. air support past 2013.⁴⁵⁶ According to Afghan army expert Antonio Giustozzi, “The delayed development of the Afghan Air Force ... has had a particularly strong impact on Afghan army combat units trained and mentored to rely on coalition close air support when fighting.”⁴⁵⁷ Yet, due to a lack

of ammunition and trained crews, the Afghan Mi-35 combat helicopters were not operational until the summer of 2013, when the first combat mission was flown.⁴⁵⁸

The tendency to train and assist the ANDSF with capabilities largely provided by the U.S. led-coalition extended beyond the provision of close air support. The ANA became accustomed to other combat enablers, such as medical evacuations, intelligence gathering, and reconnaissance capabilities, that were largely underdeveloped or nonexistent within the ANA at the time.⁴⁵⁹ In April 2010, for example, Defense Minister Wardak told NATO assembly members that the ANA faced shortcomings in air transport, mobility, reconnaissance, and firepower.⁴⁶⁰ This view was largely shared by other ANA officers, who viewed the ANA as dependent on foreign support because of its own lack of heavy equipment, close air support, and intelligence.⁴⁶¹

Capability Ratings Skewed Based on Partnered Operations

The most important security development in Afghanistan during this time period was the transition of combat operations to an Afghan lead. By the end of 2014, all combat operations were intended to be Afghan-led, with U.S. and ISAF support provided via trainers and with minimal enabling units. However, this partnering was supported by a battlefield assessment methodology that masked weaknesses in the ANA.

In practice, “Afghan-led” did not manifest as hoped. To increase security in preparation for ISAF withdrawal, U.S. and international trainers were encouraged to stabilize security conditions, even if that meant assuming a larger combat role to ensure Afghan partner units succeeded. U.S. military leadership remained risk averse and saw potential tactical battlefield losses by the Afghans as a failure and not as a means to grow and learn lessons. To demonstrate the ANA was increasingly capable of taking over security, trainers were encouraged to bolster ANA assessments to produce higher numbers of capable units.⁴⁶²

To accomplish this, in part, the United States and coalition partners changed the methodology for assessing the force readiness of the ANA several times. The new assessment methodologies were arguably more effective for measuring ANA readiness based on peacetime standards, but the changes interrupted longitudinal measurement, heightened the risk of confirmation bias, and still failed to assess or forecast battlefield performance.⁴⁶³

DOD assessment methodologies were vulnerable to confirmation bias. Unlike past training validation methods, which required an outside unit to validate, the new system required “self-assessment,” in which trainers validated their own training of ANA units.⁴⁶⁴ Such a validation technique suggested that the ratings

were measurements of training quality and quantity, not battlefield readiness or performance.

To highlight ANA battlefield performance, DOD reporting emphasized an increase in the number of operations undertaken by the ANA. For example, by early 2013, the ANA led 87 and 86 percent of all conventional and special operations, respectively, while ISAF unilaterally led only six and five percent of conventional and special operations, respectively.⁴⁶⁵ This reporting did not go into detail regarding the types of operations or levels of difficulty or success, rendering such aggregate numbers highly problematic as forecasting or assessment tools.

The focus on measurable outputs, such as recruiting, force strength, and the number of operations conducted, continued to overshadow efforts to acknowledge the impact of corruption and other predatory behaviors in the MOD and ANA. By 2013, DOD reporting described corruption in the Afghan government as a “major threat” to the Afghan political establishment.⁴⁶⁶ Yet, increases in resources, particularly financial resources from the United States and ISAF, without effective oversight mechanisms both locally and nationally created opportunities for corruption to increase within the MOD and ANA. Corrupt behavior was shown to affect force strength numbers via high attrition rates, and to further perpetuate criminal behaviors, such as pay-for-play schemes; the theft of fuel, supplies, and commodities; and narcotics collusion.⁴⁶⁷ In the end, the new assessment system not only incorrectly measured ANA capabilities, it masked fundamental weaknesses in the ANA institutional framework that the United States and coalition ignored or minimized.

Special Forces Becoming a Formidable Force

By 2011, the size and scope of the Afghan Special Forces necessitated the establishment of the ANA Special Operations Command Headquarters (ANASOC), which occurred on April 7, 2011.⁴⁶⁸ ANASOC was designed to include two brigades of commandos and one brigade of ANA Special Forces (ANASF). The ANASF partnered with U.S. Special Forces and specialized in foreign internal defense operations and COIN.⁴⁶⁹ ANASOC established its School of Excellence for training new commando and ANASF recruits at Camp Morehead, outside Kabul.

The new ANASOC was better supported by the coalition and benefited from improved organization and structure. Though the ANASOC relied on the coalition significantly for sustainment, maneuver, and higher-level communications, it was able to conduct operational direction and control of fielded forces by the end of 2011, with assistance in intelligence support from IJC.⁴⁷⁰ The School of Excellence trained 1,186 new commandos and 243 new



An Afghan commando provides security during a patrol training exercise in Kabul Province. (U.S. Army photo by Ryan DeBooy)

special forces between April and September of 2011, with the goal of completing the staffing and development of the ANASOC by the end of 2014.⁴⁷¹

DOD reported major gains in both ANASOC training and force strength in April 2012.⁴⁷² The ANASOC dramatically increased recruiting and training, reaching well over 8,000 commandos and special forces combined.⁴⁷³ The speed at which the ANASOC filled its staffing requirements suggested that the both the commandos and the special forces would reach their staffing goals before the 2014 deadline. Additionally, the ANASOC established an additional general support kandak and forward support companies, including intelligence detachments, for each special operations kandak. Such a structure enabled tactical and operational-level logistical support to the ANASOC forces. Furthermore, adding support companies to each of the nine ANASOC battalions better sustained operational units across multiple provinces.⁴⁷⁴ Thus, in contrast to the conventional forces, the development and deployment of enabling units became an immediate priority upon the establishment of the ANASOC. Intelligence, logistics, and eventually air capabilities would become the focus of ANASOC development until the anticipated development deadline in 2014.

At the end of 2012, over 12,525 commandos and 955 special forces had graduated from the School of Excellence.⁴⁷⁵ The commandos had already reached their force strength goals, and special forces' recruiting and retention numbers remained high enough to achieve their force strength goal early, by the end of 2013. By that time, the School of Excellence had become primarily Afghan-led.⁴⁷⁶ The forces within ANASOC increasingly operated independently.

With a new focus on **Village Stability Operations (VSO)**, the Afghan special forces' community conducted a total of 2,384 operations in the second half of 2012, a notable increase from the 1,884 Afghan-led operations conducted during the previous six months.⁴⁷⁷ Of these, 74 percent were Afghan-led.⁴⁷⁸

By the end of 2013, the ANASOC structure and staffing were complete. With a division headquarters and two brigade headquarters, the ANASOC had nine special operations kandaks, including both special forces and commandos. These forces were supported by a military intelligence kandak, a garrison support unit, a general support kandak, the School of Excellence, and the Special Mission Wing.⁴⁷⁹ While the special forces focused on collecting intelligence and acting as quick reaction forces, the commandos largely conducted independent missions. Of note, both forces were frequently paired with other ANDSF elements and conducted joint operations.⁴⁸⁰

The fledgling ANASOC shared some of the challenges of the conventional forces, especially in establishing enabler capabilities such as logistics, command and control, and intelligence. Additionally, the high operational tempo of the ANASOC forces required a high level of ISAF air transport and helicopter lift. Despite these challenges, the ANASOC forces were highly regarded by the U.S. Army as the most capable within the ANDSF. Though the ANASOC forces required ISAF support for some time, by the end of 2013, 99 percent of their operations were self-led.⁴⁸¹

One of the most notable reasons for the ANASOC's relative success compared to other elements of the ANDSF was its low attrition. In 2014, monthly attrition stood at 1.2 percent, just below the 1.4 percent goal.⁴⁸² Though shortages in equipment remained (84 percent of the equipment tashkil, or standard equipment list, was filled by the end of 2014), the ANASOC was able to increase in size and reach without significant impacts from attrition or shortages of recruits.⁴⁸³ As ANASOC forces continued to increase their capabilities and presence throughout Afghanistan, their importance to the overall mission in Afghanistan grew. ANASOC continued to integrate its capabilities with other ANDSF units. The special forces and commandos often paired with the special units in the police, such as the General Command of Police Special Units, with whom they conducted over 900 independent operations in 2014.⁴⁸⁴

Afghan Air Force Combat Capabilities Slow to Get Off the Ground

By 2009, documentation on the development of the Afghan Air Corps was a fixture of DOD's reports to Congress.⁴⁸⁵ Training expanded outside Afghanistan as the first group of Afghan pilot candidates traveled to the United States for English language training and undergraduate pilot training.⁴⁸⁶ Amid calls to expand the size of the AAC, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board

Village Stability Operations (VSO) was a DOD program implemented by U.S. Special Operations Forces from 2010 through 2014 that attempted to secure and connect strategically located villages to the Afghan government, while also complementing the stabilization efforts of conventional forces.

(JCMB) approved an increase to the air corps' capabilities.⁴⁸⁷ By June 2009, the United States had established a June 2016 deadline as the initial operational capability date for the AAC, with a goal of 12 Mi-17s and four C-27 cargo planes by the end of 2009.⁴⁸⁸ The AAC would reach the Mi-17 goal, but not the C-27 one.⁴⁸⁹ By the end of 2009, the number of passengers and kilograms of cargo the AAC could transport had increased substantially.⁴⁹⁰

Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board

The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board was a strategic coordination platform through which the Afghan government and the international community worked to implement the Afghanistan Compact, which was established at the London Conference and supported by UN Security Council Resolution 1659. The board had 28 members, including seven from the Afghan government (nominated by the Afghan president) and 21 from the international community. The board provided high-level oversight of the progress of the Afghanistan Compact, including addressing issues of coordination, implementation, financing benchmarks, and timelines.⁴⁹¹ Within its broad mandate, the JCMB also provided input to and approval of ANA force-strength numbers.⁴⁹²

In early 2010, U.S. Air Forces Central Command finalized an ANDSF Airpower Requirements Review. The review established the “recommended roles, missions, and force structure for the ANAAC,” emphasizing sufficient sustainability, and long-term affordability.⁴⁹³ Additionally, the Afghan Minister of Defense issued Decree 467, which renamed the AAC as the Afghan Air Force (AAF).⁴⁹⁴ According to this decree, the AAF would realign from a corps in the ANA to a “complementary organization” much like the ANASOC under the Chief of the General Staff.⁴⁹⁵ The AAF was organized into a headquarters, three air wings, four detachments, and eight air units, with a training support infrastructure.⁴⁹⁶

With this change in the air force's structure, DOD was optimistic about continued growth and improvement.⁴⁹⁷ In October 2009, the AAF finally acquired two of the four previously ordered C-27s, a year after originally scheduled.⁴⁹⁸ Growth of the AAF fostered demand for further increases: the AAF set a goal of 20 C-27s by 2012.⁴⁹⁹ These C-27s, along with the Mi-17s, began to diversify the AAF fleet as both Russian and American technologies became staples of the AAF's capabilities.

In 2010, the United States articulated its goal for the AAF, stating, “The long-term strategy for the development of the AAF is the creation of a COIN-capable air force by 2016.”⁵⁰⁰ To help reach this goal, the AAF training center in Kabul doubled in capacity. DOD described the AAF as having “several operational success stories,” such as conducting humanitarian and disaster relief operations, assisting with elections, providing aerial support against Taliban attacks on Kabul, and providing enabling support for commandos.⁵⁰¹



ANAAC troops stand before a C-27 cargo transport plane on March 24, 2010, at the celebration of the first operational flight of the C-27 training program. (Photo by David Quillen)

Recruitment was a primary concern for the AAF, and it remained difficult because aviation required literacy and English-language proficiency.⁵⁰² An Aviator Incentive Pay Program was established to attract educated recruits and reduce attrition. Further, NATC-A established “Thunder Lab” at Kabul Air Base, where pilot candidates were immersed in English before going on to flight school.

By 2011, more than 30 coalition partners were participating in the AAF train and advise mission.⁵⁰³ To accommodate the range of technologies in use, the trainers were drawn largely from Western and former Soviet-bloc countries. For example, USAF Colonel Michael Outlaw, a special operations C-130 pilot, commanded the USAF’s air advisory group, a part of NATC-A. He was tasked with training Afghan airmen in Mi-17 operations, as well as in ground support specialties ranging from airfield firefighting and medical support to communications and managing dining facilities.⁵⁰⁴

For older Afghan pilots, the common language was Russian, which few U.S. trainers knew. This underscored the importance of former Soviet-bloc nations’ contributions to the training effort. In addition, the impact of the former Soviet system and technologies extended beyond training and communication: Afghans hesitated to adopt the Western-based training system and would default to using the more familiar Soviet style.⁵⁰⁵ A Lithuanian commander involved in the training saw firsthand, however, “why a Western/U.S.-style training and command-and-control system that emphasized institutionalized procedures and also allowed for individual pilot and aircrew initiative and decision-making was better than the Soviet system.”⁵⁰⁶

At this time, the United States sought to focus on building the instructor corps to bolster the AAF's sustainability. As with the recruitment of pilots, education levels, English language proficiency, and levels of training impeded the expansion of the instructor corps.⁵⁰⁷ The importance of the English language became increasingly relevant in the instructor corps: English is the "language of flying" and literacy is required. Since the AAF originated as a part of the larger ANA, literate candidates had often been diverted away from the AAF into the special forces, whose mission appeared more critical to the COIN strategy. A further issue emerged as young, literate pilots with English language skills were "remarkably" more competent than older pilots, causing significant generational friction in the air corps.⁵⁰⁸ Afghan air corps leadership, respecting Afghan cultural norms, passed over younger pilots for air time, preferring to give older pilots flying assignments.

The year 2011 was known as a "promising period" for the AAF. In the first half of the year, the first Afghan student pilots flew Mi-17s in Shindand; the first two Afghan Mi-17 aircraft commanders graduated; the first Afghan Mi-17 instructor pilot flew with a student pilot; the first all-Afghan Mi-17 helicopter movement of the president of Afghanistan took place; U.S.-trained Afghan helicopter pilots completed initial Mi-17 copilot certificates in Kabul; and the first Afghan Mi-17 instructor pilot in the Kandahar Air Wing passed flight check.⁵⁰⁹ In the fall of 2011, five Afghan fixed-wing pilots completed the entire training course from pre-flight to earning their pilot wings and eleven accomplished the same feat as newly minted rotary wing pilots.⁵¹⁰

Despite these milestones, DOD noted the still-fledgling nature of the AAF, whose entire force was rated at CM4, or established but not operational.⁵¹¹ Only 59 of 145 planned aircraft had been delivered, and the training mission lacked 65 promised trainers.⁵¹² Further, on April 27, 2011, an insider attack killed eight USAF members, which led to increased force protection measures and delayed U.S. training efforts. At higher levels, U.S. and Afghan leaders differed on what constituted a mission in legitimate need of air support. Some Afghans preferred to use aircraft for personal, political, tribal, and other missions, while the United States preferred the AAF's focus remain on COIN operations.⁵¹³

Equipment acquisition remained a challenge for the AAF. The original air campaign plan called for 20 C-27s. The first two aircraft arrived in late 2009; by early 2011, only 10 of the C-27s were in place. By the end of 2012, the program was discontinued, with only 16 C-27s provided.⁵¹⁴ Cancellation of the remaining C-27s was largely due to emphasis on operational support missions over training and an "unacceptably low" mission capable rate for the C-27.⁵¹⁵ Only two Afghan pilots ever became certified to fly the C-27 under USAF supervision.⁵¹⁶

By June 2012, the AAF was composed of more than 5,800 personnel and 97 aircraft. This included the G-222 (C-27A variant) fixed-wing aircraft, the Mi-17, Mi-35, MD-530F helicopters, and 18 training aircraft (Cessna 182 and 208), as well as an initial set of A-29 Super Tucano turboprops that were in development.⁵¹⁷ The goal remained to have 8,000 personnel and 145 aircraft by 2016.⁵¹⁸ In terms of training, the short-term goal of the United States was to reach a point where U.S. mentors were no longer needed. As Colonel Needham, the commander of the 738th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron, said, “We would like to work ourselves out of the job.”⁵¹⁹

G-222 Program Terminated

During a November 2013 visit to Afghanistan, Special Inspector General John Sopko noticed G-222 aircraft—twin-propeller military transport aircraft built in Italy—abandoned at Kabul International Airport by DOD. Shortly thereafter, SIGAR’s Office of Special Projects initiated a review of the \$486 million program—intended to provide 20 G-222s to the Afghan Air Force—which had been terminated in March 2013 after sustained and serious problems with performance, maintenance, and spare parts.

In January 2013, a DOD IG report indicated that the G-222 program office did not properly manage the effort to obtain the spare parts needed to keep the aircraft flight-worthy. The DOD IG also pointed out that an additional \$200 million of ASFF might have to be spent on spare parts for the aircraft to be operational, and that the G-222s had only flown 234 of the 4,500 required hours from January through September 2012.

In March 2013, the G-222 program was effectively ended with an announcement that the AAF would use a different aircraft to meet its long-term, medium airlift requirement. Sixteen of the planes were grounded at the Kabul airport, while another four were transported to Ramstein Air Base in Germany. SIGAR alerted DOD that the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) had scrapped the 16 aircraft sitting idle at the Kabul airport.

An Afghan construction company paid approximately six cents per pound for the scrapped planes, for a total of \$32,000. This was a minuscule fraction of the funds expended on the program, and in an inquiry letter sent to the USAF, SIGAR expressed concern that the officials



Special Inspector General John Sopko inspects the abandoned G-222 Fleet at Kabul International Airport in November 2013. (SIGAR photo)

responsible for planning and executing the scrapping of the planes may not have considered other alternatives to save taxpayer dollars. DLA has yet to make a final decision regarding the fate of the remaining four G-222s in Germany. In another inquiry letter, SIGAR requested that DOD provide sufficient advance notice of any change in the status of the four remaining G-222s to supplement SIGAR’s ongoing review of the fleet. This matter continues to be the focus of criminal and civil investigations by SIGAR.

In 2012, the DOD IG published a report highlighting systemic, training, equipping, fielding, and other issues within the AAF, as follows:

1. **Systemic issues:** NATC-A had difficulty achieving a vision for the roles, missions, and capabilities of the AAF. There remained a need for an enhanced ability to exercise command and control of air resources, NATC-A personnel deficits, and institutional incorporation of NATC-A into NTM-A/CSTC-A.⁵²⁰
2. **Training issues:** Training, guidance, and oversight of air advisors assigned to the 438th Air Expeditionary Wing was inadequate for the effectiveness of air advisor flying duties; AAF air wings lacked qualified maintenance personnel to sustain aircrafts; proficiency of English-language instructors was inadequate to effectually teach AAF personnel: 85 percent were still illiterate.⁵²¹
3. **Equipping issues:** G-222 dual-engine aircraft were not proper cargo aircraft to support the development of an independent AAF; units within the AAF were not issued sufficient equipment, as authorized by MOD; aircraft manuals were not available in Dari or Pashtu.⁵²²
4. **Fielding issues:** recruiting personnel accepted individuals with deficient literacy, and education; AAF personnel compensation was too low to guarantee retention of those who finished technical and language training.⁵²³
5. **Other issues:** USAF pilots assigned to the 438th Air Expeditionary Wing were concerned about the continued safe operation of the G-222. In March 2012, this claim was investigated.⁵²⁴ The investigation found that the G-222 was not safe to fly under existing circumstances, but there also existed the potential to reduce the risk to a satisfactory level.⁵²⁵ Perhaps due in part to procurement challenges, DOD reporting pushed the AAF initial operational capability deadline to 2017 (previously 2016), with the caution that capabilities such as airlift, close air support, and medical evacuation might remain “limited capacity.”⁵²⁶

Additional DOD reporting to Congress recognized corruption as a significant issues in the AAF and claimed that criminal patronage networks had infiltrated the AAF. Reports further highlighted areas in need of continued development, mirroring areas the ANA also needed to develop, such as planning, budgeting, supply, quality assurance, contracting, distribution, material accountability, and performance measures.⁵²⁷ DOD reporting attributed the lag in AAF development to the lack of technical expertise among Afghans, as well as deficits in numbers of training personnel.⁵²⁸

The United States and NATO began playing catch-up with supplying training personnel, resulting in improvements in the “aircraft build” line of operation.⁵²⁹ At this time, AAF infrastructure was only 51 percent complete and all AAF units were still rated at CM4.⁵³⁰ The DOD IG report described the development of the AAF as being in a “nascent stage,” despite initial development having started seven years prior. The report indicated that “U.S. and Coalition forces have

only recently shifted their focus from generating the force to developing quality and professionalism.”⁵³¹ In addition, the emphasis of AAF development shifted toward training, equipping, and fielding enabling organizations, including AAF logistics and maintenance units.⁵³² Finally, the report placed the blame for AAF sustainability issues squarely on the Afghan government, stating,

The coalition designed and was building the AAF to have capabilities that accommodate the human capital and infrastructure of Afghanistan. However, GIROA senior officials seemed to expect that their Air Force should have the same capabilities as the coalition air forces conducting missions in their country. Moreover, senior civilian and military officials were not always following AAF command and control policies and procedures. This impacted AAF sustainability.⁵³³

As of July 31, 2013, less than one year after rating all AAF units at CM4, DOD rated the AAF at CM2B, stating the AAF was now capable with various aircraft, but could not yet maintain them.⁵³⁴ On a further positive note, attrition in the AAF was one of the lowest of all the ANDSF components (although recruitment remained low and failed to meet goals). Operation Semergh was highlighted as an AAF success story in 2013, being the first operation the AAF planned and led. During Semergh, the AAF inserted Afghan special forces and cargo into a designated location, on time, and simultaneously evacuated hundreds of civilians from a flooded region.⁵³⁵

By 2014, the AAF still faced challenges.⁵³⁶ Recruiting remained a major problem as high standards disqualified many from eligibility. The AAF demonstrated capabilities in personnel and cargo lift and evacuation, but not in close air support or medical evacuation. Training improvements resulted in the pilot and instructor corps reaching 50 percent of their force strength goal.⁵³⁷ Maintenance and logistics remained slow to develop in the AAF; as of June 2014, only one-third of the required 1,370 personnel were considered qualified maintainers.⁵³⁸ In response, NATC-A released its 2013–2017 Afghan Air Force Master Plan to guide the construction of “the most capable air force in the history of Afghanistan.”⁵³⁹

AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE

COIN Strategy Increased Role of the ANP, Yet Led to Militarization of the Force

Under the U.S. COIN strategy, the role of the ANP in security operations became more prominent.⁵⁴⁰ To support this shift in mission, the United States armed the ANP similar to a paramilitary force with the core mission of holding territory gained from U.S.-Afghan military operations. In this role, the ANP served on the front line against heavily armed insurgents. Acknowledging this de facto role, the United States supported the increased militarization of the ANP, arming local police with AK-47s, light machine guns, and military-standard light combat vehicles.⁵⁴¹



U.S. Marine officer and Garmsir District Governor Fahim walk to Combat Outpost Rankel in Helmand Province after examining the district's new community center. (DOD photo by Reece Lodder)

The U.S. vision that the ANP would serve as the “hold” function in COIN’s “clear-hold-build” strategy often led to a lack of focus and underdevelopment of the civil policing functions of the force. Civil policing professionalization was further undermined when, in 2009, just before the election cycle began, CSTC-A reduced ANP training to three weeks in an attempt to field more police, more quickly.⁵⁴² In contrast to these actions, in 2010 the MOI stated that it envisioned a traditional policing function role for the ANP, with a goal for full professionalization within five years.⁵⁴³ According to Afghan security expert Vanda Felbab-Brown, however, the force continued to serve more as “light counterinsurgency forces” throughout 2012. She further noted, “The ANP continues to lack an anti-crime capacity.... Yet crime, such as murders, robberies, and extortion, are the bane of many Afghans’ daily existence.”⁵⁴⁴ She also said the government and police inability to effectively respond to criminal actions was creating an environment ripe for Taliban exploitation. A 2014 USIP report on the status and progress of the ANP concurred with Felbab-Brown, stating that “almost all police development efforts ... were modeled on military rather than civilian police institutions.”⁵⁴⁵ The report added, “As recently as 2011, there was no vision for what the ANP would look like once the ISAF mission was complete.”⁵⁴⁶ The report continued, noting that the “challenge persists,” and that “the ISAF approach remains focused on growing the number of trained ANP to 157,000” at the expense of professionalization, which was seen as simply a distraction compared to immediate security needs.⁵⁴⁷

Attempts to Correct Training Deficiencies: The Focused District Development Program

Many police were still under-trained or even untrained at the beginning of this era. Police development consisted of, at best, initial recruit training at national or regional training centers and likely no follow-on field training. As previously noted, the ANP were not fielded as units, but rather recruited and trained as individual patrol officers who were subsequently posted with active units throughout the country. This resulted in newly trained police officers being placed into existing units that were often corrupt and largely unaware of the procedural and behavioral standards of the new Afghan government and police system.⁵⁴⁸

Slightly over a year from initiation of the Focused District Development program, problems began to develop. The total number of units that had been trained via FDD and ultimately achieved DOD's highest force capability rating declined from 18 percent of the ANP in February 2009 to 12 percent in September 2009.⁵⁴⁹ Shortages of personnel and overly optimistic timelines significantly restricted the program's outcomes.⁵⁵⁰ Deficiencies in trainers and mentors, and unanticipated delays in units achieving their goals, stunted the expected pace of training.

A 2011 RAND study concluded that "only 65 of Afghanistan's 365 police districts completed the FDD program in its first two years, and CSTC-A estimated that it would take until 2014 for every district in the country to go through the program."⁵⁵¹ The RAND report noted that some of these issues may have also arisen based on the varied implementation of the program across Afghanistan, such as when only portions of units were sent through the program, and



U.S. Army officer and Afghan National Police practice tactical movement as part of the Focused District Development training program at the Kandahar Regional Training Center. (NTM-A photo by David Votroubek)

failures to assess the program over time.⁵⁵² Other factors negatively affecting the program were a failure to accurately assess how much time and how many personnel in police mentoring teams would be needed for units to achieve and maintain the highest capability rating.⁵⁵³

Additionally, attrition posed a significant challenge to the long-term goals of FDD, as the average 25 percent annual attrition rate at that time meant that “by the end of 2009, the first units that went through FDD would have lost nearly half of the personnel who completed the program.”⁵⁵⁴ A Congressional Research Service report from 2010 noted that observers also criticized the program for not being “comprehensive enough to be effective” and that “taking thugs away for a few weeks ... just gives you better-trained thugs.”⁵⁵⁵

The unexpected need to extend FDD timelines to train ANP units to the level required had adverse effects on the Afghan National Civil Order Police and resulted in high demands on ANCOP units to backfill ANP units. Delays kept ANCOP police deployed away from home for months at a time, with no knowledge of when they might be able to return home. With ANCOP’s small force size and the large requirements levied under the FDD program, this high OPTEMPO put immense stress on the force, resulting in an almost immediate, unsustainable monthly attrition rate as high as 70 percent (in 2009).⁵⁵⁶ High ANCOP attrition also limited the FDD program’s backfill capacity, resulting in some police units not being trained as a whole, contrary to the program’s aim.⁵⁵⁷

In March 2011, there was an attempt to address the overuse of ANCOP through the “Three P Program.” The program “called for the partnering of ANCOP units with U.S. military counterparts; increased pay and improved procedures to ensure police received their salaries; and, predictability, or scheduling unit rotations so personnel knew what to expect.”⁵⁵⁸ Subsequently, ANCOP monthly attrition rates dropped, but only to 36.4 percent, still leaving ANCOP with the highest attrition rate of all the branches of the ANP.⁵⁵⁹

The Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN) reported that although feedback on the FDD program draft was provided to CSTC-A by a number of agencies prior to the program’s implementation, “there was no response,” and it “became clear that the programme had been decided upon and there was little scope for any changes.”⁵⁶⁰ Additionally, the AAN noted that CSTC-A rejected third-party assessments of the FDD program and ignored feedback provided on FDD course curricula in lieu of internal meetings focused on more technical aspects of the program.⁵⁶¹

The FDD program was phased out beginning in 2011, though this was not conveyed in DOD reports to Congress. FDD is mentioned as progressing mostly

positively through 2009 and early 2010, however later 2010 reports make no mention of FDD at all. Based on the aforementioned issues relating to training backsliding, deficiencies in trainers, stresses on ANCOP, inappropriate timelines, and attrition affecting long-term effectiveness, it is unclear what the overall achievements of the program were.⁵⁶²

Training Remained Inadequate

Overall training for the ANP remained deficient through most of 2011, although it would later improve slightly as the United States implemented a new standard Basic Patrolman Course at all training centers.⁵⁶³ These improvements slightly extended the number of training hours, as well as expanded and improved components of the course curriculum, but ultimately proved insufficient in rectifying training deficiencies in the ANP forces overall, to include illiteracy.

In 2009, literate police recruits were sent through an eight-week (203-hour) basic training program. The same year, a USIP report assessing the police in Afghanistan described the impact of such short training periods by noting that “trainees did not remain at the training centers long enough to absorb much detail or the ethos of democratic policing through contact with the instructors.”⁵⁶⁴ Additionally, NTM-A noted that the training curriculum was neither standardized nor used in all training centers.⁵⁶⁵



U.S. Army military policeman teaches ANP in Logar Province about improvised explosive devices.
(DOD photo by De'Yonte Mosley)

NTM-A described the 2009 police training program as being “PowerPoint-based,” “theoretical,” and “intended for literate students.”⁵⁶⁶ This curriculum was not suitable for the majority of ANP recruits; the training was based on a program used in the Balkans for literate recruits, whereas the vast majority of Afghan police recruits were illiterate.⁵⁶⁷

Further, USIP assessed in 2009 that ANP “trainees had little or no previous classroom experience” (table 7).⁵⁶⁸ USIP described the ANP classroom experience as challenging, highlighting how the extreme desert temperatures severely affected classroom temperatures, and that there were translation difficulties as well as a lack of trainers experienced in adult-training techniques.⁵⁶⁹

In 2010, under pressure to rapidly increase the ANP’s force size, training was compressed to six weeks, but still consisted of 203 hours as training days were simply extended. Implementation of this program remained inconsistent between training centers.⁵⁷⁰

Also in 2010, into 2011, mandatory literacy instruction was finally added to ANP training, initially lasting only 64 hours (less than two weeks).⁵⁷¹ Prior to this time, it is unclear how many police were receiving literacy training; however, a DOD report to Congress in mid-2008 noted that an MOI-level literacy program was about to be initiated.⁵⁷² A January 2009 DOD report indicated funding was being provided for ANA literacy programs, with no mention of it also occurring



U.S. Army soldier and Afghan policeman during training at Afghan police headquarters in Charreh Dera. (DOD photo by Walter M. Wayman)

TABLE 7

EVOLUTION OF ANP TRAINING				
	2009	2010	Early 2011	Late 2012
Length of Training	8 weeks	6 weeks	6 weeks	8 weeks
Total Training Hours	203 hours	203 hours + 48 hours of drill and physical training	200 hours	266 hours + 72 hours of drill and physical training
Description of Training	Theoretical, PowerPoint-based, same program as used in the Balkans	Compressed, but no change from 2009 description, no consistency between training centers	· Practical and tailored to Afghanistan · Designed for low-literacy students · First standard patrolman course	Standardized to all pillars of the ANP
Literacy Levels	Intended for literate students, no mandatory literacy training	Literacy instruction introduced, 64 hours of literacy required	64 hours of literacy	Literacy increased to 96 hours

Source: NTM-A, "ANP Professionalization: The Basic Patrolman Course," May 7, 2011.

for the ANP.⁵⁷³ Literacy training for "all policemen" is mentioned in the April 2009 DOD report to Congress, although it was categorized as "additional specialty skills" training and as "voluntary" (table 7).⁵⁷⁴

Two weeks of literacy training could hardly make an impact on the skills of an illiterate recruit, as a joint State and DOD report from 2006 had previously assessed the impacts of literacy programming. The report concluded that "for an illiterate student, a five-week literacy course is a start toward literacy. However, such a short course does not fully prepare the illiterate recruit for the basic police course designed for literate students."⁵⁷⁵ Further discussion of the impacts of illiteracy on force readiness can be found in chapter six of this report.

A former senior U.S. official with knowledge of police development projects described U.S. efforts on literacy training for the ANP as "absolutely one of the greatest missed opportunities in the history of our involvement there.... In a country where you have 80–85 percent illiteracy, had we started literacy programs when we arrived there in 2002, and kept at it, we would have changed the whole nature of the country."⁵⁷⁶

In 2011, the Basic Patrolman Course was further modified. Training continued to last six weeks, but was reduced to 200 hours. Although a reduction in training time was a loss for force professionalization efforts, a positive shift toward adapting the programming to Afghanistan's specific needs was also seen. Courses were, for the first time, noted to be "tailored to Afghanistan and designed for low-literacy students." Training was also described as "focused on practical exercises," instead of solely classroom lectures.⁵⁷⁷

Later in 2011, the curriculum was again restructured, expanded, and extended to eight weeks of instruction. This was an additional 116 hours of training, as compared to the previous six-week training program, and 183 more hours than the original eight-week program. Additionally, 24 additional hours of drill and physical training outside of classroom hours were added, and literacy training was increased to 96 hours. This extended training program aimed to ensure all students reached or exceeded a 1st grade reading level and included the first 25 percent of a 2nd grade reading curriculum.⁵⁷⁸ Despite these changes, a January 2014 SIGAR audit found that between July 2012 and February 2013, “45 percent of police personnel ... were sent directly to field checkpoints without receiving any literacy training.”⁵⁷⁹

Additionally, the United States and MOI still lacked significant managerial infrastructure to support the police training effort. ANP training was conducted by the Afghan Police Training Teams, which were still in short supply.⁵⁸⁰ A January 2010 SIGAR Quarterly Report noted a “shortfall of 119 training teams.”⁵⁸¹ An ineffective MOI human resource mechanism, inadequate staffing levels on training teams, and deficiencies in U.S. oversight and assessment to track personnel training led to only the newest recruits receiving the updated curriculum in their training. Forces already stationed in the field throughout the country continued to be significantly under-trained, as well as illiterate. According to a 2010 SIGAR data call, OSD reported that 70 percent of ANP personnel still had not been “through any formal police training.”⁵⁸² Although improvements to the curriculum were made and training hours extended, in 2011 it was clear that these improvements were not only hampered by issues pertaining to logistics and infrastructure, but were also still insufficient to achieve the desired results of a competent, professional ANP within stated withdrawal timelines.

Narrowly Focused on Outputs: Auxiliary Police Programs

By early 2009, the United States increased its focus on end-strength numbers with an eye toward inundating Afghanistan with Afghan security personnel, which was seen as the cure for Afghanistan’s security problems. In a July 2009 briefing, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) Richard Holbrooke noted that, “The current force levels of police and army are clearly going to have to be increased.”⁵⁸³ By July 2010, the target end strength for October 2011 had ballooned to 134,000.⁵⁸⁴ The narrow focus on the numbers of police trained and fielded, however, continued to negatively affect the quality of the force. The new auxiliary programs decreased the vetting performed and training received, and undermined central command and control structures.

Afghan Public Protection Program

In March 2009, in order to meet the ever-expanding force size goals within the narrow timelines established, the Afghan Public Protection Program



Local officials attend the Afghan Public Protection Program graduation in Wardak Province. (DOD photo)

(AP3) was initiated in Wardak Province.⁵⁸⁵ AP3 was based on a model similar to the failed ANAP and was designed to take advantage of more traditional community-policing models, as well as to work in tandem with population-centric COIN efforts.⁵⁸⁶ Wardak Governor Fedai was a strong advocate during a three-day conference with local Afghan elders in Wardak, but “participants were vocal in their misgivings about the program and refused to sign a memorandum of understanding with the government ... because Wardak had painful experiences with government-sponsored militias.” The Wardak elders were reputed to be worried about “infighting among rival militias.”⁵⁸⁷

Misgivings about the AP3 program were ignored, to the program’s detriment. The Afghanistan Analysts Network reported, “Many of the problems that had plagued the ANAP came back to haunt AP3.”⁵⁸⁸ The AP3 police received several weeks less training than ANP or ANA members, but were paid roughly the same salaries, creating competing incentives for prospective ANP and ANA recruits.⁵⁸⁹

Command and control of the force became a major hurdle, as “the AP3 operated as an entirely separate force” from the ANP. For example, a former militia commander and local strongman Ghulam Mohammed was controversially appointed as an AP3 provincial commander at the end of 2009. It was noted that his AP3 force “was nearly double the size of the ANP in the province,” and he “made it very clear that he answered only to the U.S. military and the MOI in Kabul.”⁵⁹⁰

Ultimately, even Wardak Governor Fedai recognized AP3 did not live up to its intended composition and function, later in 2010 described it as having

been merely an attempt at a “temporary fix.”⁵⁹¹ Analysis and reporting of AP3 revealed a mixed success, with third parties highlighting flaws, although DOD considered it to be mostly successful.⁵⁹² The program was ultimately not expanded to other provinces; DOD said this was due to “the large amount of resources” needed to implement the program, which were eventually rolled into future auxiliary programs.⁵⁹³

Afghan Local Police

By 2009, police auxiliary programs rooted in traditional community policing concepts were an intrinsic part of the new U.S. ANP development strategy for Afghanistan. The next iteration of the model was the Afghan Local Police (ALP), which was formally established in August 2010 when President Karzai announced its creation.⁵⁹⁴ An International Crisis Group (ICG) report on the program states that “General David Petraeus endorsed the idea when he took over NATO forces mid-2010 and persuaded a reluctant Karzai, despite palace misgivings about semi-regular security forces.”⁵⁹⁵ The ALP was designed, similar to its predecessors, to provide security within villages and rural areas “to protect the population from insurgent attacks, protect facilities, and conduct local counterinsurgency missions.”⁵⁹⁶

Many, if not all, of the various auxiliary programs to date “leaned heavily on interpretations of the Pashtun *arbakai* concept that traditionally only existed in the southeast,” as well as “from the concepts underlying the Sons of Iraq Program.”⁵⁹⁷ *Arbakai* were traditional security structures roughly equivalent to local police, recruited from the community and monitored by elders. The Sons of Iraq were effectively nongovernmental militias, formerly against the state, which decided to align with the new government and take up arms with the U.S. and international forces against al-Qaeda. With the ALP, the United States again tried to combine traditional tribal security structures and pro-government militias to help counteract the rising insurgency.⁵⁹⁸

As with past auxiliary police programs, command and control of the ALP was under MOI, with local command officially falling under the purview of provincial and district police chiefs. The United States helped establish local councils, in concert with the Village Stability Operations (VSO) program, which were to select ALP recruits.⁵⁹⁹ Vetting was to be conducted through MOI.⁶⁰⁰ Recruits were trained for three weeks and issued assault rifles and machine guns. Their training was significantly shorter than that of the regular ANP.⁶⁰¹ Even so, by June 2016, a DOD Report to Congress indicated that over 6,000 untrained ALP guardians were still present within the force.⁶⁰²

The ALP, like its predecessors, had mixed outcomes. It provided security in a limited number of areas, primarily where members were recruited properly



Afghan Local Police candidates graduate from the ALP Academy in Kajran, Daykundi Province. (DOD photo by Jonathan Hudson)

through shuras and village councils, and where ethnic representation matched community demographics.⁶⁰³ However, in many other areas, the ALP were corrupt and abusive, undermining security and government legitimacy.⁶⁰⁴

Reports indicate that, similar to past auxiliary police programs, intended command and control structures through the central government were manipulated, circumvented, and negatively influenced by local warlords, powers brokers, and their militias.⁶⁰⁵ ALP guardians were ordered to patrol only within their “home villages,” though this was “widely ignored.”⁶⁰⁶ Circumvention of the central government’s authority over these armed groups was also reinforced by the U.S. military’s need to “deal directly with the villages” when conducting rural operations, diluting the central government’s authority.⁶⁰⁷

The ALP was criticized for conflating security force efforts with reintegration and subsequent Taliban infiltration, thereby increasing insider attacks in the ANDSF and “officially encouraging the legitimization [of] armed groups.”⁶⁰⁸ In September 2012, “ISAF suspended Special Forces training for the ALP after a spike in the number of attacks on coalition forces by Afghan counterparts, including ALP members.”⁶⁰⁹ U.S. government assessments showed powerbroker control of ALP units and ghost personnel, and further noted the ALP had a “lack of criteria for selection” and exhibited “abusive behavior against local citizens.”⁶¹⁰

Although congressionally mandated DOD reports mentioned some problems facing the force, solutions to these problems were rarely discussed.

The October 2011 DOD report to Congress disassociated the problem of legitimization of armed groups from its purview of responsibility, describing the problem as the growth of other “independent, non-sanctioned militias” posing as ALP, noting that these groups might undermine the program.⁶¹¹ The report further described the ALP as largely successful in helping to counter the insurgency, and said the only major issue was ALP overreliance on U.S. SOF for training, advising, and mentoring.⁶¹²

According to a 2014 DOD report to Congress, ALP training was extended from three to four weeks to address “some of the ethical concerns about the ALP cited by international organizations, and [enhance] the credibility of the ALP.”⁶¹³ The extended program was now 140 hours total, and covered topics such as human rights, ethics, logistics, and administrative processes. The report, however, further described a number of challenges, including command and control, as well as questionable effectiveness of the program.⁶¹⁴ A 2015 International Crisis Group report continued to detail the lack of oversight of the ALP program and described some ALP members’ continuing human rights abuses.⁶¹⁵ In conjunction with the release of the report, the ICG Asia Program Director described the ALP as “not a solution to rural insecurity: too many units have become predators on the people they are supposed to protect.”⁶¹⁶ A DOD report to Congress in 2015, however, did not mention these concerns.⁶¹⁷

The Afghan Public Protection Force

The Afghan Public Protection Force was initiated in 2009. APPF was intended to be a small force that would replace private security firms as the provider of facility and convoy security across the country.⁶¹⁸ However, similar to the ALP, the APPF was noted to be “recruited directly” and did not participate in NTM-A’s police training program.⁶¹⁹ The creation of the APPF was, in part, intended to decrease concerns about private security contractors (PSC) in Afghanistan. However, third-party reports, such as those of Human Rights Watch (HRW), described concerns about the continued influence of former warlords within the force. This was due to many PSCs and their command structures simply being rolled into and rebranded as APPF.⁶²⁰

The HRW report and a 2013 USIP report further described APPF human rights abuses and a lack of oversight of the force, similar to the ALP.⁶²¹ At the end of 2013, DOD described the APPF as having conducted a number of successful convoy escort operations, but also as an “immature organization” overall, with a lack of “systematic processes” and concerning levels of corruption.⁶²²



Graduation of Afghan Public Protection Force from three-week training program in Kabul. (ISAF photo by Kristopher Levasseur)



U.S. Air Force photo

CHAPTER 5

2015–2016: TRAIN, ADVISE, AND ASSIST

CONDITIONS NOT SET, AFGHANS FACE RESILIENT INSURGENCY

While the U.S. military surge helped blunt the Taliban’s momentum and increased security gains, the Taliban remained resilient and the insurgency became emboldened by the drawdown of U.S. and coalition military forces. In 2016, General John Nicholson reiterated a statement made throughout the conflict by senior U.S. military leaders when he noted, “Remember, this is an insurgency that still enjoys sanctuary and support from outside the country, that’s very difficult for the Afghans to defeat.”⁶²³

In 2013, General Joseph Dunford stated, “The gains that we have made to date are not going to be sustainable without continued international commitment.... We are not where we need to be yet.”⁶²⁴ Less than a year later, in March 2014, General Dunford warned the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) that, upon coalition troops’ withdrawal, “the Afghan security forces will begin to deteriorate.” He added that “the only debate is the pace of that deterioration.”⁶²⁵

In February 2016, General John Campbell, the Resolute Support (RS) and USFOR-A commander, informed the SASC that Afghanistan had not achieved the enduring level of security and stability sufficient to justify a reduction in U.S. sup-

port to the ANDSF. Also that month, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper alerted the SASC that the intelligence community believed “fighting in 2016 will be more intense than 2015, continuing a decade-long trend of deteriorating security.”⁶²⁶

In the years since these warnings began, the ANA’s ability to hold territory has gradually decreased. According to USFOR-A, as of August 2016, only 63 percent of the country’s 34 provinces were under Afghan government control or influence, down from 72 percent at the end of 2015.⁶²⁷

U.S. LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES TO STABILIZE MISSION SCOPE

Following the official transition of security responsibilities to the ANDSF in June 2013, President Obama aimed to make good on his pledge to withdraw U.S. combat forces and reduce the U.S. footprint to a small, embassy-centric presence by the end of 2016.⁶²⁸ Contrary to DOD estimates, however, the ANDSF was unable to secure the country and prevent the re-emergence of terrorist sanctuaries with the planned levels of U.S. and international military assistance. To address a security situation that was deteriorating more rapidly than forecast, President Obama extended timelines and resource commitments while loosening targeting restrictions.

At the end of 2014, President Obama had introduced new restrictions on targeting Taliban forces. These restrictions were a part of the administration’s effort to end the U.S. combat role in Afghanistan and support the larger peace and reconciliation process, but had damaging effects on the relationship



Generals Nicholson (l) and Dunford (r) meet with President Ghani in July 2016 to discuss the Resolute Support mission. (DOD photo by Dominique A. Pineiro)

between the advisory mission and the ANDSF.⁶²⁹ In 2015, with security conditions deteriorating, President Obama was forced to change timelines two more times following deliberations with the Afghan government and his national security staff. In March 2015, during a joint press conference with President Ghani, President Obama announced that the United States would maintain its 9,800 troop strength through the end of 2015 and would transition to a Kabul-based embassy presence by the end of 2016.⁶³⁰ President Obama noted, “Afghan forces are still not as strong as they need to be. They’re developing critical capabilities—intelligence, logistics, aviation, command and control. And meanwhile, the Taliban has made gains, particularly in rural areas, and can still launch deadly attacks in cities, including Kabul.”⁶³¹

On the advice of General Nicholson, in June 2016 President Obama loosened targeting restrictions, allowing targeting under certain circumstances, while also permitting U.S. forces to closely partner with the ANDSF at the sub-national level.⁶³² With the loosening of targeting restrictions, in May 2016 the U.S. government launched a successful airstrike in Pakistan that killed Taliban senior shura leader, Akhtar Mohammad Mansour.⁶³³ Recognizing that security was not dramatically improving and the Afghan security forces still lacked the indigenous capability to win decisively against the Taliban, in 2016 President Obama reversed promises to withdraw all U.S. forces and deferred withdrawal timeline decisions to the next administration. On July 6, 2016, President Obama announced 8,400 troops would remain in Afghanistan through 2016; the previously authorized level was 5,500 troops. President Obama noted in his decision that “the security situation in Afghanistan remains precarious. Even as they improve, Afghan security forces are still not as strong as they need to be.”⁶³⁴

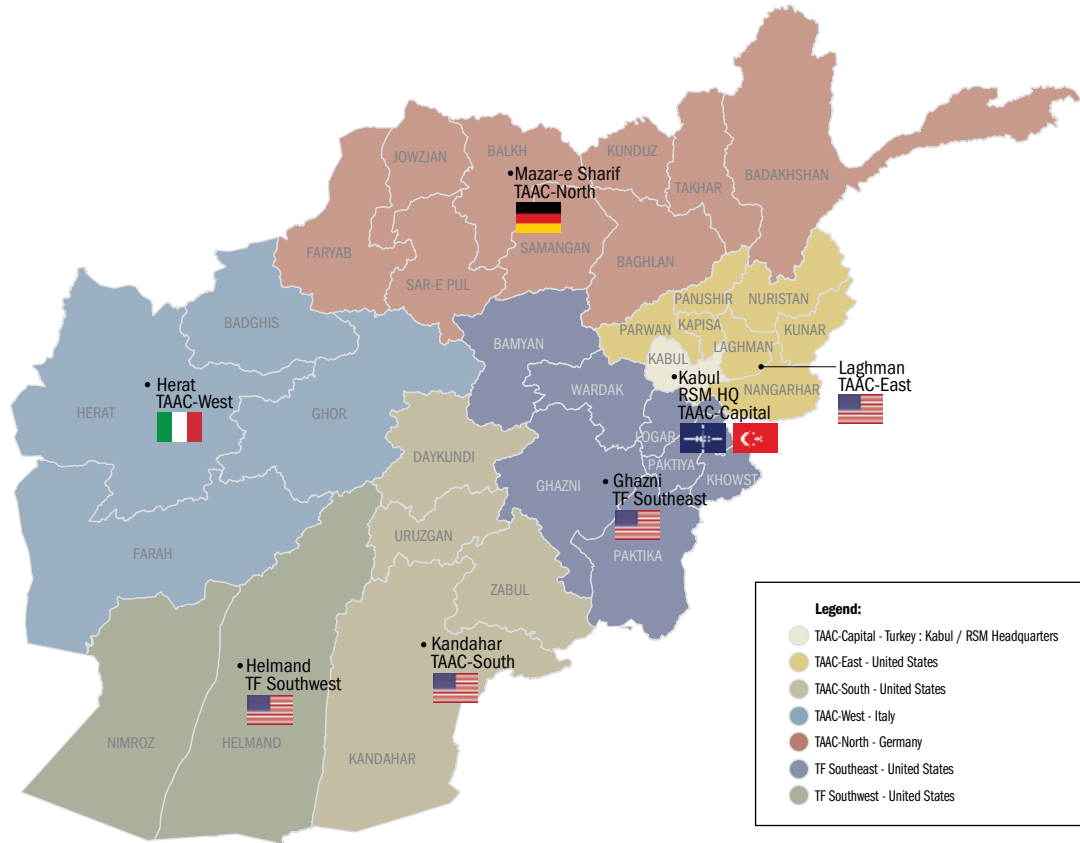
RESOLUTE SUPPORT AND OPERATION FREEDOM’S SENTINEL

On January 1, 2015, U.S. and NATO forces officially changed missions to Operation Freedom’s Sentinel (OFS) and Resolute Support, respectively. However, U.S. strategy essentially remained centered on working with NATO allies to support the development and professionalization of the ANDSF. To accomplish this, according to DOD, the “U.S. and coalition forces conduct [train, advise, and assist] efforts at the ANA corps level, the ANP zone level, and with MOD and the MOI to improve their ability to support and sustain the fighting force.”⁶³⁵

The RS mission currently includes regional train, advise, and assist commands (TAAC) in the north, south, east, west, and capital, with a functional TAAC for air capabilities (figure 15 on the next page). Each TAAC is led by a “framework nation” responsible for coordinating support and capabilities. The four “framework nations” are the United States, Germany, Italy, and Turkey.⁶³⁶ International advisors partner with the Afghans on three levels. Level 1 advising is continuous,

FIGURE 15

NATO TAAC FRAMEWORK COUNTRIES



Note: TAAC-Air encompasses all of Afghanistan. TF Forge and TF Anvil replaced Advise and Assist Cell (AAC) Southwest and Southeast in late 2016.

Source: DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, December 2016, pp. 15–17; DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2017, pp. 14–16; NATO, *Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan*, October 13, 2016.

usually daily, and normally conducted by embedded advisors. Level 2 is less frequent, based on the proximity of the advisors and capability of the Afghans, and is intended to ensure continued development. Level 3 advising means that advisors are no longer co-located; expeditionary teams of advisors visit their Afghan counterparts to plan and coordinate operations and sustainment.⁶³⁷

According to DOD, “unlike the previous [ISAF] mission focused primarily on combat operations with a secondary focus on generating, training, and equipping the ANDSF and building ministerial capacity, the main effort for RS is ministry and ANDSF capacity-building at the national and regional levels.”⁶³⁸ To accomplish this, eight essential functions (EF) were identified, with a U.S. or coalition general officer or senior civilian defense executive as the lead (table 8). Despite a limited mission scope and smaller resource requirements, some advisor and leader slots remain unfilled.⁶³⁹

TABLE 8

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS (EF)	
EF 1	Plan, program, budget, and execute
EF 2	Transparency, accountability, and oversight
EF 3	Civilian governance of the Afghan security institutions and adherence to rule of law
EF 4	Force generation
EF 5	Sustain the force
EF 6	Plan, resource, and execute effective security campaigns
EF 7	Develop sufficient intelligence capabilities and processes
EF 8	Maintain internal and external strategic communications capability

Source: DOD, *Report on Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, December 2016, pp. 12–15.

AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

Loss of Territory, Mixed Assessments of Battlefield Performance

Despite the alarming decline in the amount of territory under the control of the Afghan government, one expert observer noted that such a decline was to be expected after the withdrawal of the U.S. military and did not necessarily signal the demise of the ANA.⁶⁴⁰ USFOR-A suggested that such a loss of territory was deliberate, because efforts to restructure the ANA's force posture by closing numerous checkpoints and consolidating forces intentionally left some territory less heavily guarded.⁶⁴¹ USFOR-A's plan for restructuring the ANA included identifying critical areas the ANA must defend and disregarding less important areas that had little impact on the overall mission of the ANDSF.⁶⁴²

During this time, the ANA's battlefield performance varied by region, with some successes, but, more notably, major failures in Helmand and Kunduz Provinces that grabbed international headlines. In a blow to the ANA, Musa Qala District in Helmand fell to the Taliban in the summer of 2015.⁶⁴³ And, in September 2015, Kunduz City rapidly fell to the Taliban, with members of the ANA seen fleeing to the airport for escape. The Taliban had been closing in on Kunduz City for at least a year, with no significant attempt by the ANA to push them out of the province. After two weeks, the ANDSF eventually regained control of the city, albeit with significant coalition support.⁶⁴⁴

Leadership remained a key issue preventing improved readiness within the ANA, and varied by region. The 215th Corps in Helmand, for example, nearly disintegrated.⁶⁴⁵ Additionally, poor and corrupt leadership resulted in problems with resource management.⁶⁴⁶ In Helmand and Kandahar, 40 percent of the corps' leaders were deemed ineffective, and were removed and replaced.⁶⁴⁷ The large number of ineffective senior leaders suggests a system that had rewarded inept or corrupt leadership.

USFOR-A believed the ANA performed better in 2016 than in 2015.⁶⁴⁸ In a December 2016 press briefing, General Nicholson reported the Afghan security

forces, though still reliant on the United States for enabling support, thwarted eight attempts by the Taliban to seize cities during 2016, including attacks on Kandahar, Lashkar Gah, Kunduz, Tarin Kowt, and Farah. General Nicholson said the ANDSF's ability to deal with simultaneous crises reflected their growing capability and maturity.⁶⁴⁹

However, U.S. advisors had little direct contact with ANA units below the corps level; advisors were forced to rely heavily on assessments provided by the MOD to evaluate the effectiveness of the ANA. Given the distance between the advisors and the data, the consistency, comprehensiveness, and credibility of these assessments varied and could not always be confirmed by U.S. officials.⁶⁵⁰

The ANA Special Forces continued to be more proficient than the conventional ANA forces. As the security situation continued to deteriorate, the Afghan government increasingly relied upon the ANA Special Forces to help secure key population centers, largely due to perceived and real deficiencies in the ANA conventional forces. The commander of the ANASOC protested that the purpose of the special forces was to conduct short-term missions rather than defend territory.⁶⁵¹ This sentiment was echoed by RS advisors who felt that the overuse of special forces would result in burnout among Afghanistan's most elite forces.⁶⁵² To prevent further misuse of the forces, RS attempted to restructure the force posture of the ANA.

Assessments Still Fail to Assess Battlefield Performance

Over the course of the ANA reconstruction effort, the ANA assessments methodology changed at least three times: from Capability Milestone (CM) to Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT); from CUAT to Regional ANDSF Assessment Report (RASR); and from RASR to Monthly ANDSF Assessment Report (MAAR).⁶⁵³ The most recent methodology, MAAR, assesses the ANA only at the headquarters level and, as noted by the U.S. military, is not intended "to be used as an assessment or evaluation of the entire ANDSF."⁶⁵⁴

Such a methodology and lack of coverage of the ANA below the corps level suggest that any evaluation is capturing only superficial details of the ANA's current battlefield readiness. The illusion that such an assessment framework could accurately depict realities on the ground was dispelled at the end of 2015 when the 215th Corps collapsed and had to be reconstituted. Following the U.S. and coalition military drawdown and leading up to the 215th Corps' collapse, only five of the six ANA corps were supported by coalition advisors. The 215th Corps in Helmand was not supported because the UK declined the advisory mission and the United States was unwilling to increase its presence. The lack of coverage and advisory units below the corps level hindered the U.S. ability to forecast ANA operational capabilities before it was too late to rectify.



A U.S. Marine observes an ANA soldier at the Helmand Regional Military Training Center at Camp Shorabak. The U.S. Marine Corps was forced to redeploy to Helmand following the collapse of the ANA 215th Corps in 2015. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lucas Hopkins)

Changes to ANA Development

During this time, USFOR-A made “modest progress” in moving the ANA toward offensive, rather than defensive, operations.⁶⁵⁵ In practice, this meant that the U.S. military advocated for the closure of multiple checkpoints and consolidation of forces on fewer bases. To improve force protection and logistics, coalition advisors advocated for consolidating ANA forces in priority areas of the country.⁶⁵⁶

Consolidated forces allowed for more flexibility during clearing operations, but contributed to security vacuums in areas without checkpoints. Furthermore, local Afghan power brokers, who largely saw the presence of the ANA in their territories as military might at their disposal, resisted this restructuring, resulting in some static posts remaining unconsolidated, leaving many spread far and wide. This situation made some ANA soldiers easy targets for the Taliban and increased ANA casualties.⁶⁵⁷ Checkpoints and small military outposts were also seen by the local population as a comforting presence of security forces, no matter how small or incapable those units were. Withdrawing those checkpoints resulted in negative reactions by villagers and local officials, forcing the Afghan national government to allow checkpoints to remain for political, not military, reasons.

Changes to the ANA’s design were made to stem attrition and casualties. The force restructuring established a National Mission Brigade, scheduled to be fully operational by 2018. The National Mission Brigade was designed to alleviate the improper use of the ANA Special Forces in clearing and holding missions,

enabling those forces to focus on their short-term, operations-driven mission.⁶⁵⁸ The brigade is planned to consist of approximately 200 personnel to provide ANA SOF contingency operations command and control capabilities.⁶⁵⁹

The MOD and ANA have begun creating reserve forces of former ANA soldiers to serve locally in support functions, such as base security and checkpoints.⁶⁶⁰ In September 2016, reserve kandaks for the 201st and 209th Corps, consisting of 600 reserve soldiers each, and for the 111th Capital Division were established. A reserve kandak for the 207th Corps is in the planning stages.⁶⁶¹ The combined size of the ANA and reserve forces must remain within the 195,000 final force ceiling for the ANA.⁶⁶² Though officials hope that reserve forces will help mitigate some of the factors driving attrition, it is too early to observe such an effect.

In addition to the restructuring of the ANA, U.S. and Afghan officials are seeking to reform and professionalize the MOD. In 2014, the U.S.-Afghan Bilateral Civilianization Agreement made progress toward increasing civilian personnel in the MOD.⁶⁶³ President Ghani spearheaded efforts to professionalize the MOD, including increasing legal education at the corps level and improving and formalizing investigative procedures.⁶⁶⁴ Under such reforms, a major fuel theft case in the 205th Corps successfully made its way through the Afghan court system.⁶⁶⁵

In September 2016, the Common Policy Agreement established guidelines to help the MOD improve internal behaviors, professionalize the force, and generate combat power.⁶⁶⁶ This policy allows coalition advisors to provide



An Afghan Air Force MD-530 helicopter participates in an air-to-ground integration exercise in Kabul Province. (NATO photo by Kay M. Nissen)

rewards and penalties based on MOD compliance, and aims to stem problems of poor leadership and corruption in the MOD.

Demands for U.S. Combat Enablers Persist, Afghan Air Force Improving

Years of operating in the shadows of U.S. and international advisors and mentors resulted in a physical and “psychological” dependency that has proven difficult to break for most ANA conventional units.⁶⁶⁷ According to the *Washington Post*, one U.S. advisor noted that air strikes were used as a way to keep Afghan forces on “life support” and resulted in the “Afghans ask[ing] for air strikes every day.”⁶⁶⁸ The June 2016 measure to increase airstrikes granted General Nicholson “the authority to order ‘pro-active’ close air support strikes for Afghan forces in the field.”⁶⁶⁹

In February 2017, Afghanistan’s national security advisor, Mohammed Hanif Atmar, told reporters he was asking the United States to provide close air support for ground operations as a “kind of filling-the-gap measure” until Afghan security forces could do the job alone. Atmar stated that “it will take [Afghanistan] time” to develop such capabilities.⁶⁷⁰ Atmar’s request, however, came five months after General Nicholson cited Afghanistan’s Air Force—in addition to Afghanistan’s special forces and police special units—as one example of “the way in which [the Afghans] are conducting most of their operations in an independent manner.”⁶⁷¹

A-29 Super Tucano Procurement and Delay

The acquisition of the A-29 Super Tucano counterinsurgency aircraft demonstrated the challenges of the bureaucratic process espoused by the United States and coalition. At the end of 2011, DOD awarded a \$355 million contract to Embraer, the Brazilian company that made the A-29 Super Tucano, and its American business partner, Sierra Nevada Corps.⁶⁷² Embraer’s competitor, Kansas-based Hawker Beechcraft Defense Company, protested Embraer’s contract win, resulting in a pause in the contract and launching the dispute into the hands of the courts.⁶⁷³ A year later, in 2013, DOD handed Embraer another win, rejecting Beechcraft’s dispute.⁶⁷⁴ Beechcraft again protested through the GAO, but within three days of the temporary stay on the contract, DOD decided to continue with Embraer. Beechcraft protested yet again, this time with a lawsuit. Beechcraft alleged that the USAF would pay more than \$100 million more for the A-29, compared to the Beechcraft AT-6, and that most of the A-29 parts would be made in Brazil, compared to Beechcraft’s American-made planes. Embraer denied that most



Afghan Air Force A-29 Super Tucanos fly over Kabul. (U.S. Air Force photo by Larry E. Reid, Jr.)

of their planes’ parts would be made in Brazil.⁶⁷⁵ In June 2013, the GAO issued Embraer another win, and Beechcraft another loss, stating that there were no irregularities in the procurement process.⁶⁷⁶ In February 2016, the first A-29 Super Tucanos arrived in Kabul, Afghanistan, almost two years behind schedule.⁶⁷⁷

The development of the AAF is part of improving the offensive capabilities of the conventional military units, in addition to on-the-ground firepower capabilities. A capable AAF could increase combat airstrikes to alter the current stalemate with the Taliban, and decrease Afghan dependence on U.S. air support. USAF A-29 advisors noted they observed conventional ANA soldiers take a more offensive posture when supported by Afghan A-29 assets, indicating that air support is highly desired for most Afghan ground forces.⁶⁷⁸

DOD reported in 2015 that the AAF flew “most operations independently.”⁶⁷⁹ Yet, a hallmark of the AAF persisted: force strength remained under goals and even began to decrease.⁶⁸⁰ DOD further reported that the logistical sustainment of the AAF would “make or break” the force in the long term, and was a serious challenge.⁶⁸¹

Pilot availability and development remained a critical challenge within the AAF through 2016.⁶⁸² The literacy skills required for pilot training made finding qualified recruits challenging. The addition of new technologies and equipment further complicated AAF training, requiring even experienced pilots to be away from the battlefield to train in new technologies. Finally, pilots were frequently redirected to other purposes, particularly the Special Mission Wing.⁶⁸³

Some improvements in the AAF were noted by 2016. The AAF was increasing its capabilities in airlift, casualty evacuation, and airpower.⁶⁸⁴ The AAF independently planned for and provided air assets for logistics, resupply, humanitarian relief efforts, human remains return, casualty evacuation, nontraditional ISR, air interdiction, armed over-watch, and aerial escort missions. The physical structure of the AAF included the headquarters in Kabul and three wings in Kabul, Kandahar, and Shindand. The training mission, TAAC-Air, provided persistent training in Kabul and Kandahar and routinely sent Expeditionary Advisory Packages (EAPs) to Herat.⁶⁸⁵

As of November 2016, the AAF had 116 of 136 originally planned aircraft, consisting of C-130, C-208, A-29, Mi-17, MD-530, and Mi-35, or a mix of U.S., Russian, Brazilian, and French fixed and rotary wing aircraft. Use of these aircraft was somewhat limited by the lack of fully-trained flight crews, including flight engineers, loadmasters, and maintenance personnel.⁶⁸⁶ The complexities of the A-29 Super Tucano required the AAF to extend the timeline for development and initial operational capability past 2017, as originally expected.⁶⁸⁷ Although the Super Tucanos were credited with successfully supporting the 209th Corps in Badakhshan in April 2016, the first class of trained Afghan maintenance personnel for the A-29s graduated in December 2015 and the platform remained dependent on contractor logistics support (CLS).⁶⁸⁸ Additionally, full staffing of the Mi-17 was extended to 2018 due to its continuing reliance on CLS for heavy lift operations.⁶⁸⁹



SIGAR project team lead James Cunningham speaks with the deputy commander for TAAC-Air about the MD-530 light helicopters being supplied to the Afghan Air Force for air support of ground troops. (SIGAR photo)

At the end of 2016, the AAF lacked the trained operations and maintenance personnel required for its current size. Only 223 students were enrolled in U.S.-funded training programs, 172 of whom were training to be pilots.⁶⁹⁰ The largest challenge for the AAF remained recruiting qualified candidates, despite English-language training in Kabul, Kandahar, and at the Defense Language Institute in the United States. At the same time, Afghan Tactical Air Coordinator training—an airpower familiarization course for ANA personnel—increased throughout 2016. At the beginning of 2016, only 14 recruits had graduated from the course, but by the end of the year, there were 130 graduates.⁶⁹¹

Sustainment remained an obstacle. The AAF could not sustain itself at any of its locations, and given the increased operational tempo, had become increasingly reliant on contractor logistics support, which was expected to be required through 2023.⁶⁹² In Kabul, the rationing of electrical power to support AAF sustainment operations further undermined consistency.⁶⁹³

In terms of operations, DOD noted there was “a tension between the need for training and the combat demand placed on the AAF fleet.”⁶⁹⁴ DOD largely used increases in the number of operations conducted to demonstrate the AAF was improving. For example, although AAF’s capacity to conduct casualty evacuations had increased, the number of requests still far exceeded the AAF’s ability to respond due to increased overall operational tempo of the ANDSF.

ANA Attrition, Casualties, and Ghost Soldiers Undermined Force Strength

ANA force strength decreased from 185,817 in September 2013 to 168,327 in November 2016, with numbers steadily declining for three quarters in a row in 2016.⁶⁹⁵ The decline in ANA numbers was largely attributed to high attrition and casualty rates. Furthermore, the true number of soldiers was increasingly called into question due to the persistent issue of ghost soldiers.

ANA attrition remained high during this time, with about one-third of the force lost annually, or just below 3 percent per month.⁶⁹⁶ In 2016, USFOR-A reported overall ANA attrition at 2.9 percent in August, 2.3 percent in September, and 3.1 percent in October.⁶⁹⁷ Though recruiting efforts persisted, such high attrition increasingly created a military with little to no training. Thus, training efforts had to continue to focus on basic training, with fewer opportunities to train soldiers at advanced warrior levels.⁶⁹⁸

The unprecedented number of casualties sustained by the ANA was even more alarming.⁶⁹⁹ ANA casualties from January to November 2015 increased 27 percent over the same time period in 2014.⁷⁰⁰ In the ANDSF overall, 5,523 service members were killed in the first half of 2016 alone.⁷⁰¹ In addition to battlefield casualties, the ANDSF experienced a spate of insider attacks in which its personnel turned on fellow soldiers, claiming 257 lives by 2015.⁷⁰²

Ghost soldiers remained an elusive challenge to ANA development. Such a phenomenon not only resulted in fraudulent budget forecasting, but also overstated ANA force strength, undermined recruiting and planning forecasts, and undercut battlefield performance.⁷⁰³ To address the issue of ghost soldiers, CSTC-A is implementing four automated systems to address personnel and pay accountability.⁷⁰⁴ When fully functional, the Afghan Human Resources Information Management System (AHRIMS), the Afghan Personnel Pay System (APPS), the Afghan Automated Biometric Identification System (AABIS), and the ANDSF Identification Card System (ID) will be integrated to pay properly enrolled soldiers electronically.⁷⁰⁵ Such complex systems will, however, still require oversight to determine that personnel are properly accounted for and active in the ANDSF. Furthermore, modern infrastructure is required to operate these systems, including reliable electricity and internet access with



The 209th Corps' biometric enrollment process under way in Mazar-e Sharif. (SIGAR photo)

proper bandwidth.⁷⁰⁶ CSTC-A, though hopeful, has acknowledged that the systems will not completely eliminate the problem of ghost soldiers.⁷⁰⁷

Afghan Special Forces Became “the Best of the Best,” But Were Often Misused

By 2015, increases in violence and political instability appeared to have taken their toll on the ANASOC. Once a large force of over 12,000 highly-trained members, the ANASOC shrank to 10,700 personnel by mid-2015.⁷⁰⁸ The force structure grew, however, to ten kandaks across the country.⁷⁰⁹ Despite the dip in force numbers, the ANASOC made significant progress in its ability to execute complex operations, notably in Helmand Province. Though the RS mission still provided advising, medical evacuations, and ISR enablers, its support goal transitioned to encouraging Afghan forces to have confidence in their own systems, processes, and capabilities.⁷¹⁰ By mid-2015, the Afghans had completely taken the lead in the Special Forces training effort.⁷¹¹

The ANASOC continues to be the most proficient Afghan force on the battlefield.⁷¹² Attrition remains low and reenlistment high.⁷¹³ ANASOC forces perform well at both the tactical and operational levels. Some experts believe the ANASOC remains the last bet against the Taliban and other insurgent and terrorist forces in Afghanistan.⁷¹⁴ Yet, challenges persist. ANASOC still has difficulty in acquiring and maintaining the proper equipment.⁷¹⁵ Additionally, ANASOC, a light force by design, requires appropriate enabling capabilities, relying on the conventional ANA for resupply and logistics, for example.⁷¹⁶ Aviation, ground mobility, fires, and intelligence capabilities are all still in need of training and increased proficiency.



ANA commandos participated in counterinsurgency operations in Kapisa Province. (U.S. Army photo by James K. McCann)

A notable and recent challenge to ANASOC is the improper use of its capabilities in conventional-type clear-and-hold operations.⁷¹⁷ As the conventional forces have been plagued by high attrition and serious deficits in training, equipment, and overall readiness, ANASOC forces have increasingly filled this void. This mismatch degrades combat effectiveness, capability, readiness, and morale.⁷¹⁸ The over-reliance on ANASOC forces for battlefield successes in Afghanistan has recently been noted to be affecting the morale of special forces and commandos.⁷¹⁹ These threats to ANASOC cohesion and readiness are a double-edged sword: (1) Without properly attending to the needs and mission of ANASOC, the RS mission and coalition members risk the degradation of Afghanistan's most capable forces, and (2) without proper attention to the ANA conventional forces, Afghanistan will continue to rely on ANASOC forces for capabilities that lie outside their primary mission.

AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE

Current ANP Train, Advise, and Assist Mission

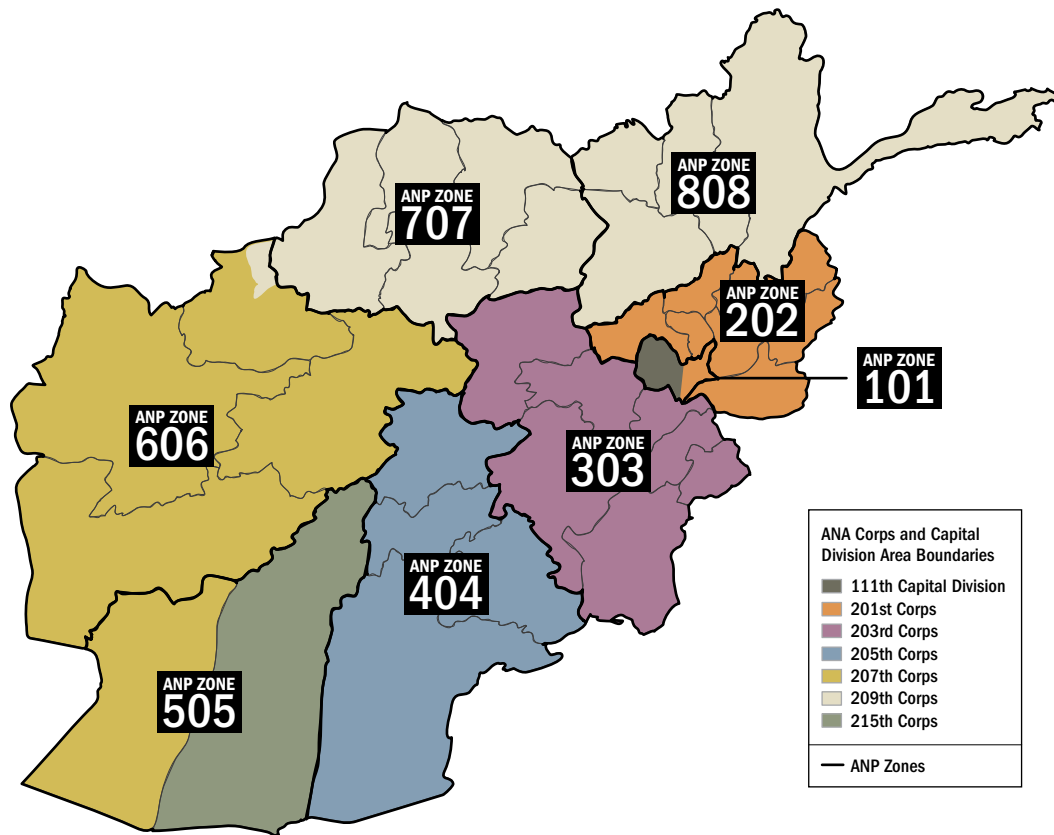
Under Resolute Support, U.S. and NATO police advisors are restricted to the ANP zone level and within the MOI (figure 16).⁷²⁰ Since many ANP units are manning checkpoints or policing district centers, U.S. oversight and visibility of ANP performance and development is scarce. At U.S.-led missions at TAAC-East and TAAC-South, the police advisory missions are led by U.S. conventional army units that may or may not have the required training or expertise in police advising or rule of law. Ministerial-level advising teams also remain under the command of U.S. Army units. To augment deficiencies in policing expertise, contractor specialists are deployed to augment U.S. military units.



ANP patrolman and U.S. Marine near Patrol Base Amir Agha. (DOD photo by Reece Lodder)

FIGURE 16

ANP ZONES VS. ANA CORPS AREA BOUNDARIES



Source: DOD, *Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2016, pp. 63, 95.

A primary focus of the U.S. DOD effort is to work with MOI in developing an operational readiness cycle for the ministry.⁷²¹ An operational readiness cycle—train, fight, rest—is designed to improve professional development of the force and allow units to rest and refit. The operational readiness cycle will also increase the U.S. and coalition advisors’ ability to provide hands-on training for units throughout the country on a routine basis as units rotate back to the zone level for remedial training.

ANP Still Suffering From Missteps of the Early Years

Although some progress has been made since 2002 in improving MOI systems and processes, the ANP continues to suffer from an identity crisis largely due to the competing efforts of U.S. and European stakeholders. ANP train, advise, and assist efforts suffered from a failure to meet international advisor staffing level targets and to properly equip police units.⁷²² Additionally, the U.S. and coalition’s lack of coverage and attention to police units and offices outside of Kabul has had lasting, negative effects on the development of the ANP and MOI.

Without regular oversight and accountability, inappropriate ANP activities have contributed to the persistent low confidence Afghan civilians have in criminal justice and rule of law.

Friction among Key Stakeholders Results in Identity Crisis

Tension over the purpose of the ANP and the role of the advisory mission remain today. The U.S. military continues to see the ANP as a counterinsurgency force focused on protecting the population from Taliban attacks and influence. Due to the high-threat environment, State’s civilian advisors have been restricted to advising in Kabul and lack a continued presence at the regional TAACs where the day-to-day advising of the ANP occurs. For the Europeans, after nearly a decade in Afghanistan, the EU ended its police mission on December 31, 2016, but noted its intentions to send some follow-on advising teams in late 2017. The decision to end the EUPOL mission was in response to “growing instability” which was noted as limiting EUPOL’s ability to work effectively on civilian policing, as most police were “increasingly focus[ed] on fighting insurgents rather than traditional police work.”⁷²³

Under Afghanistan’s four-year plan for the ANDSF, the ANP’s mission is to conduct community policing with a focus on rule of law. However, based on years of training and development as a counterinsurgency force, as of 2016 the ANP lacks the ability to protect the general populace as a civilian policing institution and struggles to address criminality and crime prevention that is not insurgent-related.⁷²⁴ A June 2017 DOD report to Congress indicated that



Members of the ANP in Bamyan Province next to their Humvee during a raid demonstration.
(U.S. Army photo by Christopher Bonebreak)

“the focus and employment in counterinsurgency military functions have hindered the ANP’s development of sufficient anti-crime and other community policing capabilities.”⁷²⁵

The ANP remains focused on the front lines, combating the Taliban-led insurgency, with professionalization as a secondary objective.⁷²⁶ Particularly at sub-national levels, where civilian policing is most critical and the battle for control of territory is ongoing, the ANP have remained largely paramilitary in nature.⁷²⁷ This focus has been continually reinforced by U.S. COIN-oriented strategy and objectives for police development efforts in Afghanistan.⁷²⁸ The paramilitary focus is likely further influenced by MOI leadership with ties to the military, for example, with former ANA commanders currently and previously leading the ANP.⁷²⁹ In many cases, the police still suffer from poor leadership, are under-equipped, under-trained, and subsequently incapable of effectively executing their mission, leading to the reported abandonment of 112 police checkpoints in late 2016.⁷³⁰

Due to its continued front-lines role, the ANP has suffered heavy casualties, negatively impacting morale and attrition rates, which have been consistently around 2 percent of the force per month.⁷³¹ This attrition rate means that, on average, roughly a quarter of the ANP is lost annually.⁷³² Such heavy losses negatively impact the institutional knowledge of the force, as well as creating additional funding, logistical, and professionalization challenges.

At the same time, the COIN focus of the ANP is at odds with MOI’s 10-year vision, published in 2013. The MOI vision document states that the responsibilities of the police should include “enforcing the rule of law, maintaining law and order on the streets and protecting human safety.” It further details that “over the last ten years the police have been used to fight insurgency, which has confused their role and functions. Now the vision of the Ministry of Interior is to return police to the traditional duties they perform under the Afghan Police Law and to cease their participation in combat operations.”⁷³³

Focus on (Unsustainable) Numbers, not Professionalization

Since 2002, the force size for the police has increased dramatically, from 62,000 in 2002 to 157,000 in 2016. This figure does not include the semi-autonomous ALP, which itself is roughly 30,000 police.⁷³⁴ Together, the current ANP force size is three times what it was after the original German assessments in 2002.

The financial obligations for the current ANP force size are unsustainable for the Afghan government. The United States contributed \$93 million in FY 2016 alone.⁷³⁵ SIGAR previously noted that the Afghan government has been facing severe shortfalls in domestic revenue targets, such as for the 2015–2016 fiscal

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

TABLE 9

COMPARING KEY ELEMENTS OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE			
	Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP)	Afghan Local Police (ALP)	Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP)
Recruiting	- Historically low literacy rates - Challenging recruitment due to high attrition and negative incentives created by lower pay and training for AUP, compared to ANA or ANCOP	- Historically low literacy rates - Strong powerbroker influence as a result of limited oversight during recruitment process - Described as legitimizing militias	- Recruited more literate personnel - Recruited from the best officers serving in the AUP - High attrition, at one point as high as 70 percent, due to over-usage of the force
Training*	Basic: 4-9 weeks In the early years, a 2-week refresher course was offered in lieu of basic training to police with previous experience	Basic: 3-4 weeks	Basic: 16+ weeks
Training Description	- Basic policing skills - Basic firearms training added in 2005 - Initially PowerPoint-based, theoretical, intended for literate students - Updated to accommodate low literacy, focusing on practical exercises in 2011 - ANP training and application described as increasingly over-militarized and focused on COIN - Trained by a mix of contractors, U.S. military, and Afghans	- Basic policing techniques - Brief module on human rights - Trained by U.S. SOF, coalition forces, and other ANDSF	- More police-focused training than AUP or ALP, including: - Crowd control - Urban tactical operations - Tribal relations - Ethics - Special weapons tactics - Closer field training, mentoring, and partnering with U.S. and coalition SOF, as compared to other ANP divisions
Salary**	Pre-2009: \$25-80 per month Post-2009: \$100-165 per month	Pre-2009: N/A Post-2009: \$100-150 per month	Pre-2009: \$140 per month Post-2009: \$260 per month
Equipment	- Provided AK-47s, side arms, some light machine guns, uniforms, vehicles - Historically ill- and under-equipped; improvements made in recent years	- Provided AK-47s and ANP police uniforms - Issues regarding logistical support from MOI	Provided better weapons, equipment, and vehicles than other ANP divisions, such as AUP and ALP

Note:

*Training - Ranges show the length of U.S.-initiated training programs over time. Training includes only the basic/initial training course provided (not including literacy, which was later added as a mandatory component of ANP training). Training length shown is also only for those police who attended a basic training course. A number of ANP and ALP personnel did not go through basic training, particularly in the earlier years of U.S. involvement in police training, as well as during the push to rapidly expand the ANDSF in 2009 and beyond. DOD reports as recent as 2017 indicate that some ALP still have not gone through training.

**Salary - Salary figures refer to base pay only and do not account for bonuses. Salaries also do not include losses which occurred when corrupt leaders skimmed salaries; this has improved over time with the implementation of more advanced HR systems and electronic funds transfers.

Source: U.S. Embassy Kabul, "Afghan National Civil Order Police: First Battalions Graduated and Ready For Duty," Kabul 001727 cable, May 24, 2007; Donald Rumsfeld, "Afghan National Police," Memorandum to Dr. Condoleezza Rice, Rumsfeld Files Archive, February 23, 2005; DOD and State Inspectors General, *Interagency Assessment of Afghanistan Police Training and Readiness*, November 2006, pp. 17, 19, 27, 41–64; DOD IG, *Assessment of U.S. Government and Coalition Efforts to Develop the Afghan Local Police*, DODIG-2012-109, July 9, 2012, p. 47; DOD, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, November 2013, pp. 69, 71; DOD, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces*, June 2008, pp. 21–24; GAO, *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police*, GAO-05-575, June 30, 2005, p. 23; GAO, *Afghanistan Security: U.S. Programs to Further Reform Ministry of Interior and National Police Challenged by Lack of Military Personnel and Afghan Cooperation*, GAO-09-280, March 2009, pp. 3, 37; SIGAR, *Afghan Local Police: A Critical Rural Security Initiative Lacks Adequate Logistics Support, Oversight, and Direction*, SIGAR 16-3-AR, October 2015, p. 4–5; NTM-A, "ANP Professionalization: The Basic Patrolman Course," May 7, 2011; NTM-A, "ANP Base Pay and Incentive Pays," April 20, 2011; Robert Perito, *Afghanistan's Civil Order Police: Victim of Its Own Success*, USIP Special Report No. 307, May 2012, pp. 2, 9–12; Robert Perito, *Police Transition in Afghanistan*, USIP Special Report No. 322, February 2013, pp. 2, 4–5; David Bayley and Robert Perito, *The Police in War: Fighting Insurgency, Terrorism, and Violent Crime* (London, United Kingdom: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2010), pp. 23, 28; Richard Hooker Jr. and Joseph Collins, *Lessons Encountered*, pp. 292–293, 299; Ali Jalali, *Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces: Mission, Challenges, and Sustainability*, Peaceworks No. 115, USIP, 2016, p. 18; RAND, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan*, 2011, pp. 50–52, 61–64; Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), *From Arbaki to Local Police: Today's Challenges and Tomorrow's Concerns*, Spring 2012, p. 5; Andrew Wilder, *Cops or Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police*, July 2007, pp. ix, 2, 12–14, 35–37; C.J. Chivers, "Afghan Police Earn Poor Grade for Marja Mission," *New York Times*, June 1, 2010.

year, when Afghanistan was 35 percent below targets.⁷³⁶ The April 2017 SIGAR Quarterly Report also noted that, "as of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated \$20.3 billion and disbursed \$19.9 billion of ASFF funds to build, train, equip, and sustain the ANP."⁷³⁷

Improvements have been made in ensuring all Afghan police have completed required training prior to beginning work at their assigned posts. According to DOD, as of May 31, 2016, more than 95 percent of ANP personnel had received basic training, with plans in place to ensure this is mandatory in the future. However, a June 2017 DOD report to Congress indicated there were still "significant deficiencies" in ANP training, concluding that "efforts to increase

the capabilities of ANP units” were “severely hampered.”⁷³⁸ The drawdown of coalition forces since 2014 has resulted in significantly decreased oversight and assistance to police training across the country. And, as U.S. funding and assistance to training decreases, keeping pace with annual attrition may prove a significant obstacle for the Afghan government to overcome.⁷³⁹

Even with significant international financial support, the United States and MOI continue to struggle with equipping the forces currently in place, including the ALP and the elite forces like ANCOP (table 9).⁷⁴⁰ A December 2016 DOD report to Congress described “limited accountability for equipment and supplies at the ANP provincial headquarters.”⁷⁴¹ The report further described MOI as having “limited capacity to draft and manage complex procurement contracting actions.” However, DOD described recently initiated efforts to improve MOI capacities through procurement training programs, which DOD stated have resulted in improvements in the ministry’s contracting capabilities.⁷⁴²

Afghan Local Police

Reports still indicate ALP program results are mixed.⁷⁴³ Assessments of the ALP indicate that third parties raised concerns with the program and its efficacy early on, as reports of human rights abuses, drug trafficking, and corruption were noted from the first year.⁷⁴⁴ The ALP continues to be accused of corruption and a variety of human rights abuses across the country.⁷⁴⁵ Although DOD reports in previous years have indicated the ALP contributed to counterinsurgency efforts and improved security, recent DOD reports do not confirm this, but rather detail the ALP’s significant challenges.⁷⁴⁶

The International Crisis Group described the ALP’s assistance with security as marginal, noting that between 2010 and 2014, overall levels of violence across Afghanistan rose by 14 percent, but in the five provinces without an ALP presence, these levels fell by 27 percent.⁷⁴⁷ The record does, however, also suggest “that the ALP contribute to security where local factors allow recruitment of members from the villages they patrol and where they respect their own communities. But such conditions do not exist in many districts.”⁷⁴⁸ The ICG report also noted that some of the provinces that experienced improved security, but did not have an ALP presence, were already more peaceful than other regions.

The ALP and past auxiliary programs have, however, proven themselves to be more fiscally sustainable than the regular ANP; one ALP guardian costs roughly one quarter of the average ANP policeman.⁷⁴⁹ The 2013 estimates from DOD noted that the ALP program would cost roughly \$121 million annually to sustain.⁷⁵⁰ This reduced price-tag was appealing, especially considering the cost of the ANA and ANP reconstruction overall. Burden-sharing, while desirable, is not likely for these auxiliary programs; the Afghan government is incapable, at least in the near-term.

Other international donors, such as Japan and some European countries, have noted they are not only legally unable to support the auxiliary police, citing their resemblance to militias, but also unwilling, as they have strong reservations about such militia-based programming.⁷⁵¹ At this point, the ALP is still funded entirely by the United States from the Afghan Security Forces Fund.⁷⁵²

Size goals and timelines for the ALP remain of concern. As of the end of 2016, the ALP force strength was roughly 28,000, with an authorized end strength of 30,000.⁷⁵³ Although the ALP program was established with the stated intent to be phased out within two to five years, training was still occurring in 2016, with no end dates or transition timelines officially indicated in DOD reports to Congress.⁷⁵⁴ An August 2016 *SOF News* report notes that the force “has been fully transferred to the Afghan [MOI],” but also notes that “a small advisory team” is still in place.⁷⁵⁵ MOI’s 2013 10-year vision for the ANP states its intent to eventually integrate the ALP into the ANP “as security conditions improve” and “after receiving the required education and training.”⁷⁵⁶

The ALP continues to receive mixed reviews.⁷⁵⁷ The ALP has been assessed, mostly by U.S. government officials, as having helped in achieving some counter-insurgency goals, nationally.⁷⁵⁸ However, DOD reporting to Congress in 2016 also indicates a number of persistent problems with the ALP, such as powerbroker control of ALP units and the continued existence of ghost personnel, albeit with improvements.⁷⁵⁹ Specifically, the report detailed how 2,000 ghost police were removed with the help of new payroll systems and how two “districts identified as working for local powerbrokers were disestablished.”⁷⁶⁰



ALP recruits in basic training at Nangarhar Police Regional Training Center. (U.S. Army photo by Jarrod Morris)

Although some improvements are noted to have recently been made, a SIGAR audit conducted in 2015 indicated that CSTC-A had still not conducted a thorough audit of the ALP program and that a number of recommended improvements to the program had not been implemented.⁷⁶¹ A 2016 DOD report to Congress did indicate that attempts were made to improve ALP command and control structures, but also noted those actions were not successful. The report detailed that “despite the alignment of the ALP more directly underneath the Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) in June 2015, in practice, provincial chiefs of police have maintained operational control or influence over many ALP units.”⁷⁶² Former Afghan Minister of Interior Jalali also noted in a 2016 report that, although safeguards have been established, they are “rarely implemented,” resulting in his ultimate conclusion that the force was still a net contributor to instability, not security.⁷⁶³ Jalali further described the mixed results and reviews of the ALP, stating,

The ALP has contributed to security in areas where its members could be recruited from local villages and tribes, where they serve and are accountable to their local communities. In other places where the ALP is organized and led by local militia leaders and patronage networks, the armed men become engaged in predatory acts—abusing the population—and in many locations, they worsen security.⁷⁶⁴

Evidence suggests that in its current capacity, the ALP is a dangerous, double-edged sword. Although the ALP has helped to counter the insurgency in roughly a third of the areas where they are present, the ALP still largely continues to reinforce the legitimization of corrupt, criminal, warlord-loyal militias, often undermining the authority of the central government and the overall security situation.⁷⁶⁵ As Minister Jalali succinctly stated in 2016, “Unless the current ALP program is reformed ... any expansion will be a waste of resources.”⁷⁶⁶

Corruption and Lack of Public Confidence Still Helping to Drive the Insurgency

There are mixed indicators for public perceptions of and confidence in the ANP. Some prominent Afghans have noted that the government, including the police, still enjoys a respectable amount of public support, at least compared to other options (for example, the Taliban or other violent extremists).⁷⁶⁷ However, patronage networks continue to negatively influence local capacities to maintain security, as do continued corruption and human rights abuses by the police.⁷⁶⁸

In many cases, based on the history of limited government oversight and corrupt practices, police are often viewed as a net detractor from security. This was especially true with the ALP, who were described as “cheap but dangerous” in a 2015 International Crisis Group report.⁷⁶⁹ Institutional governance and integrity have been significantly damaged by years of informal chains of command, the re-sanctioning of untrained or under-trained militias across the country, and subsequent pervasive corruption and human rights abuses by these groups.⁷⁷⁰



A large audience, including Major General Richard Kaiser and Inspector General John Sopko, third and fourth from left, respectively, attended a May 2017 conference in Kabul on “Countering the Culture of Corruption in Afghanistan.” (Afghan government photo)

The Afghan government and ANP legitimacy are also still negatively impacted by the continued lag in justice sector development, including rule of law, which undermines security efforts by causing Afghans to turn to the Taliban for “quick justice,” effectively legitimizing the insurgency.⁷⁷¹ Police corruption has added to the slow development of these complementary sectors, as police face little recourse for offenses, such as sexual harassment or accepting bribes for releasing offenders from detention. In the last quarter of 2016, for example, the number of Gross Violation of Human Rights (GVHR) cases identified for MOI increased from 24 to 30, as compared to the previous quarter. Of the 24 reported in the previous quarter, only 10 of those cases were actually investigated.⁷⁷²

Corruption and abuse are significant challenges for the MOI writ large. DOD reported that, at the end of 2016, MOI “possesses the basic systems and organizations to investigate and adjudicate allegations of GVHR and corruption.” However, DOD also described significant challenges for the ministry, such as not demonstrating a capacity “to train personnel on rule of law issues” and an inability to manage “the volume of corruption and GVHR allegations identified,” noting that MOI “leadership’s political will to hold violators accountable remains inconsistent at best.”⁷⁷³

A human rights report issued by the State Department in 2015 described the ANP as a major predatory actor.⁷⁷⁴ The report stated, “According to observers, ALP and ANP personnel were largely unaware of their responsibilities and defendants’ rights under the law. Accountability of NDS and ANP officials for

torture and abuse was weak, not transparent, and rarely enforced. Independent judicial or external oversight of the NDS and ANP in the investigation and prosecution of crimes or misconduct, including torture and abuse, was limited.”⁷⁷⁵ President Ghani, speaking at the 2017 Annual European Union Anti-Corruption Conference, described the MOI as the most corrupt institution in Afghanistan, further emphasizing the significant challenges facing MOI in its efforts to curb corruption.⁷⁷⁶

Police corruption continues to negatively affect both the civilian population of Afghanistan and the police themselves. In a January 2015 audit, SIGAR found that ANP personnel were sometimes being paid for days not worked, or not receiving pay either in-full or partially, as “trusted agent” payroll systems allowed senior officials to skim police wages, as well as benefit from ghost police salaries.⁷⁷⁷ For example, a provincial police chief in Helmand Province claimed that half of the Helmand police consisted of ghost personnel.⁷⁷⁸ To mitigate this, the United States began integrating AHRIMS into the MOI and MOD at the end of 2016.⁷⁷⁹ According to CSTC-A, this system may help dramatically reduce, though not completely eliminate, the problem of ghost police.⁷⁸⁰

Public confidence in the police force has, however, been noted to be improving by some experts.⁷⁸¹ Albeit rising slowly from markedly low levels, rising public confidence could indicate that issues of corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, and human rights abuses will continue to diminish if further efforts are placed on countering corruption, improving command and control, and general professionalization.⁷⁸²



CHAPTER 6

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AFFECTING ANDSF DEVELOPMENT

Several cross-cutting issues have affected the development of the ANDSF since 2002, including corruption, low literacy rates, the role of women in the security forces, equipment shortages, high levels of attrition, and the consistent rotations of U.S. trainers and advisors.

CORRUPTION AND CONDITIONALITY

In Afghanistan, currently ranked one of the most corrupt nations in the world, corruption has contributed to the significant waste of U.S. funds and resources, particularly in relation to the U.S. ANDSF development efforts.⁷⁸³ Since 2001, corruption has ballooned to a level referred to as “pervasive,” “entrenched,” and even “deadly” to Afghan society.⁷⁸⁴ In this environment, “resource windfalls or aid flows may instead reinforce patronage networks, encourage economic rent-seeking, and foster corruption and waste.”⁷⁸⁵ Corruption by ANDSF officials, at all institutional levels, has degraded security, force readiness, and overall capabilities. High-level corruption, such as that exhibited by some ANDSF leaders, is likely to promote lower-level corruption, as a culture of impunity starts at the top and then normalizes corrupt behavior within the entire system. It gives the rank and file an “excuse” to engage in extortion, embezzlement, fraud, and other abusive behaviors themselves, which then directly affects the population.⁷⁸⁶

Reports indicate that corruption has been steadily increasing in Afghanistan since 2001.⁷⁸⁷ Little was done to address this issue, especially during the early years of reconstruction, due in part to the competing priorities of coalition nations. For example, the United States prioritized immediate security concerns and countering the rising insurgency above long-term sustainability and development objectives, including a focus on anticorruption.⁷⁸⁸

According to a 2016 Asia Foundation (TAF) report, Afghan perceptions of corruption reveal significant and steady signs of disillusionment. TAF polling indicated a rise in the percentage of survey respondents describing corruption as a “major problem” in local authorities, rising from 48 percent in 2006 to 58 percent in 2016. Similarly, Afghan perceptions that corruption was affecting their daily lives increased from 42 percent in 2006 to 61 percent in 2016.⁷⁸⁹

By 2009, donor nations began to recognize the full extent of the negative impacts of corruption on security and development throughout the country. Corruption and its “direct influence on insecurity” could no longer be ignored.⁷⁹⁰ Although some measures to counteract corruption were implemented in earlier years, more significant steps—including additional pay and rank reform initiatives, as well as aid conditionality—were taken to counteract corruption within the ANDSF from 2009 onward, albeit with limited results. While there have been renewed efforts to counter corruption within the ANDSF in 2017, including mass firings and parliamentary hearings, it is unclear if these are signs of a normative shift, or simply a show of force that will be followed by a continuation of business as usual.⁷⁹¹

Corruption in the ANDSF

Within the ANDSF, reports of corruption have been widespread and varied, including, but not limited to, participation in the drug trade, extortion, pay-for-position schemes, bribery, land grabbing, and selling U.S. and NATO-supplied equipment, sometimes even to insurgents. The impacts of corruption within the ANDSF have been felt far and wide within the country and have been described as tarnishing the reputation and diminishing the legitimacy of the forces, and the Afghan government.⁷⁹²

Corruption within the ANA was regularly reported as being lower than in the ANP. Possible reasons for this difference include the ANA having less interaction with the public and more consistent contact with the coalition. At the same time, ANA corruption typically remained at a level that was cause for concern. This concern was enhanced in recent years, as perceptions of corruption within the ANA have steadily increased since 2006.⁷⁹³ TAF noted that 48 percent of its 2016 survey respondents were exposed to corruption through interactions with the ANP, while exposure to corruption through interactions with the ANA was lower at 38 percent.⁷⁹⁴

Effects of the Drug Trade

Corruption has been in part fueled by the drug trade and opium production, “affecting all levels of the Afghan government,” to include the ministries of defense and interior, as well as parliament.⁷⁹⁵ A report from USIP noted that “Afghans believed almost universally that Interior Ministry officials, provincial police chiefs, and members of the ANP were involved with the drug trade.”⁷⁹⁶ These beliefs were based on widely reported incidents of officials accepting “large bribes for protecting drug traffickers and for ‘selling’ senior provincial and district police positions to persons engaged in drug trafficking.”⁷⁹⁷

Extortion

Public extortion has long been a problem within the ANP. Afghans reported being frequently held at legal and illegal police checkpoints and required to pay bribes in order to pass through in a timely manner, if at all.⁷⁹⁸ At checkpoints along the road from Herat to Kandahar, Afghans reported having to pay multiple bribes, or “risk having the windows of their vehicles broken” or having other damage done to their vehicle, property, or person.⁷⁹⁹ An assessment conducted in 2013 found that of 377 checkpoints surveyed, nearly “two-thirds of police checkpoints [were] charging illegal tolls.”⁸⁰⁰ Truck drivers also reported being taken hostage by police, who then demanded that truck owners pay ransoms to secure their drivers’ release.⁸⁰¹ Shopkeepers in Herat also described other incidents of extortion, where members of the ANDSF entered their stores and “they pay whatever they want for things.... If you [the shopkeepers] say anything, they threaten you.”⁸⁰²



Afghan Uniformed Policeman stands guard at a checkpoint in Kandahar. (U.S. Army photo by Kaily Brown)

Extortion deeply affects individual Afghans, but also has repercussions at a broader level. For example, extortion has been described as having a “major depressive impact” on the economy, helping to keep foreign investors at bay.⁸⁰³ Using Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) data, an IWPR reporter estimated that “illegal road tolls amount[ed] to US \$50,000 each month.”⁸⁰⁴ Foreign investors were reluctant to invest time, personnel, and capital in a country where not only the individual safety of employees was in question—because of concerns about the Afghan security forces responsible for protecting them—but also where their supplies and products could be commandeered, or when significant amounts of money might be wasted paying bribes or ransoms.

Stealing Salaries

The theft of soldiers’ and police officers’ salaries was another aspect of corruption within the ANDSF. SIGAR previously reported on this phenomenon in 2015, stating that more than \$300 million in annual U.S.-funded salaries for the ANP were based on only partially verified or reconciled personnel data.⁸⁰⁵ According to these reports, CSTC-A indicated that corrupt practices, including a “trusted agent method of salary payments,” could lead to a loss of 50 percent of a policeman’s salary.⁸⁰⁶ The “trusted agent method” meant personnel were paid in cash via an intermediary agent, who accepted the money from a central institution. The agent was supposed to then deliver the cash to the policeman or soldier in person.⁸⁰⁷

This phenomenon was also observed frequently within the ANA, where there was minimal oversight of personnel and payrolls. CSTC-A estimated that in February 2015, 5 percent of ANA personnel were paid through a similar trusted agent method.⁸⁰⁸ This method increased the opportunity for corruption, as there was little, if any, oversight once the cash was turned over to the agent. The trusted agent model effectively enabled corruption and salary skimming at a national level. Such practices underscore the importance of electronic payment systems that can be more easily viewed and assessed by third parties, such as donor nations.

Theft and Sale of Supplies

Supplies and equipment have also frequently been affected by corruption within the ANDSF. Police and soldiers have reportedly sold fuel, weapons, ammunition, and other supplies for profit, sometimes even to the Taliban.⁸⁰⁹ Lower-level personnel found guilty of these activities often pay a heavier price than more senior officers, who have the resources or political power to evade prosecution.⁸¹⁰

The mismanagement of ANDSF supplies is perhaps best illustrated by the misuse of weapons and ammunition. Media outlets have investigated Afghan soldiers who fired their weapons purely for the sake of being compensated for their ammunition.⁸¹¹ Reuters estimated that eight of ten soldiers in the ANA had,



Inspector General Sopko discusses fuel authentication procedures with Brigadier General Paul Calvert, deputy commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, during a visit to the headquarters of the 201st Corps. (U.S. Army photo by Egdanis Torres Sierra)

at some point, sold their ammunition for personal profit, adding, “Some soldiers and police even sell weapons and ammunition to the Taliban.”⁸¹²

The theft and sale of weapons and equipment was not unique to the ANA. A Congressional Research Service (CRS) report indicated that an equivalent phenomenon occurred within the ANP. The ANP increasingly received heavy weapons and vehicles from U.S. and coalition forces and, in some cases, ANP commanders sold and pocketed funds from ammunition and vehicle sales.⁸¹³

In a 2014 SIGAR audit, the agency highlighted how ANDSF records did not adequately provide accountability of all weapons transferred by the U.S. and coalition forces to the Afghan security forces. Although the audit did not address where the unaccounted-for weapons ended up, it was inferred that many were sold illegally by ANDSF personnel.⁸¹⁴

Fuel presented a separate and unique resource for exploitation. SIGAR’s investigations into the use and misuse of fuel noted CSTC-A had no record of spilled or lost fuel. This lack of accountability created opportunities for theft.⁸¹⁵ CSTC-A admitted to having poor or incomplete data, suggesting there was no way the agency could properly predict the demands and amount of money that would be needed to supply fuel to the ANDSF in the future. To further underscore this issue, in Kapisa Province, the provincial police chief, Brigadier General Abdul Karim Faye, allegedly orchestrated the theft of about 60,000 gallons of government fuel meant for Afghan troops.⁸¹⁶

Weapons, equipment, and fuel theft are perhaps the most common examples of U.S. concerns about the mismanagement of resources and corrupt practices within the ANDSF. Yet, the provision of food and health care were additional indicators of the severity and saturation of corruption within the ANDSF. Recently, the *New York Times* reported that Major General M. Moein Faqir of the ANDSF was arrested and charged with the misuse of money intended to supply his soldiers with food.⁸¹⁷ Furthermore, the U.S. government has investigated significant corruption at the Dawood National Military Hospital, where injured ANDSF members were treated.⁸¹⁸ The misuse of money intended for food and healthcare underscores the fact that the provision of anything, regardless of its value, must be subject to strict oversight and accountability to prevent corruption.

Anticorruption Activities

Extortion and bribery within the ANDSF were thought to be, in part, a product of low pay and the skimming of salaries by senior officials. Pay reforms were attempted, but produced limited results. An Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) report on senior MOI appointments and corruption noted that, in the case of the police, officers who “engage more in corrupt practices seem more likely to secure better positions since they can afford buying [them].”⁸¹⁹ IWA also described cases of reported corruption which were largely ignored due to “influential figures” derailing many investigations and prosecutions.⁸²⁰ Some junior-level police were fired and prosecuted for stealing “thousands” of afghanis, but senior officials, described as stealing “millions” of afghanis, were not prosecuted.⁸²¹ As recently as 2015, Afghan MOI Inspector General



Members of the ALP wait patiently to receive their monthly pay in Kandahar Province. (DOD photo by Arnell Ord)

officials were accused of not investigating corruption and even participating in it themselves.⁸²²

Pay and rank reforms were first instituted by the coalition in 2006 in part to correct issues related to corruption. These reforms were described as having only moderate success.⁸²³ Rank was noted to have become more balanced, wages rose, and some ghost soldier positions were eliminated through a new direct payment system. However, implementation was limited, in part due to a lack of banks throughout the country, which allowed some officials to skim off salaries in rural areas. The reform program was also noted to ultimately be “far less successful in creating a merit-based system for recruitment, promotions, and assignments and reducing the influence of corruption, factionalism, and tribalism in these areas.”⁸²⁴

As part of the pay reform effort, at the end of 2008, “CSTC-A, major donors, and Interior Ministry officials agreed on a plan for restructuring the ministry to improve efficiency and reduce corruption.”⁸²⁵ However, the implementation of the plan was delayed due to political resistance, as well as “a lack of coordination between international donors and advisors.”⁸²⁶ Ministry officials also noted confusion throughout the process, as they were receiving “conflicting advice from mentors from different countries.”⁸²⁷

More recently, CSTC-A implemented four automated systems to address personnel management and accountability problems: The Afghan Human Resource Information Management System, the Afghan Personnel Pay System, the Afghan Automated Biometric Identification System, and the ANDSF Identification Card System.⁸²⁸ These systems are not yet fully operational due, in part, to their complexity.⁸²⁹ The systems have been criticized because they require continued assistance from U.S. personnel to maintain, calling into question their sustainability and prolonging issues of dependence and capacity substitution.

Conditionality

By 2013, corruption was recognized as a critical threat to U.S. objectives in Afghanistan. DOD called “government ineffectiveness and endemic corruption” the most significant threats to the successful transition of security responsibilities in Afghanistan.⁸³⁰ Despite consistent reports of rampant corruption, U.S. security-related aid to Afghan ministries was provided with little oversight or accountability. According to Lieutenant General Todd Semonite, former commanding general of CSTC-A, the United States “had no conditions” on funds flowing through CSTC-A to the Afghan defense and interior ministries prior to 2014.⁸³¹ Generally, any mechanisms that were in place to

prevent funds or resources from being misappropriated or otherwise misused were secondary to the demands of war fighting and increasing security.

At the ministerial level, efforts to counter corruption were not prioritized. In 2013, for example, DOD reported that at the same time an already potentially destabilizing political transition was occurring, the MOI made several cuts to its inspector general staff. The MOI inspector general's office was noted to be "the main focus of ISAF counter-corruption" efforts.⁸³² That same year, DOD reported that because of the political transition in MOI, there was no common direction on anticorruption efforts.⁸³³ Due to these cuts and lack of direction, DOD noted that, "The positive progress made six months ago at MOI has slowed or in some cases stalled."⁸³⁴

It was not until 2014 that the U.S. military started using conditionality as a way to influence leadership and institutional behavior. Implementing a conditions-based provision of funds and resources was seen as a "risk-mitigating and damage-controlling" measure appropriate for a "challenging environment for aid implementation."⁸³⁵ More importantly, however, conditionality was seen as a mechanism for fostering a sense of discipline, capacity, and self-sufficiency—qualities that had not yet been required of the ANDSF given such strong international support.⁸³⁶

Since 2014, the U.S. military has come to increasingly use conditionality as a way to mitigate corruption. The conditions-based provision of funds and resources is decided annually by CSTC-A and the ANDSF via the mutual drafting and signing of bilateral financial agreements, or commitment letters. The commitment letters stipulate the conditions the Afghan government must meet in order to receive aid or resources and provide CSTC-A the leverage to hold or debit funds.

More broadly, conditionality is viewed as a means to ensure the proper implementation and integration of items such as payroll, human resources, and real property systems. In the context of security assistance, conditions can be large in scope, such as demonstrating progress toward ministry-level goals, or can be more targeted, such as integrating the use of electronic personnel information systems or submitting corps-level spending plans. CSTC-A's 2014 commitment letter to MOD, for example, implemented a condition of an annual 100 percent inventory of weapons, with loss reports due within 30 days; CSTC-A could freeze deliveries or withhold repair support if discrepancies were not reconciled or resolved.⁸³⁷ In 2015, leaders from MOD, MOI, and MOF signed a commitment letter obligating each of their respective organizations to meet 93 mutually agreed-upon goals: 45 for MOD and 48 for MOI. According to Major General Semonite, these goals "drive Afghan government processes, save

millions of dollars in donor contributions by reducing fuel and ammunition excess (by 40 and 60 percent, respectively), addressing corruption at multiple levels, and setting procedures that reduce fraud and abuse opportunities.”⁸³⁸

Factors that Impede Conditionality Effectiveness

Several factors undermined the effectiveness of conditionality. First, conditionality required extensive understanding and buy-in from the Afghan government. A 2015 SIGAR Quarterly Report to Congress noted that, without genuine understanding and support of aid programs and their conditions, recipient nation leaders “may construct compliance charades like enacting high-sounding but unenforced laws and conceal day-to-day practices ... may be willing to tolerate penalties for failing to enact reforms they do not actually want ... or they may simply lack the political or administrative clout to deliver compliance in the first place.”⁸³⁹ To illustrate, a USIP briefing paper on aid for Afghanistan noted that “withholding funding for gender programs on the basis of limited progress on gender issues may prove counterproductive given that some [local] actors may actually welcome cessation of such funds.”⁸⁴⁰ Moreover, in its report on the failure of international aid programs, the National Academy of Public Administration noted that “governments will agree to almost anything [to obtain aid] ... [but] whether they support it is another matter.”⁸⁴¹ The report also noted that political pressures and fears of wrecking or undoing progress may serve as an impetus to keep aid flowing, despite failing to comply with or meet agreed-upon conditions.⁸⁴²

In Afghanistan, U.S. and other donor nations’ security concerns resulted in a lack of rigor in enforcing conditionality. In 2015, for example, the DOD Inspector General reported concerns regarding CSTC-A’s efforts to develop capacity and responsibility at the Afghan ministerial level. The DOD IG became aware of “internal pressure to not allow the Afghans to fail” and that “pressure to maintain hard-fought gains” led to “overlooking ministerial shortcomings.” The same report noted that CSTC-A was unable to develop the capacity of the ministries to operate “effectively, independently, and transparently” because CSTC-A officials “often performed ministerial functions” and “did not enforce the requirements within commitment letters.”⁸⁴³ This tendency was reflected in a 2015 SIGAR interview with Lieutenant General Semonite, who said he believed strongly that fiscal discipline and capacity building imperatives forbade rescuing Afghan ministries every time they had problems, but added he would not stand by if Afghan ministry failures to satisfy conditions threatened loss of life or battlefield defeat.⁸⁴⁴

Corruption in Afghanistan Today

The train, advise, and assist mission remains focused on “improving the ability of the MOD and the MOI to provide appropriate oversight and accountability

of international funding for the ANDSF and developing Afghan capability in financial management.”⁸⁴⁵ According to a December 2016 report, USFOR-A has incorporated the recommendations of the DOD Inspector General and SIGAR. In addition to the continued reliance on financial commitment letters, USFOR-A has been working toward developing a financial intelligence and forensic accounting capability to gain greater oversight of U.S. funds.⁸⁴⁶ In addition, as of March 2016, the coalition began conducting quarterly reviews at the two-star level to assess MOD and MOI progress on meeting conditions outlined in commitment letters and to better determine responses when and if the Afghans did not meet established conditions. According to a December 2016 DOD report, “The first two quarters of [FY 2016 saw] mixed success in meeting the conditions outlined in the commitment letters” and the “second quarter saw a slight improvement, with 66 percent of conditions demonstrating satisfactory progress compared to 60 percent demonstrating satisfactory progress in the first quarter.”⁸⁴⁷ Penalties for noncompliance included reduced fuel allocations and equipment withholding.

In January 2017, Resolute Support and CSTC-A Major General Richard Kaiser stated that the U.S. military would only pay ANA soldiers who were biometrically enrolled and had matching identity cards. The U.S. military subsequently removed more than 30,000 names of suspected ghost soldiers they could not prove existed; the ANA has until summer 2017 to refute this.⁸⁴⁸ These recent efforts followed SIGAR allegations that Afghan soldiers were still selling weapons and vehicles to the enemy.⁸⁴⁹ To tackle these corruption issues, Major General Kaiser and the U.S. military placed increased focus on



Dr. Rohullah Abed, at far left, executive director of Afghanistan’s Anti-Corruption Justice Center, with visitors (left to right) Josie Stewart, UK Department for International Development; Carl Walker, CSTC-A; Hamidullah Hamidi, CSTC-A; Capt. Matthew Karchaske, CSTC-A; Col. John Siemietkowski, CSTC-A; and Charles Hyacinthe, SIGAR. (SIGAR photo)

“big-ticket” items such as fuel contracts and personnel. Kaiser noted that, while losing supplies to the enemy remained a serious concern, monitoring losses caused by sales or desertions of some Afghan forces was impeded by limited U.S. oversight in Afghanistan’s provinces. Acknowledging the limitations of what could be done to address the issue of corruption due to time and resources available, the *Wall Street Journal* quoted Major General Kaiser as saying, “We can do anything, but we can’t do everything.”⁸⁵⁰

In 2017, Afghan security ministers came under renewed scrutiny and review by the Afghan parliament because of recent SIGAR and other Afghan commentators’ reporting on endemic corruption and leadership challenges within the security services. An Afghan news agency reported that, at the end of 2016 through the beginning of 2017, the Afghan government had “fired at least 1,394 army personnel,” including some army generals and commanders, “on charges of corruption amid persistent efforts to bring reforms in the government institutions.”⁸⁵¹ However, Deputy Defense Minister Helaluddin Helal also noted that only 140 of those fired had been charged with “involvement in corruption and graft.”⁸⁵² General Nicholson testified to Congress in February 2017 that the Anti-Corruption Justice Center, “stood up by President Ghani ... with support of the international community,” had its “first trial of a two-star general in the Ministry of Interior.”⁸⁵³ The MOI general was convicted of charges relating to bribery for a fuel contract and was sentenced to 14 years in jail. Nicholson noted that because of this and other problems relating to corruption, the control of fuel contracts had been pulled back under CSTC-A, instead of the ministries. He also said they would be “going after the reduction of ghost soldiers,” mentioning the personnel management systems CSTC-A was implementing.⁸⁵⁴

Although reform programs are noted by both U.S. and Afghan officials to be in place in the security ministries, the actual impact of these programs is unclear, as several senior leaders have recently been implicated in corrupt activities. A senior Afghan general, Major General Mohammad Moeen Faqeer, was arrested on charges of corruption in March 2017, “a year after he was deployed to crack down on fraud and other shady dealings in restive Helmand Province.”⁸⁵⁵ Faqeer had been sent to the 215th Corps in early 2016 to replace another commander who had become embroiled in controversies related to corruption and poor unit performance. In March 2017, charged with incompetence and corruption, Minister of Defense, Lieutenant General Abdullah Khan Habibi; Minister of Interior, Taj Mohammad Jahid; and National Directorate of Security head, Masoom Stanikzai, narrowly survived a parliamentary vote of no-confidence for corruption-related concerns.⁸⁵⁶

Corruption has plagued the development of the ANDSF since 2002 and President Ghani faces continued criticism as “high levels of fraud continue.”⁸⁵⁷ It is still

possible for Afghanistan to effectively combat corruption through new or current initiatives being implemented, including the prosecution of high-level officials. The United States and its partners can promote those efforts through the use of effective conditionality.

LITERACY TRAINING: BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE, INDEPENDENT ANDSF

Afghanistan's population has long suffered from extremely low levels of literacy. Recent reports estimate that nearly 70 percent of the adult population is illiterate, making Afghanistan one of the most illiterate countries in the world.⁸⁵⁸ In Afghanistan's rural areas, the situation is even more acute: an estimated 90 percent of women and 63 percent of men cannot read, write, or compute.⁸⁵⁹

Literacy challenges have significantly hindered U.S. security sector assistance efforts within the country. The ANDSF has been affected by this problem, albeit at an even more alarming rate than the national average. In 2009, SIGAR estimated that only 13 percent of ANDSF recruits could read and write.⁸⁶⁰ Admiral Michael Mullen, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as other sources, cited an even lower percentage: 9 to 10 percent.⁸⁶¹ Similar estimates were affirmed by CSTC-A commander Lieutenant General William Caldwell IV, who said in 2011 that "nine out of ten [recruits] were illiterate."⁸⁶² In July 2010, DOD News reported that Army Colonel John Ferrari, deputy commander for CSTC-A programs, cited literacy as the "biggest hurdle" the ANDSF faced. The article quoted Ferrari as saying, "Afghanistan is a country that has been at war for 30 years. Education was not prized; as a matter of fact, the Taliban shut down the schools."⁸⁶³ Consequently, recruits between the ages of 18 and 30, who the United States and its coalition partners were trying to bring into the security forces, lacked basic literacy skills and experience with formal education systems.

The disparity between the literacy levels of incoming ANDSF recruits and those of the average Afghan adult population were attributed to the number of recruits coming from lower-class, less-educated families.⁸⁶⁴ Even within the ANDSF, differences existed between the literacy rates of the ANA and the ANP. This largely stemmed from the disincentives associated with joining the ANP.⁸⁶⁵ Prior to 2005, the recruitment and retention of police suffered under a system that failed to meet pay expectations and was not aligned with the ANA's rank and pay scale.⁸⁶⁶ It was not until 2005 that the MOI began implementing pay reform to establish parity between ANA and ANP salaries.⁸⁶⁷ Surprisingly, the implementation of literacy programs also contributed to the high turnover rates that plagued the ANDSF. According to one Afghan soldier, a number of his colleagues who excelled in the literacy training program left the ANA because "once they could read and write, they could easily find a better job."⁸⁶⁸

While improving literacy has recently been considered a critical factor in developing professional and capable security forces, literacy training was not a component of early ANA and ANP training efforts by the coalition, as well as by Afghan leadership itself. In pursuit of quick, tangible results, U.S. and coalition training efforts for the ANDSF centered largely on combat preparation in order to rapidly field operational forces. Because of this, force and weapons training took precedence over any literacy or educational efforts. As the focus shifted toward developing sustainable and independent security forces, however, addressing the problem of illiteracy took on new and increased importance.

Impacts of an Illiterate Force

The importance of having a literate Afghan security force is best understood when the specific, tangible impacts of illiteracy are exposed. Unable to read maps, signs, directions, or instructions, many Afghan army and police forces were largely dependent and unable to operate alone.⁸⁶⁹ An Afghan army recruit once stated, “If someone calls me and tells me to go somewhere, I can’t read the street signs.”⁸⁷⁰ Lieutenant General Caldwell elaborated on this in an article for *Military Review*, noting, “How do we professionalize a soldier who cannot read a manual ... fill out a form for the issue of equipment ... or write an intelligence report for a higher command? How do we professionalize a police officer who cannot read the laws he is enforcing, write an incident report, record a license plate, or even sign his name to a citation?”⁸⁷¹ Caldwell also described challenges of accountability of both superiors and subordinates when personnel could not read what was expected of them, particularly in terms of equipment, pay received, and other professional actions.⁸⁷²



An ANA recruit receiving literacy training during Basic Warrior Training at the Regional Military Training Center in Kandahar. (Photo by Adrienne Brammer)

The *Military Review* article further noted that illiteracy regularly affected the pace and depth of training, in that “all training has to be hands-on; each skill has to be demonstrated. Without the ability to provide written material to prime the pump, every new block of instruction starts from scratch.”⁸⁷³ In the field, the low literacy levels of ANA forces inhibited “their ability to use computers, effectively manage staff functions, and exercise command and control.”⁸⁷⁴ Similarly, illiteracy impeded vital military functions, including understanding written orders, documenting operations, and using technical manuals. A 2008 DOD report noted that “only officers and NCOs have arrest authority, largely due [to] low rates of literacy among patrolmen.”⁸⁷⁵

Illiteracy also inhibited the ability of the ANDSF to effectively use advanced, Western weapons systems, vehicles, aircraft, and equipment. While the provision of NATO-standard weapons and equipment improved standardization and modernization, many of the highly advanced goods and systems were unsuitable for an illiterate force.⁸⁷⁶ The inability of the Afghans to effectively operate such systems, as well as the tendency for Western advisors to lead such efforts to avoid failure, led to problems of capacity substitution, rather than capacity building. This had the effect of increasing the Afghans’ long-term dependence on international donors for both operational and maintenance capacities and capabilities. Further, a later emphasis on achieving a literacy rate aligned to first-grade proficiency levels was unlikely to sufficiently enhance the security forces’ ability to use these systems.⁸⁷⁷

Those tasked with training and advising the ANDSF on logistics, communications, and maintenance support were particularly attuned to the impact illiteracy had on overall training efforts. Illiterate soldiers struggled to account for equipment and weapons due to their inability to complete paperwork and read serial numbers. Unable to correctly log supply data, the Afghan army and police were unable to create the organizational capacities, management controls, and oversight required of an independent security force.⁸⁷⁸ This concern was highlighted by Colonel Ferrari of CSTC-A when he said, “It’s hard to teach somebody logistics and to do inventory control if they don’t know how to read.”⁸⁷⁹ Moreover, the dearth of literate soldiers and police contributed to the shortage of personnel in more specialized positions, including, but not limited to, intelligence officers, mechanics, engineers, artillery specialists, and medics.

ANDSF Literacy Training

Early efforts to train the ANA centered on combat and infantry training in preparation for battle and security operations, with new recruits receiving standardized initial entry training at the Basic Warrior Training course.⁸⁸⁰ Initial literacy-based training programs centered on improving the educational level of ANA officers, who were required to have “basic reading and writing abilities.”⁸⁸¹

These efforts aimed to increase the professionalism of the officer corps by improving their understanding of operational and strategic concepts; at the time, no literacy-based training program was in place for Afghan enlisted soldiers.⁸⁸²

Training of the ANP was largely similar to that of the ANA in both structure and scope. In 2008, most Afghan police officers, with the exception of auxiliary forces, received training on “basic policing skills” and firearms.⁸⁸³ Advanced and specialized training was “offered” in topics such as investigative skills, forensics, and ethics, though it is unclear how many police completed these courses.⁸⁸⁴ A 2011 RAND report noted that, by 2006, although illiterate recruits were supposed to attend a five-week literacy program prior to their enrollment in the basic patrolman’s course, “the reality was that few police actually received this training. Many ... had only attended the three-week course developed for officers already in service, despite the fact that their backgrounds, experiences, and suitability for police work varied considerably.”⁸⁸⁵ A 2008 DOD report stated that, in addition to providing schooling for NCOs, the United States was “implementing literacy programs in the MOI to increase the literacy level of all policemen.”⁸⁸⁶ No details regarding the literacy program were provided, however.



A literacy class for Afghan National Police at the Lashkar Gah Training Center in Helmand Province. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Tammy K. Hinline)

While initial force-building efforts were focused on increasing the quantity of the ANA and ANP, the focus shifted slightly in late 2009 and early 2010 toward improving the quality of these forces. Included in this shift was a new focus on literacy and educational training. A literate ANDSF was recognized as essential if Afghan security forces were to one day conduct operations independent of U.S. and NATO support.

Following its formation in 2009, NTM-A/CSTC-A affirmed the U.S. and NATO commitment to establishing a literate Afghan security force by implementing mandatory literacy programs. It established the goal of having “100 percent of [ANDSF] personnel achieve Level 1 literacy (basic literacy equivalent to first grade proficiency) and at least 50 percent personnel attain Level 3 (functional literacy equivalent to third-grade proficiency) by December 31, 2014.”⁸⁸⁷

In October 2009, the MOD implemented 64 hours of mandatory literacy training in its Basic Warrior Training program. This was the first time literacy training

was both mandatory and included in basic ANA training.⁸⁸⁸ That same year, the MOI also added 64 hours of literacy training to its basic police training program.⁸⁸⁹ The goal of mandatory literacy training was to provide each graduate with the ability to read at a first-grade level, which required a rudimentary grasp of numbers, letters, and simple words. However, while NTM-A/CSTC-A may have considered literacy training “mandatory,” actual Afghan buy-in may have limited the program’s potential. Afghan commanders “prioritize[d] even noncritical missions ahead of literacy training” and an MOI decree specified MOI “should” institute literacy training, “leaving the enforcement and prioritization up to the local commander on the ground.”⁸⁹⁰

Literacy experts interviewed by SIGAR were skeptical of the timelines set under NTM-A/CSTC-A’s literacy program, noting that while plausible, they were likely overly optimistic given the recruits’ low literacy rates and limited exposure to formal educational settings.⁸⁹¹ A joint report issued in 2006 by the DOD and State Inspectors General concurred with these reservations about short-duration literacy training, stating that “a five-week literacy course is a start towards literacy. However, such a short course does not fully prepare the illiterate recruit for the basic police course designed for literate students.”⁸⁹² A 2011 *Military Review* report noted, “For many [recruits], the availability of literacy training is the first educational opportunity in their lives.”⁸⁹³

Skepticism concerning the timelines set by the program was substantiated by remarks from Afghan soldiers who completed the program. In 2014, a soldier in the ANA stated that the courses “were too short,” “focused on delivery rather than results,” and that there “was too much to take in;” despite 64 one-hour lessons, he was still unable to do more than write the first three letters of his name.⁸⁹⁴ He stated, “For someone my age [34 years old], you need much more time to practice.”⁸⁹⁵ Moreover, it is unclear if achieving first-grade proficiency would produce recruits with merely rote memorization skills or with actual phonological awareness. In addition, experts believe that comprehension of technical manuals—such as those accompanying more advanced weaponry sent to Afghanistan—requires reading proficiency above a ninth-grade level.⁸⁹⁶

NTM-A/CSTC-A efforts were further expanded to build upon the foundation laid by literacy training conducted in ANA and ANP basic training programs. Literacy program accomplishments, however, appear to have been limited, at best. An April 2011 DOD report stated that goals were met, with an average success rate of 90 percent within a year of the literacy programs’ establishment.⁸⁹⁷ IJC reported in October 2013 that 224,826 ANDSF personnel had achieved basic Level 1 literacy and that 73,700 had achieved Level 3 proficiency since the program’s inception in November 2009. However, a 2014 SIGAR audit found these numbers did not tell the full story. The audit determined that literacy goals

were based on the ANDSF's 2009 authorized end-strength of 148,000 personnel, rather than the updated goal of 352,000 (which was roughly a 138 percent increase in force size between those years). Consequently, the reported percentage of literate personnel lacked context and was overstated: It did not account for the increase in current force strength goals. NTM-A/CSTC-A officials interviewed affirmed this shortfall, describing the program's goal of 100 percent literacy as "unrealistic" and "unattainable."⁸⁹⁸

Additionally, the audit report highlighted the inability of NTM-A/CSTC-A to measure the effectiveness of the literacy program and determine the extent to which overall literacy in the ANDSF had improved. The report found that "none of the three literacy training contracts requires independent verification of testing for proficiency or identifies recruits in way that permits accurate tracking as the recruits move on to army and police units."⁸⁹⁹ The audit also determined that the contracted programs were able to operate without defined requirements for classes and length of instruction—and without measurable performance standards—due to the inability of NTM-A/CSTC-A to effectively provide oversight. Literacy efforts were also impacted by significant shortfalls in instructors who specialized in literacy training.⁹⁰⁰

The SIGAR audit noted that external factors impeded both actual progress and the ability to measure progress. Due to increased security pressures and the need to send personnel into the field quickly to combat the rising insurgency, some recruits were unable to complete the full 64 hours of instruction needed to achieve Level 1 literacy. Moreover, the report stated that the MOD actually removed literacy training from basic ANA training from February to July 2013, and that "45 percent of the police personnel recruited between July 2012 and February 2013 were sent directly to field checkpoints without receiving any literacy training."⁹⁰¹ Following the release of the audit report, SIGAR reported that NTM-A implemented changes to increase program oversight and efficiency. Additionally, SIGAR reported that NTM-A issued an improved program plan that would "[incorporate] five years of lessons learned."⁹⁰²

Impacts of any new literacy training are difficult to assess, however, as the MOD and MOI assumed full responsibility for the ANDSF literacy programs, to include monitoring and evaluation, on January 1, 2015, with the transition to the Resolute Support mission.⁹⁰³ One year later, in January 2016, USFOR-A reported that the MOD and MOI literacy contract packages submitted in 2015 were still awaiting final approval by the National Procurement Agency.⁹⁰⁴ In the interim, according to USFOR-A, the ANA and ANP were conducting literacy training with internal assets, relying primarily on "train-the-trainer" graduate instructors at regional training centers.⁹⁰⁵ At that time, ANA and ANP officers and NCOs were still expected to be literate to hold their positions.

WOMEN IN THE ANDSF

Historically, women were part of the Afghan security forces; however, after the Soviet occupation of the late 1970s to the late 1980s, conservative Islam spread throughout large parts of Afghanistan, resulting in a prohibition on women joining the force, especially during the Taliban regime.⁹⁰⁶ On October 31, 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, which stressed the importance of involving women in all aspects of peacebuilding in post-conflict countries.⁹⁰⁷ This document remains the foundation for inclusion of women in the modern ANDSF. Additionally, Article 6 of the Afghan constitution upholds the importance of equality across the nation. Article 55 states that “defending the country shall be the duty of all citizens of Afghanistan.”⁹⁰⁸ However, quotas for women’s participation are largely limited to political roles in the national government and parliament.⁹⁰⁹

Incorporating women into the Afghan security forces was not a priority in early, post-2001 design decisions for the force. Initial decisions were primarily based on establishing an ethnic, political, and regional balance among the male recruits; there was no quota established for women. In the 2005 Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals Vision 2020 report, the government made no mention of the inclusion of women in the security forces in its list of goals.⁹¹⁰

Afghan National Army

As reported by DOD, the inaugural female Officer Cadet School class of 37 female cadets began in May 2010.⁹¹¹ Although attrition was relatively high, 29 cadets graduated on September 23, 2010. Also in 2010, the MOD and MOI set a goal of 10 percent women in all ANA and ANP uniformed positions by 2020.⁹¹²

DOD noted in April 2011 that Afghan culture continued to impede the inclusion of women in the force.⁹¹³ In 2012, CSTC-A reported to SIGAR that there was a low prioritization of recruitment and retention of women in the ANA.⁹¹⁴ CSTC-A interpreted this as stemming from the ANA’s lack of centralized and structured systems to onboard female applicants, in addition to the absence of female career paths.⁹¹⁵ As DOD reported in October 2011, NTM-A began working with the ANA to increase female recruiting and training.⁹¹⁶ DOD understood the important role women played in creating credible and respectable security forces, but acknowledged there were difficulties in reaching target numbers in recruiting, and problems with equipment, uniforms, and facilities.⁹¹⁷

Even with coalition assistance, as of April 2012 there were only 350 female ANA members out of a goal of 19,500.⁹¹⁸ Although MOD had a gender integration Ministerial Development Plan that was the foundation for increasing women’s representation within the ANA, DOD noted that MOD lacked the capability to execute this plan and ensure respectful and fair treatment of women in the force, which, in turn, further diminished female representation.⁹¹⁹



Female ANA soldiers at the grand opening of their new permanent facilities in Camp Shaheen. (U.S. Navy photo by Egdanis Torres Sierra)

Although there were setbacks for ANA female recruitment, ISAF continued to focus on increasing the representation of women in the force. Before the release of the April 2012 DOD report to Congress, ISAF hosted a Gender Integration Conference to discuss how women could be better represented in the security forces and how stakeholders, like the Afghan government and civil society, could assist this effort.⁹²⁰ The MODA program assigned two senior gender integration mentors to NTM-A; their responsibilities included advising the MOD and MOI on how to improve gender integration and equality in the ANDSF.⁹²¹ Nevertheless, shortfalls continued. Between April and December 2012, there was an increase of only 29 women in the ANA overall.⁹²² In May 2014, the Minister of Defense ordered a comprehensive effort to double women in the ANA by May 2015 through an annual recruiting and training plan.⁹²³ As in many militaries, however, women were not allowed to serve in combat roles. This limited the positions they were able to enter and therefore continued to impact their ability to integrate. According to DOD, although female recruitment and retention continued to be low in 2017, training was still available for female recruits.⁹²⁴

Afghan National Police

DOD began to report about women in the ANP in April 2010.⁹²⁵ This was the result of a February 2010 MOI two-day conference intended to increase recruitment and training of women in the ANP to 5,000 by 2014, with assistance from DOD and State.⁹²⁶ This goal was referred to as MOI Decree 55 and, although supported verbally, there is little evidence there was any follow-through on its initiatives.⁹²⁷ As of April 2010, DOD reported that fewer than 1,000 female police were serving in the ANP.⁹²⁸ The report noted that women were being paid the



Afghan policewomen during riot training conducted by U.S. forces. (105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment photo by Darren D. Heusel)

same as men, but suffered from “low public opinion, lack of support from male co-workers, and the dangerous nature of the job.”⁹²⁹

According to DOD reports to Congress, the ANP continued to focus on initiatives to increase the presence of women in the force. In November 2010, 1,191 women were serving across the MOI, with a majority serving in the Family Response Units in 34 provinces.⁹³⁰ In 2010, the ANP began to actively recruit women. The ANP established a female recruiting branch “to focus on the recruitment, retention and career advancement of women in the ANP.”⁹³¹ Additionally, the ANP made training adjustments that extended the six-week course to eight weeks, with a shorter training day that allowed women to go home in the evening.⁹³²

By October 2011, the United States and MOI conceded that the goal of 5,000 women in the ANP by 2014 would not be achieved.⁹³³ The ANP failed to meet the 2010 and 2011 recruiting goals for women, leading to their continued underrepresentation.⁹³⁴ MOI, as well as MOD, faced significant challenges, particularly in the provincial and district levels.⁹³⁵ In October 2014, DOD reported the goal of 5,000 women in the force would be met by the end of February 2015, not far off the target of 2014.⁹³⁶ By April 2015, ANP reported having only 2,100 female police, a shortfall of 2,900.⁹³⁷ Again in June 2015, MOI was directed to increase the number of women in the force. The goal was “to employ 6,000 women by the end of fiscal year 2015, employ 10,000 women by the end of 2016, and have women make up 10 percent of the workforce by the end of 2017.”⁹³⁸ The December 2015 DOD report stated that “as of October 20, 2015,

there were approximately 2,200 women within the ANP forces with the goal of reaching more than 3,000 by the end of 2015.”⁹³⁹

Challenges

For women to serve successfully in the ANDSF, they must overcome a variety of challenges, including cultural stigmas, discrimination, and family concerns.⁹⁴⁰ Many times, family members or male ANDSF members have pushed back on the inclusion of women out of fear for their safety.⁹⁴¹ One ANA female recruit was cited as saying, “There were so many problems with my family over my choice.... But I insisted, and they came to support me in the end.”⁹⁴² In April 2012, DOD reported that “many Provincial Headquarters Commanders do not accept policewomen, as they prefer male candidates and lack adequate facilities to support females.”⁹⁴³ Specifically, in the ANA, there were concerns about women working away from their families with large groups of men.⁹⁴⁴ In the ANP, other challenges included an inability to work night shifts and lack of daycare facilities.⁹⁴⁵ Overall, in 2013, coalition advisors were unsure if the lack of progress in adding women was a result of families’ reluctance to support women who entered into the force, or of ANDSF leadership, specifically in the ANA, which was not ready to recruit more women.⁹⁴⁶

Additionally, when women entered the force, they were discriminated against by their male counterparts. On October 29, 2013, Michelle Barsa, former Director of Security Policy and Programming at the Institute for Inclusive Security, testified before the House Armed Services Committee about securing Afghan women’s gains post-2014. She alluded to numerous issues that women in the ANDSF faced, ranging from being turned away from the force, not being trained to use weapons, sexual harassment, and public perceptions.⁹⁴⁷

In October 2014, DOD identified four challenges with integrating women into the ANA, which could further be applied to the ANDSF as a whole: (1) achieving the goal of recruited and trained women in accordance with the Annual Accession Plan approved by MOD in April 2014, (2) identifying permanent positions for women within the force, (3) ensuring that all military establishments have adequate female facilities, and (4) creating a safe environment for all women across the ANA.⁹⁴⁸ In 2014, ISAF believed that as more women began to serve in the ANDSF, men would learn to accept and respect their presence.⁹⁴⁹

Progress

Although DOD reported that recruiting and retaining women in the ANDSF would be a difficult task, incremental progress did occur, often through reassessments of the feasibility of goals. In 2010, rather than having a set number of women in the force by a certain date, goals were changed to have 10 percent representation of women across the ANDSF by 2020.⁹⁵⁰ However, a revision to

this goal was reported in December 2015. The Resolute Support Gender Office aimed “to have 5,000 uniformed women in the ANA and 10,000 uniformed women in the ANP by 2025.”⁹⁵¹ Although this change extends the timeline for increasing women in the force, it is also reflective of the inherent challenges.

DOD, MOD, MOI, and the Afghan government recognized that cultural perceptions created difficulties in integrating women into the ANDSF. In July 2013, DOD stated that gender training was in place across most of the ANDSF and gender integration policies existed in both the MOD and MOI.⁹⁵² However, more improvements were needed to make these policies effective. In 2013, the ANP turned to well-known Afghans “to promote the image of the ANP as being an employer of choice for Afghan women and their families.”⁹⁵³ To further address this issue, in 2013 MOD stood up the Directorate of Human Rights and Gender Integration.⁹⁵⁴ Also in 2013, MOD and MOI worked to establish programs focusing on women’s rights and promoting women in the ANDSF.⁹⁵⁵ The ANA created educational training that focused on women by using Afghan historical values, Koran passages, and cultural context.⁹⁵⁶ The ANP worked with the MOI Human Rights, Gender, and Child Rights office to provide training on UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which focused on women, peace, and security.⁹⁵⁷

In the FY 2014 NDAA, Congress directed no less than \$25 million in funds for the recruitment and retention of women in the ANDSF.⁹⁵⁸ This money went to ANDSF priorities, including female recruiting and advertising campaigns, performance awards, and construction and renovation of facilities, with the hopes of overcoming the various barriers to entry for women.⁹⁵⁹ The ANA developed a comprehensive plan to increase capability in the MOD to recruit and retain women. By 2015, the ANP had made the force an attractive option for women because of the nature of the work and flexibility for women to work close to home.⁹⁶⁰ In 2016, MOI finalized a transportation stipend for women, and MOD was finalizing a similar policy, which are both intended to give female personnel ease of access to their positions.⁹⁶¹

One area in which women were essential to the ANDSF was in filling roles that men could not fill due to cultural sensitivities. Female ANDSF personnel were called to conduct searches, report human rights violations, and log domestic disputes.⁹⁶² Women were also used in the Ktah Khas, a light infantry special operations kandak with a female tactical platoon.⁹⁶³ In this role, they were used to interrogate other women and assist in grouping women and children together after an operation.⁹⁶⁴

Importantly, there has also been an increase in the diversity of women’s roles in the ANDSF. As of June 2015, the Afghan Air Force reported its personnel

included 51 women, which later increased to 55 in October 2015.⁹⁶⁵ To continue this diversity, in 2016 MOD and MOI created more than 5,000 dedicated women-only or gender-neutral positions to open up advancement for women.⁹⁶⁶ Finally, the Afghan government worked with MOD and MOI in 2016 to create the Afghan Office of Human Rights Ombudsman, which supports gender efforts in Afghanistan, including within the ANDSF.⁹⁶⁷

ANDSF EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

One of the many challenges of building the ANDSF after the fall of the Taliban in 2001 was providing weapons and equipment, as well as developing the supply systems through which the fledgling security institutions could sustain their forces. Notably, the effort to arm and equip the Afghan security forces was not a new challenge: Decades earlier, the Soviet effort to supply forces with weapons and equipment was also riddled with challenges and complexity.⁹⁶⁸

In 2001, the effort to arm the new ANDSF depended primarily on the donations of Soviet-era weaponry and equipment from former Soviet-bloc countries. These efforts were poorly planned and generally unpredictable. The nascent Afghan security ministries lacked the ability to plan and execute the acquisition of weapons and equipment, so the responsibility for this lay largely with the international community.⁹⁶⁹ However, the coalition did not turn its focus toward mastering the logistics and supply chains necessary for proper weaponry and equipment until 2009.⁹⁷⁰ Even then, the United States and its partners in the development of the ANDSF failed to keep proper records of the weapons and armaments supplied to Afghanistan.⁹⁷¹ The mismanagement of resources was underscored by the example of the Mobile Strike



ANA soldiers learning how to repair heavy equipment at Camp Shorabak in Helmand Province. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Tammy K. Hinline)

Force, a component of the ANA that received most of its ordered vehicles, but lacked spare parts and proper training in operating the vehicles.⁹⁷²

Logistics and supply systems that are critical for the provision and sustainment of equipment and weapons require months, if not years, to develop and master.⁹⁷³ Yet, ISAF did not adequately address these needed capabilities until 2011.⁹⁷⁴ Eventually, the ANDSF's logistics system transitioned from a push model—centrally driven by the United States and coalition—to a pull model that was demand-driven at the unit level.⁹⁷⁵ Although the new logistics and supply systems were complex, the coalition did not precisely increase training in the required pull-model skillsets, such as planning and budgeting. Further, the systems required multiple levels of authorization, which resulted in increased opportunities for corruption throughout the ANDSF ranks.⁹⁷⁶ For example, some Afghan officials would delay equipment delivery or supply requests until they had been properly paid off.⁹⁷⁷ Personnel within the MOD, MOI, and General Staff often remained undertrained, inexperienced, and ripe for corrupt behavior.⁹⁷⁸ Without the proper training, the new logistics and supply models became burdensome, increasing Afghan reliance on the United States and coalition. Logistics planning remained deficient, and supply chain management failed to ensure consistent supplies to support combat and garrison operations.

In addition, the complexity of systems and equipment resulted in a situation where Afghan forces and security institutions were not equipped to use and sustain command and control technologies.⁹⁷⁹ For example, the United States and its coalition partners lacked a plan for providing computer automation and information technology to the ANDSF that took into account the relatively low levels of education and literacy among security force personnel. Further, despite improvements in infrastructure, many locations in Afghanistan still lacked the appropriate electrical grid to support the technologies required to manage ANDSF supply and logistics systems—and the electrical infrastructure that did exist in remote areas frequently became the target of Taliban attacks.⁹⁸⁰ These limitations further solidified the ANDSF's reliance on the planning and operational capabilities of the United States and its coalition partners.⁹⁸¹

In July 2014, a SIGAR audit concluded that DOD did not pay adequate attention to the disposition of weapons sent to Afghanistan. Rampant discrepancies in the records of guns' serial numbers, among other problems, underscored the unprofessional manner in which weapons were accounted for in Afghanistan.⁹⁸² A SIGAR auditor highlighted the role corruption played in undermining the ANDSF's ability to sustain equipment and weapons. The auditor referenced poor record keeping and attempts by Afghan officials to obstruct entrance into warehouses as indicators that corruption was suspect in these cases.⁹⁸³ Special Inspector General John Sopko stated, "There is also evidence that the

Taliban have instructed their field commanders to simply purchase U.S. supplied weapons, fuel, and ammunition from Afghan soldiers because to do so is both easier and less expensive for the insurgents.”⁹⁸⁴

In 2015, as the U.S. and coalition forces drew down and the ANDSF assumed the lead for security, the ANDSF still did not have the necessary planning, programming, budgeting, and execution capability necessary to provide timely resource support to their respective security forces to sustain combat operations.⁹⁸⁵ The Afghan MOD and General Staff PPBE processes were “immature and unable to identify requirements and acquire equipment and materiel necessary to sustain the [ANDSF] logistics systems.”⁹⁸⁶ In part, this immaturity was the result of insufficient numbers and experience of U.S. and coalition advisors in the security ministries.⁹⁸⁷

In addition to shortages of equipment, there were questions about the kinds of weapons to provide the ANDSF. A 2012 DOD IG report underscored the sensitive nature of this question; not only were the ALP perceived to be outgunned by insurgents, the insurgents also had heavier weapons that were more effective at longer ranges.⁹⁸⁸ In 2016, RAND reported that between January 2012 and January 2013, 21 districts whose ALP programs had been under Afghan control for at least three months, on average, “had almost all of their authorized complement of light weapons (AK-47s), but the median level of machine guns, ammunition, and trucks was less than 50 percent.”⁹⁸⁹ This disparity between the ALP and the enemy made it difficult for the ALP to provide the local population with proper security. The DOD IG report stated that the “inability of police forces to counter current and potential threats degrades their operational effectiveness and morale, increases their desertion rates, and reinforces a defensive mindset to avoid major casualties rather than engaging in proactive patrolling of their communities.”⁹⁹⁰

The ANA provides another example of equipment mismatch. Initially, Army recruits were trained with “impractical” M16 rifles and issued “poorly designed” uniforms and military hardware.⁹⁹¹ The coalition also provided Humvees, a far more complex and difficult to maintain vehicle compared to other options, such as former Soviet models.⁹⁹² Humvees serve as a prime example of equipment that surpassed the ANDSF’s resources and capacity to maintain: According to one investigation, Afghan soldiers were unable to repair these vehicles, which resulted in unsafe driving and increased accidents.⁹⁹³ The inability to maintain and sustain their equipment directly and negatively impacted ANDSF combat readiness and effectiveness.⁹⁹⁴ The failure to properly equip even local forces proved to be a driver of several chronic challenges in developing the ANDSF.



Afghan drivers with the ANA's 6th Kandak repair a vehicle during preventive maintenance training. (Photo by Mike MacLeod)

As the coalition began to draw down, support for the ANDSF, including contractor support, followed suit. The timing and rate of drawdown impacted the Afghans' abilities to sustain the supply and logistics frameworks, resulting in pervasive unpreparedness.⁹⁹⁵ Further, the nature of coalition and contractor logistics support largely focused on equipment readiness, without adequate resources dedicated to training Afghan forces on maintenance.⁹⁹⁶ The Afghans' ability to assume responsibility for the maintenance of weapons and equipment through contracting or training will be critical to meet force readiness requirements and the long-term sustainability of the ANDSF.

ATTRITION IN THE ANDSF

Attrition has severely limited the ANDSF's ability to meet force-size goals and operate independently without help from the international community.⁹⁹⁷ On average, the ANA loses one-third of its members to attrition every year, and the ANP loses one-fifth, rates which have garnered attention and concern from U.S. and international military and civilian leadership.⁹⁹⁸ A 2008 GAO report stated that although an estimated 32,700 ANA combat personnel received training and were assigned to one of five corps, "the number of combat troops on hand [was] less than those trained and assigned due to attrition, absenteeism, scheduled leave, and battlefield casualties."⁹⁹⁹ In June 2016, DOD reported that consistently high attrition had a direct impact on the combat effectiveness and growth of the ANDSF due to the ongoing loss of institutional knowledge and trained personnel.¹⁰⁰⁰

The government of Afghanistan has taken a variety of steps to address this issue. In September 2010, Minister of Defense Wardak issued an AWOL mitigation plan in an attempt to recognize the issue and attempt to reduce attrition in the ANA.¹⁰⁰¹ The plan called for an increased effort to find and recall AWOL soldiers and

created a commission to address AWOL, attrition, and leadership effectiveness in units with high attrition rates.¹⁰⁰² Despite these and other efforts, attrition rates remained high.

ANDSF attrition is primarily a result of personnel simply dropping from the rolls, followed by voluntary separation.¹⁰⁰³ Reasons for attrition include poor unit leadership, insufficient vetting of recruits, lack of equipment and support, substandard literacy rates, poor quality of life, and corruption.¹⁰⁰⁴

Defining Attrition

Until the end of 2010, the ANA and ANP had different definitions of attrition. In December 2010, the Convergence Decree provided a common definition to be used by both the MOI and MOD in their reporting.¹⁰⁰⁵ The decree created five categories of attrition: (1) killed in action, (2) non-hostile death, (3) disappeared or captured, (4) disabled, and (5) dropped from rolls.¹⁰⁰⁶ In addition, ANDSF personnel were to be reported as AWOL after 24 hours of absence, and dropped from rolls after 20 days of AWOL for officers and NCOs and 30 days for patrol officers.¹⁰⁰⁷

According to the April 2011 DOD report to Congress, this new model assisted “in increasing the level of accuracy and reporting” of personnel.¹⁰⁰⁸ However, the definition of attrition was still not universally applied within the ANDSF. For example, SIGAR Quarterly Reports from the same year indicated that attrition for the ANA was defined as “the loss of soldiers from the force before they complete[d] their contracts,” while ANP attrition was defined as “personnel who had been killed in action or injured, were absent or AWOL, had disappeared, or had been separated from service, retired, or captured.”¹⁰⁰⁹

In 2015, DOD reported that ANDSF attrition included losses to the force for these reasons: killed in action, non-hostile deaths, separations, retirements, and dropped from the rolls.¹⁰¹⁰ DOD further noted that ANDSF personnel were dropped from the rolls after being absent for more than 30 days without authorization. In 2015, dropped from rolls was the largest source of ANDSF attrition and killed in action was the smallest.¹⁰¹¹ From 2010 to 2015, the definition of attrition became more specific. Yet, despite efforts to apply a standard definition within the ministries and the ANDSF, inconsistent and inaccurate reporting resulted in DOD being unable to accurately track ANDSF attrition over time.

Poor Leadership and Corruption

Ineffective leadership and corrupt behavior among both high-level military and police officers negatively affected attrition rates and ANDSF effectiveness.¹⁰¹²

In March 2015, General John Campbell testified to the U.S. House of Representatives Armed Services Committee that high attrition due to poor leadership had a negative impact on combat readiness.¹⁰¹³ General Campbell continued in 2015 to highlight why attrition was so high. In August, he stated at a Brookings Institution discussion that poor leadership, among other factors, drove the high attrition rates within the Afghan security forces.¹⁰¹⁴

In an April 2011 report to Congress, DOD documented poor leadership in the ANDSF as a persistent concern that increased attrition.¹⁰¹⁵ A number of police chiefs and ANA kandak commanders were guilty of pay and rank abuse, including the creation of ghost soldiers and the purchase of promotions.¹⁰¹⁶ Reports of the theft and illegal sale of ANDSF supplies were commonplace.¹⁰¹⁷ These issues, combined with a lack of U.S. and ministry oversight of units, undermined leadership and efforts to establish professional norms for ANDSF personnel. In turn, poor leadership affected morale and increased the likelihood for security force personnel to leave their posts.¹⁰¹⁸

The MOD, with help from the United States, initiated efforts to reduce the negative impact of corruption and poor leadership through improved leadership development practices, to include increasing the literacy of ANA recruits.¹⁰¹⁹ Additionally, goals were set to produce professional officers and NCOs who could lead the ANA. GAO underscored this notion and stated that leadership skills among the NCO corps could “provide a vital link between senior officers and soldiers and can provide leadership to ANA units in the field.”¹⁰²⁰ These initiatives, however, failed to reverse high attrition rates, and the ANA continued to suffer from the loss of soldiers with leadership skills. A November 2013 DOD report to Congress noted that, although recruiting rates were sufficient to offset high attrition rates in the ANA, the loss of officers and NCOs was impeding the professionalization of the force.¹⁰²¹

Lack of Equipment and Support

Another factor driving ANDSF attrition was the lack of quality equipment and maintenance support from MOD, MOI, and the United States.¹⁰²² In 2005, DOD planned to provide the ANA with donated and salvaged weapons and armored vehicles; however, this proved detrimental to the ANDSF because the equipment was “worn out, defective, or incompatible with other equipment.”¹⁰²³ Subsequently, the United States began to provide the ANA with U.S. equipment, which had a more reliable supply chain. Yet, the ANDSF still suffered from insufficient support and equipment due to competing global priorities, production delays, and delayed execution of the budget.¹⁰²⁴ For a 2008 report, GAO interviewed DOD officials from CSTC-A, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), and the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command concerning shortfalls, specifically with the ANA. The officials attributed these deficiencies to competing global priorities for equipment, including those stemming from the simultaneous operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁰²⁵

In 2013, DOD reported that the ANDSF lacked sufficient air resources for casualty evacuations. This negatively affected morale among ANA troops and resulted in increased attrition due soldiers’ fears of what would happen if they were injured in action.¹⁰²⁶ This concern became a reality when a wounded Afghan soldier had to wait 19 days for medical evacuation from the field.¹⁰²⁷

DOD's November 2013 report to Congress asserted that the "single most important challenge facing the ANDSF ... is in developing an effective logistics and sustainment system."¹⁰²⁸ In 2015, DOD reported that the train, advise, and assist mission was attempting to develop better logistical and sustainment capabilities for the ministries and the ANDSF.¹⁰²⁹

Poor Quality of Life

Hardship and sacrifice defined the life of an ANDSF recruit. Corruption, poor leadership, and lack of equipment and support structures served to undermine the recruit's well-being and overall quality of life. According to DOD, this was further exacerbated by poor compensation, insufficient casualty and martyr care, absence or misunderstanding of leave policies and procedures, and generally inadequate living and working conditions.¹⁰³⁰ Problems with low wages were highlighted in December 2009, when Secretary of Defense Robert Gates stated that "the Taliban, for the most part, are better paid than the [ANDSF]."¹⁰³¹ And, as DOD reported in 2013, low wages were a top concern contributing to attrition.¹⁰³²

High attrition led to several, related personnel concerns. Afghan forces were unable to take leave to look after their families, thereby creating low morale and negatively affecting their quality of life.¹⁰³³ Furthermore, there was a lack of personnel rotation within the ANDSF.¹⁰³⁴ As Secretary Gates noted in December 2009, ANDSF personnel would frequently "fight until they die or they go AWOL" because no one was able to rotate out for a much-needed rest.¹⁰³⁵ This severely undermined morale and caused fatigue.¹⁰³⁶

In addition to low wages and the inability to take leave or rotate into different positions, heavy combat itself had negative effects on personnel well-being and morale. Secretary Gates noted that "attrition is higher in the areas where the combat is heavier."¹⁰³⁷ ANCOF, in particular, suffered increased levels of attrition because of high levels of combat related to election preparations and the Focused District Development program.¹⁰³⁸ Yet, despite the impact of heavy combat over the years, in November 2013, DOD reported that increased casualties accounted for only a small portion of overall attrition in the ANDSF.¹⁰³⁹

Conclusion

Although defining and measuring attrition has been a challenge, official reporting and expert analysis confirms attrition is a serious threat to the development of the ANDSF. Several issues have been identified as affecting the ANDSF's ability to retain and maintain its force strength, including poor leadership and corruption, lack of equipment and support, insufficient vetting of recruits, and an overall poor quality of life. Despite coalition and Afghan government efforts to stem attrition, it remains one of the most pressing issues affecting ANDSF development and sustainability.

ROTATIONAL TRAINING

The U.S. and coalition effort in Afghanistan was dominated by the rotational deployment of civilian and military units on short tours of duty. Implemented in part to help mitigate the physical and psychological stress of operating in a war zone, short tours of duty—where entire units rotated in and out of country every four to twelve months—were also cited as a way to ensure “both tactical proficiency and unit cohesion at the soldier level.”¹⁰⁴⁰ Despite the legitimacy of these reasons, the regular turnover of civilian and military personnel, as well as the frequent shifts in command, hindered U.S. and coalition training efforts in Afghanistan.

Rotational Training and the U.S. Advisory Effort

Short tour lengths were a consistent, critical challenge to the U.S. advisory effort in Afghanistan. While tour lengths varied in duration, the majority of units rotated out of country after less than one year. Some U.S. marines and airmen, as well as many NATO personnel, served only six-month tours, for example.¹⁰⁴¹ These short deployments, while important for the health and welfare of military and civilian personnel, limited the U.S. effort in Afghanistan, negatively affecting institutional knowledge and continuity. As one report succinctly affirmed and described, brief rotational deployments and frequent shifts in command contributed to a “lack of proper continuity of effort, a breakdown or gaps in critical U.S.-host country relationships, and a mutual lack of trust.”¹⁰⁴² A 2016 *Foreign Policy* assessment of the situation highlighted the U.S. tendency to rotate “leaders through the country like tourists,” a policy that “explicitly short-changed the [war] effort.”¹⁰⁴³ At a joint SIGAR and USIP conference in April 2016, one participant described the regular turnover of personnel as an “annual lobotomy.”¹⁰⁴⁴

The frequent turnover of advisors and senior leaders was also described as “ill-suited” for a counterinsurgency campaign, where understanding the local context and building relationships are essential.¹⁰⁴⁵ Given that it often takes more than a year to achieve useful knowledge of a local context, the brevity of in-country assignments and the frequent rotation of personnel into and out of Afghanistan led to a “constant loss of knowledge and experience.”¹⁰⁴⁶ A former special assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and advisor to the Afghan Border Police wrote in 2015, “By changing out entire units so frequently, our policy has guaranteed that military leaders rotating through Afghanistan have never had more than a superficial understanding of the political environment they are trying to shape.”¹⁰⁴⁷ Retired Command Sergeant Major Robert Bush emphasized a similar point, describing the “acclimatization” and “training wheels” phase required by newly arrived units as ill-suited for any type of campaign where cultural knowledge is critical. He wrote, “One tenet of COIN, and for any type operations, is to know the populace, and one-year tours ... did not give organizations or the community they were supporting the time to get to

know one another. [One unit] leaves and another unit would come in and begin the learning phase all over again.”¹⁰⁴⁸

Impeding Continuity

Due to the short deployment lengths of military and civilian units, Afghans regularly had to adjust to a new unit’s expectations and training program. For example, from 2003 to 2009, eight different Army National Guard units assumed responsibility for TF Phoenix and the training of the ANA.¹⁰⁴⁹ With few standard operating procedures or consistent staffing policies in place, incoming units were unable to build upon previously established relationships or take advantage of pre-existing norms or procedures. Moreover, these units were at risk of missing out on previous lessons learned. According to a U.S. military officer who served in Afghanistan, new units arriving in theater often made “quick adjustments in operations” and new leaders implemented changes “before they fully [understood] all the implications of their actions.”¹⁰⁵⁰ This was affirmed by a senior defense contractor at TAAC-South, who noted that while some attempts were made at educating incoming personnel on previous procedures, many incoming units desired to “do it their own way.”¹⁰⁵¹ In response to similar experiences with the special operations advisory effort in Afghanistan, a 2015 RAND report argued, “Effective continuity means that new staff build on previous advisor practices and relationships, avoid ‘reinventing the wheel,’ and understand past successes and failures.”¹⁰⁵²

Without periods of overlap between incoming and outgoing personnel, information was not always effectively transferred. As reported by RAND, the lack of proper communication and coordination between units was described by Special Operations Advisory Group (SOAG) advisors as causing “advisor fratricide,” where, without the ability to “mentor the mentors,” incoming advisors provided conflicting advice or guidance to their Afghan counterparts.¹⁰⁵³ Moreover, gaps in assignments further inhibited the effective transfer of information and ease of transition. According to the same RAND report, numerous relief-in-place gaps were reported at the Special Mission Wing, including a two-month gap between outgoing and incoming commanders and a three-month gap for the position of executive officer.¹⁰⁵⁴ In such instances, the effective transfer of authority or information rarely occurred. Additionally, U.S. military commanders expressed concern over opposition forces exploiting security gaps created by the months-long rotations.¹⁰⁵⁵

Rapport

Numerous reports emphasize the importance of rapport to security force assistance.¹⁰⁵⁶ Strong rapport proved particularly critical to the U.S. advisory effort in Afghanistan, where advisor and counterpart trust was often described as central to the partnership’s success.¹⁰⁵⁷ The 2015 RAND study on the

special operations advisory effort in Afghanistan stressed that strong rapport between host-nation and partner units can reap a number of benefits, including “increasing the possibility that an advisor’s advice will be acted upon and reducing the risk to coalition forces.”¹⁰⁵⁸ Rapport has also been noted to enhance information sharing between host-nation and partner units.¹⁰⁵⁹

Not surprisingly, therefore, frequent and short rotations regularly impeded trust and rapport-building efforts between the U.S. and Afghan partner units. Advisors in Afghanistan, for example, frequently observed “‘mentor fatigue’, whereby Afghans tire[d] of the revolving door of advisors.”¹⁰⁶⁰ RAND cites one SOAG advisor as stating, “There is reluctance on [the] part of Afghans to really open up to you because they get tired [of the constant influx of new advisors]. A six-month [tour] becomes, if you are lucky, five months of a working relationship. Four months is effectively what we get.”¹⁰⁶¹

Going Forward

There have been many suggestions for mitigating the setbacks caused by the frequent rotations of military and civilian units and personnel. One recommendation, for example, calls for increasing the deployment length of military units. A 2015 RAND report recommended “nontraditional” or “atypical” assignment rotations and durations for military personnel, noting that “models other than the standard short deployment may be more effective” given the importance of personnel continuity to building partnership capacity.¹⁰⁶² Additionally, multiple reports call for increased tour lengths for key advisory positions or senior leaders.¹⁰⁶³ One assessment noted, “Leaders attempting to establish the kind of relationship and understanding necessary to be effective in counterinsurgency must be kept in place much longer.”¹⁰⁶⁴

Others have cited the nature of a counterinsurgency campaign as the reason behind recommending repeated deployments to the same location. According to a U.S. military officer who served in Afghanistan, counterinsurgency missions require “interaction with the local populace and relationship-building” which inherently “require longer tour lengths or repeated deployments to the same location to help facilitate the necessary interpersonal relations between soldiers and key leaders.”¹⁰⁶⁵ Individuals returning to the same location are able to build on past relationships, do not have to spend time familiarizing themselves with a new culture, and are able to maintain continuity of efforts within their areas of operation.¹⁰⁶⁶ The benefits of repeated deployments to the same area were also corroborated by a 2015 RAND study, which noted that “units that returned time and time again to work with the same partner unit reported unusually positive rapport.”¹⁰⁶⁷

The State Partnership Program

The National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) provides a potentially useful model for improving continuity in security assistance. Implemented in 1993, the SPP links a state's National Guard with a partner nation's security forces in a "cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship."¹⁰⁶⁸ The program is managed by the National Guard Bureau, guided by State's foreign policy objectives, and executed by the individual state adjutants general, in support of combatant command security objectives and ambassadors' country strategies. In 2017, the SPP accounts for 73 unique security partnerships involving 79 nations around the globe.¹⁰⁶⁹ Through the program, the National Guard supports not only security goals through military-to-military engagements, but a number of governmental, economic, and social initiatives as well. Examples of these broader efforts include disaster preparedness, counternarcotics, deployment planning and family support, critical infrastructure and resource protection, and law enforcement reform and development.¹⁰⁷⁰ In Afghanistan, aligning National Guard units with specific expertise within the train, advise, and assist effort—for example, police, aviation, and maintenance—has the potential to provide enduring support to the ANDSF. As observed recently in TAAC-South, the deployment of National Guard law enforcement professionals has contributed to improved training of the ANP in Kandahar.

Other recommendations aimed at mitigating the effects of frequent unit rotations include providing advance notification for deployments in order to allow incoming staff time to prepare and make connections in the field, requiring departing personnel to create "continuity books," and leveraging experienced staff who can ensure continuity within the advisory units.¹⁰⁷¹ Similarly, some reports emphasize the need for overlap between incoming and outgoing personnel to ensure an effective transfer of authority and information.¹⁰⁷²

An April 2017 SIGAR visit to Afghanistan confirmed that several commanders are taking the initiative to mitigate the adverse effects of the "brain drain" that has plagued Afghanistan since 2002. These initiatives include overlapping nine-month deployments of the commander's unit and deputy commander's unit to maintain continuity through the mission. The United States has also begun sending small teams of deployed advisors back to the United States to sync up with the replacement unit to improve information sharing through the transition process. While each of these initiatives has reportedly shown progress, the U.S. military has no institutionalized mechanism to address the issue of rotational trainers. Implementing the lessons we've learned—and institutionalizing rotations that reinforce the advisory mission and the importance of continuity and rapport with our Afghan counterparts—remains critical to advancing ANDSF development efforts.



CHAPTER 7

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

DOD photo

Our study of the U.S. experience developing the ANDSF since 2002 finds:

- 1. The U.S. government was ill-prepared to conduct security sector assistance programs of the size and scope required in Afghanistan. The lack of commonly understood interagency terms, concepts, and models for SSA undermined communication and coordination, damaged trust, intensified frictions, and contributed to initial gross under-resourcing of the U.S. effort to develop the ANDSF.**

The United States lacked an interagency framework and decision-making processes for SSA sufficient to address the scope and magnitude of issues that arose in Afghanistan. Security sector reconstruction models that included raising, training, and fiscally supporting an entire military and police force and their sustainment institutions were very different from the typical SSA models where the United States provided advanced military support to a standing force, for example, in Pakistan, Jordan, Japan, and Israel. The lack of appropriate models undermined the U.S. government's ability to undertake a sound approach to ANDSF development and appropriately link training combat forces to the necessary critical infrastructure and equipment requirements. The absence of common language and authoritative concepts impeded communication and coordination within the U.S. government and

with Afghan and international partners, and often pulled efforts in different directions. These problems wasted time and resources, created opportunities for manipulation by Afghan elites, and contributed until late 2009 to grossly inadequate resourcing of the SSA effort by the United States and its international partners.

2. Initial U.S. plans for Afghanistan focused solely on U.S. military operations and did not include the development of an Afghan army, police, or supporting ministerial-level institutions.

Starting in 2001, the United States' primary focus was targeting al-Qaeda leadership and removing the Taliban government from power. As security deteriorated, the international community viewed the creation of an Afghan security force as a preferred alternative to expanding the international military presence nationwide. In March 2002, the Group of Eight nations met in Geneva, Switzerland, to divide responsibility for security sector reform in Afghanistan, with five countries assuming a lead nation role: the United States (military reform), Germany (police reform), UK (counternarcotics), Italy (judicial reform), and Japan (disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration). It was not until 2006 that the United States created CSTC-A and assumed the primary responsibility for training both the ANA and ANP, as well as fielding training teams under TF Phoenix.

3. Early U.S. partnerships with independent militias—intended to advance U.S. counterterrorism objectives—ultimately undermined the creation and role of the ANA and ANP.

In the early years of OEF, the United States partnered with independent militia leaders to conduct counterterrorism operations with U.S. Special Forces and the CIA. In June 2002, as the United States began training the new ANA, the average Afghan militia fighter was reportedly being paid significantly more by the United States than what was being offered by the Afghan government to join the national army and police force. Additionally, local militia fighters were allowed to serve near their homes, while new Afghan army and police recruits were stationed in Kabul. This created incentives for local Afghan fighters to continue their partnership with CIA and U.S. Special Forces and not join the emerging national army, causing initial recruitment for conventional forces to be quite low. To increase recruiting, in 2003 the United States cut the number of U.S.-funded militia fighters by half. Although both the CIA and U.S. Special Forces objected to this action, it resulted in an increase in the number of ANA recruits to 4,000 by the end of 2003.

In 2006, to address growing insecurity, the United States again turned to local militias to provide security in areas with limited national security

forces. These militias became part of auxiliary police forces that were partnered with U.S. Special Forces in high-risk areas of Afghanistan and were largely independent of the national government. With limited oversight from and accountability to the Afghan government, some police forces were reported to have engaged in human rights abuses, drug trafficking, and other corrupt activities.

4. Critical ANDSF capabilities, including aviation, intelligence, force management, and special forces, were not included in early U.S., Afghan, and NATO force-design plans.

The development of combat enablers and their supporting institutions takes significantly more time than building a light-infantry force, and often requires years to come to full maturity. Furthermore, these capabilities require a highly educated, literate, and professional workforce, are expensive to build, and create increased fiscal dependencies. Decisions to build an Afghan Air Force, special forces, intelligence capabilities, and necessary force management systems only began in earnest as security deteriorated in 2005. Since these elements were not part of the initial force design and investment, milestones for their development were chronically postponed. On a positive note, the successful Afghan special forces have become critical components of the Afghan government's ability to counter the rising Taliban threat.

5. The United States failed to optimize coalition nations' capabilities to support SSA missions in the context of international political realities. The wide use of national caveats, rationale for joining the coalition, resource constraints and military capabilities, and NATO's force generation processes led to an increasingly complex implementation of SSA programs. This resulted in a lack of an agreed-upon framework for conducting SSA activities.

The NATO alliance's financial and military support to Afghanistan for over a decade and a half was crucial to success. However, the SSA mission, conducted as part of a coalition, was as much a political exercise as a military operation. Coalition members' rationale for partnering with the United States to help develop the ANDSF ranged from a country's commitment to adhere to Article 5 of the NATO alliance to engagements to bolster bilateral relationships with the United States. Removing the Taliban from power, advancing democracy in Afghanistan, and eradicating terrorism from South Asia were not the primary drivers for some nations to commit forces to Afghanistan. Based on this, some partner nations deployed forces with very restrictive national caveats, which hindered the deployed forces' ability to travel and engage in combat. For example, Germany, the third-largest NATO troop contributor and initially the lead nation for police reform, had

national caveats and laws that prevented its deployed soldiers from engaging in expeditionary combat. This had the effect of precluding German police advisors from deploying with ANP units in the field to mitigate the Taliban threat in contested or non-permissive environments.

Additionally, many European countries generally viewed police reform as a civilian mission focused on civil policing, reactionary operations, and rule of law. In contrast, the U.S. military often viewed the ANP as the first line of defense in the counterinsurgency mission, which required offensive operations against Taliban forces. Within the MOI, U.S. MODA advisors provided guidance that supported the U.S.-preferred design of the force, while EU advisors provided the same senior Afghan officials alternative views on the role of the police. This dichotomy contributed to the ANP's current identity crisis.

6. Providing advanced Western weapons and management systems to a largely illiterate and uneducated force without appropriate training and institutional infrastructure created long-term dependencies, required increased U.S. fiscal support, and extended sustainability timelines.

From 2002 to 2008, the United States outfitted the ANDSF with equipment donated by former Soviet-bloc nations and from seized Taliban caches. This led to a lack of uniformity in weapons systems and equipment within ANDSF units. In 2008, the United States began to equip the force with NATO-standard weapons and equipment. This transformation, while seemingly benefiting the ANA through the standardization and modernization of its weapons and equipment, ultimately fostered increased long-term dependency on international donors for both funding and maintenance capacity.

Western-style management systems, an all-volunteer force, and a budding air corps capability were imposed upon a largely illiterate population. Educated, literate, and professional members of the ANDSF were often offered positions in specialized units, removing talented junior officers from the ranks of the conventional force. These specialized units were more successful in adapting to the transition to Western-style weapons and management systems, while the conventional units suffered. Conventional forces' reliance on combat enablers and U.S. trainers and advisors resulted in long-term dependency and missed force readiness milestones.

Furthermore, the requirement to invest in Afghan professional schools to ensure the ANDSF could train its military in the operations and maintenance of equipment was not appreciated, and there were inadequate efforts to leverage U.S. or other coalition formal training institutions to develop Afghan experts.

7. The lag in Afghan ministerial and security sector governing capacity hindered planning, oversight, and the long-term sustainability of the ANDSF.

The importance of governing institutions for the security sector was chronically under-appreciated by U.S. officials. Prior to 2008, the U.S. military lacked comprehensive and institutionalized programs specifically tailored to developing and advising on security sector ministerial-level governing capabilities. In 2008, the MODA program was created within the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy. MODA deployed trained U.S. government civilians to partner with MOD and MOI personnel to train, advise, and assist in the governing and oversight functions of the ministries. The results of the MODA program were mixed. Proper alignment of civilian experts with their Afghan counterparts led to positive results; at the same time, civilian advisors were often either a misfit for the mission or were improperly assigned to missions that were outside the scope of their expertise. Starting in 2015, the U.S. and NATO train, advise, and assist mission focused on ministerial-level capacity and advising at the ANA corps or ANP zone levels.

8. Police development was treated as a secondary mission for the U.S. government, despite the critical role the ANP played in implementing rule of law and providing static, local-level security nationwide.

The U.S. military aligned its military-to-military engagements with the ANA; however, there wasn't a similar symmetry of engagement between U.S. civilian law enforcement entities and the ANP. This led to gross underfunding, under-resourcing, and less mentoring of police units, as compared to army units. Based on increased insecurity and non-permissive environments, and under the guise of support to the overarching ANDSF, DOD was forced to adapt SSA programs for military units to fit police units. For example, in 2008 DOD created the MODA program to embed DOD civilians at the MOD to help govern the national army. There was no program to mirror this in the MOI and ANP. MODA advisors were "converted" to MODA billets to support the MOI, despite the differences in overall mission between the ministries of defense and interior. The same phenomenon occurred in the field, where deployed U.S. soldiers assigned to provide field training to the Afghan army were converted to a field mentoring team advising police units, with no additional training in civil policing or rule of law. Furthermore, crime statistics were never collected or analyzed by the MOI, despite the adverse effects that criminality, such as petty theft and non-insurgent related violence, had on the population daily.

9. The constant turnover of U.S. and NATO trainers impaired the training mission’s institutional memory and hindered the relationship building and effective monitoring and evaluation required in SSA missions.

U.S. military units frequently transitioned into and out of Afghanistan, forcing ANDSF units to adapt to new U.S. trainers and advisors and establish new relationships. Often times, as relationships and trust between the ANDSF and U.S. units deepened, a new U.S. unit arrived and the cycle started again. Unlike other military units, U.S. Special Forces and USAF trainers and advisors created enduring relationships with their Afghan partners through frequent deployment cycles partnering with the same Afghan units. This enduring partnership resulted in the quicker development of specialized units, as compared to other forces. Recognizing the importance of building and maintaining personal relationships, the MODA program mandated its civilian advisors serve two-year tours, with the potential to remain in country for a third year.

Furthermore, high turnover of SSA personnel had a destructive impact on the U.S. military’s ability to properly provide long-term forecasting for ANDSF development and correctly assess ANDSF capabilities against readiness milestones.

10. ANDSF monitoring and evaluation tools relied heavily on tangible outputs, such as staffing, equipping, and training levels, as well as subjective evaluations of leadership. This focus masked intangible factors, such as corruption and will to fight, which deeply affected security outcomes and failed to adequately factor in classified U.S. intelligence assessments.

The U.S. military relied on tangible measures of success of the ANDSF, such as gross recruiting requirements and force strength targets; however, a focus on aggregate numbers masked important rank and social imbalances that damaged ANDSF performance and perceptions of the force’s legitimacy.

Furthermore, ANDSF readiness measures assumed the U.S. military’s capability milestones system would be able to predict battlefield performance and security outcomes in Afghanistan. These forecasts, however, underappreciated key strategic-level threats, including the will and ability of the Taliban to continue the fight, sustained popular support for the Taliban in Afghanistan, insurgent sanctuary in Pakistan, eroding Afghan government legitimacy, and corruption in the ANDSF.

11. **Because U.S. military plans for ANDSF readiness were created in an environment of politically constrained timelines—and because these plans consistently underestimated the resilience of the Afghan insurgency and overestimated ANDSF capabilities—the ANDSF was ill-prepared to deal with deteriorating security after the drawdown of U.S. combat forces.**

U.S. military and civilian personnel surges were designed to reduce the insurgent threat and set conditions for an ANDSF with known limitations to be able to successfully provide national security post-transition. However, the United States, ISAF, and the Afghans did not reduce the Taliban threat to a level that could be contained and eventually defeated by the ANDSF. By 2014, as the ANDSF assumed lead responsibility for security nationwide, Afghan security forces faced far larger threats than they were designed to handle.

Initial plans for the ANDSF envisioned light-infantry brigades capable of being deployed by the national government to quell local unrest, mostly between factional militias. By 2004, Taliban attacks spiked and the United States and international community reacted by expediting training of the ANDSF's light-infantry brigades and expanding the size of the military and police forces. By 2006, the ANDSF design was changed and plans were created to develop Afghan Special Forces, an Afghan Air Force, and other advanced combat units. Timelines to leave Afghanistan quickly changed. ANDSF force-size planning conferences relied upon DOD assumptions of a reduction in the Taliban threat and improved security; however, as violence and high levels of insecurity continued throughout the 2009 U.S. military and civilian surge and into 2010, senior U.S. officials recognized previous assumptions were incorrect and that a longer-term sustained presence of U.S. combat forces and advisors would be required. Initial force sizing of 60,000 for the ANA and 62,000 for the ANP ballooned to a collective end-strength goal of 352,000.

12. **As security deteriorated, efforts to sustain and professionalize the ANDSF became secondary to meeting immediate combat needs.**

Early decisions concerning the design and development of the ANDSF were largely made in the context of establishing a highly professional force that would be sustainable by the nascent Afghan government. Starting in 2006, as Taliban-initiated violence skyrocketed, decisions concerning the size and capabilities of the ANDSF were made almost exclusively in relation to countering violence and insecurity, with limited concern for the Afghan government's ability to sustain the force in the short- or long-term. The U.S. military was unable to maintain a "gold standard" training program at the speed of politically driven milestones and, therefore, expediency overtook professionalization. This situation

continues today, as senior U.S. officials highlight the significant stress placed on the ANDSF due to the increased and sustained operational tempo of the fight, and describe sustainment and operational readiness of soldiers and police in the field as a significant weakness.¹⁰⁷³

These findings underscore the significant shortfalls in the U.S. approach to security sector assistance in Afghanistan that contributed to the current inability of the ANDSF to secure the country from internal and external threats and prevent the re-establishment of terrorist safe havens. The United States failed to understand the complexities and scale of the mission to construct the Afghan security forces in a country suffering from 30 years of war, government misrule, and significant poverty and underdevelopment. Since 2002, senior U.S. and international officials have noted that the Afghanistan government's inability to quell local unrest, protect the population from insurgent-related violence or crimes from predatory Afghan security officials, and respond to factional fighting has "continue[d] to impact negatively on the lives of Afghans every day, whittling away at the support for the transitional process."¹⁰⁷⁴ As described by former senior DOD official Marin Strmecki, "It's not that the enemy is so strong, but that the Afghan government is so weak."¹⁰⁷⁵

Senior U.S. and Afghan officials remain committed to rectifying past errors. In response to the deadly attacks against the 209th Corps in northern Afghanistan in April 2017, President Ghani took long overdue steps to remove weak military leaders, replacing several corps' leaders and putting more capable and professional military leaders into senior positions.¹⁰⁷⁶ This was a step that was welcomed by deployed senior U.S. military leaders.¹⁰⁷⁷ In May 2017, at the Third Annual European Union Anti-Corruption Conference, President Ghani publicly admitted that "the ministry of interior is the heart of corruption in the security sector and it is unacceptable and it will be reformed."¹⁰⁷⁸

The U.S. government also imposed rigid conditionality on the Afghan government to pressure it to undertake necessary reforms in exchange for continued U.S. financial and material commitment. To mitigate the threat of ghost soldiers, starting January 2017 the United States withheld financial support for 30,000 ANDSF salaries and stipulated it would only pay salaries to soldiers who were biometrically enrolled in the Afghan personnel system.¹⁰⁷⁹ Additionally, the United States required the Afghan government to remove several top Afghan Air Force leaders who were weak and corrupt, in exchange for more than 100 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. Initial reflections from USAF advisors indicated the change in Afghan Air Force leadership was a positive development.¹⁰⁸⁰

While these are promising steps, General Nicholson recently noted that the conflict in Afghanistan is at a stalemate, and the Taliban continues to control a significant amount of territory in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁸¹ U.S. military leaders asked the U.S. administration to increase the deployment of ANDSF trainers and advisors to expand training to the brigade level and support the expansion of the Afghan special forces and Afghan Air Force. A strong ANDSF could advance the U.S. national security objective of preventing parts of Afghanistan from returning to terrorist safe havens and serve as the security transition strategy for the nation.



CHAPTER 8

LESSONS

U.S. Marine Corps photo

This section distills lessons from the U.S. experience designing, training, advising, assisting, and equipping the ANDSF.

Lesson 1. The U.S. government is not well organized to conduct SSA missions in post-conflict nations or in the developing world. Furthermore, our doctrine, policies, personnel, and programs are insufficient to meet SSA mission requirements and expectations.

The United States does not lack the capability to conduct effective SSA programs, but rather lacks a comprehensive interagency approach to implement these programs. Most U.S. SSA programs focus on improving fighting capabilities of the partner nation's security forces, with limited efforts to improve the necessary security governance and sustainability institutions. After more than 15 years of SSA efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States has made limited progress in institutionalizing innovative programs, such as CSTC-A and TF Phoenix, that were designed to build partner security sectors.

Lesson 2. SSA cannot employ a one-size-fits-all approach; it must be tailored to a host nation's context and needs. Security force structures and capabilities will not outlast U.S. assistance efforts if the host nation does not fully buy into such efforts and take ownership of SSA programs.

From 2002 to 2015, senior U.S. and NATO officials took ownership of ANDSF development, with little to no input from senior Afghan officials. Afghan buy-in largely occurred through the process of U.S. and NATO officials briefing Afghan leaders on military plans and training programs for the ANDSF. At one point, the United States threatened to withhold funding for the ANP if the Afghans did not increase the end-strength of the force to the numbers the United States demanded. In Afghanistan, PowerPoint-based police training curricula previously used in the Balkans were a mismatch given the high levels of illiteracy within the police force. This mismatch is only one example of the “cut-and-paste” programs applied from one country to the next that negatively impacted the overall effort. Additionally, the lack of Afghan ownership of force development, operational planning, and security sector governance prevented the Afghans from effectively overseeing and managing the ANDSF following security transition at the end of 2014.

Lesson 3. Senior government and nongovernment leaders in post-conflict or developing-world countries are likely to scrimmage for control of security forces; SSA missions should avoid empowering factions.

U.S. officials should expect host-nation leaders to compete for control of the military and police, including attempts to manipulate U.S. efforts to advance their own personal and political agendas. In many developing-world countries, the control of military and police forces is a show of political power. Even in situations where the United States does not directly support one faction or ethnic group, the provision of U.S.-made equipment is often seen as a sign of that support. In Afghanistan, the United States largely ignored the transitional security forces operating throughout Afghanistan, as well as the political imbalances throughout the rank-and-file that were eroding security, both of which were often supported by host-nation elites. As a result, major social and political imbalances remain within the ANDSF today.

Lesson 4. Western equipment and systems provided to developing-world militaries are likely to create chronic, high-cost dependencies.

Many developing-world security forces have military and police personnel with far lower rates of literacy than their Western counterparts. Advanced weapons systems and vehicles, demand-based supply systems, and high-tech personnel and command and control systems that work for Western militaries could be

inappropriate for many developing-world forces. Even if some personnel at higher echelons can master the systems, such capabilities might not be realistic in tactical units. Those with such skills are also more likely to seek higher-paying (and safer) employment in the private sector or senior civil service. Western advisors, therefore, are likely to step in to perform the jobs themselves rather than see the tasks done poorly or not at all. In Afghanistan, this reliance on U.S. support created a chronic dependency within the ANDSF.

Lesson 5. Security force assessment methodologies are often unable to evaluate the impact of intangible factors such as leadership, corruption, malign influence, and dependency, which can lead to an underappreciation of how such factors can undermine readiness and battlefield performance.

Assessment methodologies used to evaluate the ANDSF measured tangible outputs, such as staffing, equipping, and training status, but were less capable of evaluating the impact of intangible factors, such as battlefield performance, leadership, corruption, malign influence, and changes in systems and equipment. DOD forecasts and targets for force readiness were largely based on the U.S. military's capacity for recruitment and training, and not based on battlefield performance and other factors corroding the force. Issues such as ghost soldiers, corruption, and high levels of attrition were more critical than training capacity to measure true ANDSF capabilities.

Lesson 6. Developing and training a national police force is best accomplished by law enforcement professionals in order to achieve a police capability focused on community policing and criminal justice.

In Afghanistan, two different U.S. government agencies led police development activities. Each of these efforts alone was insufficient. State, mandated by legislation and supported by funding, is responsible for foreign police development. However, State INL is staffed by civilian program managers and not law enforcement professionals. Therefore, State largely relied on contracting with DynCorp International to conduct police training and development programs in Afghanistan. U.S. civilian police trainers were largely restricted from operating in high-threat environments and therefore could not provide follow-on field training to new ANP recruits. The mission was eventually transferred to DOD, which was largely inexperienced and improperly prepared to provide rule of law training to foreign police forces. As a result, training and development of the ANP was militarized and resulted in a police capability focused more on force protection and offensive operations and less on community policing and criminal justice.

Lesson 7. To improve the effectiveness of SSA missions in coalition operations, the U.S. government must acknowledge and compensate for any coalition staffing shortfalls and national caveats that relate to trainers, advisors, and embedded training teams.

The ANDSF training mission suffered from chronic understaffing. Even during the surge from 2010 to 2011, required trainer billets at NTM-A were staffed at less than 50 percent. Due to the national caveats of some NATO countries, deployed trainers were unable to be appropriately assigned throughout Afghanistan. In late 2011, ANP trainers in Kabul were overstaffed by 215 percent, while police trainers in hostile and non-permissive areas of eastern Afghanistan were at a shortfall of 64 percent, leaving the advisory mission severely understaffed. Chronic understaffing remains today, as Resolute Support still has gaps in its advisory program.

Lesson 8: Developing foreign military and police capabilities is a whole-of-government mission.

Successful SSA missions require whole-of-government support from the civilian and defense agencies with expertise in training and advising foreign countries in both security operations and the necessary institutional development of the security forces' governing institutions. Within DOD, SSA is a defense enterprise mission and not strictly a mission to be executed by the military chain of command. Deploying military combat commanders to oversee military operations and the development of foreign forces results in an over-prioritization of the fighting force at the expense of governing and sustainability missions. For police-related missions, the United States lacks a deployable, rule of law training force that can operate in high-threat environments; in Afghanistan, this limited the U.S. ability to develop the ANP.

Lesson 9: In Afghanistan and other parts of the developing world, the creation of specialized security force units often siphons off the conventional force's most capable leaders and most educated recruits.

In post-conflict nations and the developing world, where human capital for a professional military and police force is limited, the creation of smaller, specialized forces may be necessary. However, if the decision to create these specialized forces is executed, the U.S. military must analyze the impact the removal of the potential cadre of promising leaders will have on the conventional forces. In Afghanistan, to address growing instability and support the fledgling conventional forces, the U.S. military relied on specialized security forces. Within the ANA, the creation of the ANA commandos and special forces removed literate and proficient soldiers from the ranks of the conventional

forces and moved them into the new ranks of the ANA elite forces. Within the ANP, the creation of the Afghan National Civil Order Police and special police units also removed the most literate and capable police recruits from the force. While the performance of these elite units has been admirable, the conventional units struggled.

Lesson 10: SSA missions must assess the needs of the entire spectrum of the security sector, including rule of law and corrections programs, in addition to developing the nation's police and armed forces. Synchronizing SSA efforts across all pillars of the security sector is critical.

Successful security sector development is often achieved when all aspects of the security sector are developed in concert with one another. Successful development of a national police force without development programs and reforms of the nation's judicial and corrections systems will create perverse incentives for the police to capture and release criminals for bribes or be involved in extra-judicial activities. In Afghanistan, the 2002 division of security sector reform into the five independent silos of military reform (United States), police reform (Germany), judicial reform (Italy), counternarcotics (UK), and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (Japan) undermined each individual program's success as the SSR process lacked the required coordination and synchronization of effort.

Lesson 11: SSA training and advising positions are not currently career enhancing for uniformed military personnel, regardless of the importance U.S. military leadership places on the mission. Therefore, experienced and capable military professionals with SSA experience often choose non-SSA assignments later in their careers, resulting in the continual deployment of new and inexperienced forces for SSA missions.

The career path of a U.S. Army officer, for example, relies on commanding U.S. soldiers. Outside of joint military exercises, experiences partnering with a foreign military have little positive impact on promotion board review. U.S. military commanders publicly emphasized the importance of the train, advise, and assist missions in Iraq and Afghanistan; however, this emphasis did not equate to any change in how the military rewarded those members who volunteered for or were deployed in support of SSA missions.



CHAPTER 9

RECOMMENDATIONS

U.S. Army photo

These recommendations suggest actions that can be undertaken by Congress or executive branch agencies to inform U.S. security sector assistance efforts at the onset of and throughout reconstruction efforts, and to institutionalize the lessons learned from the U.S. experience in Afghanistan. The first set of recommendations is applicable to any current or future contingency operation and the second set of recommendations is specific to Afghanistan.

When assessed in hindsight, we recognize that the numerous pressures facing policymakers may have led to short-sighted choices and hard-won lessons. The recommendations below aim to provide better policies, organizations, information, and staffs to future policymakers faced with the difficult decisions inherent in reconstruction efforts in contingency operations.

The specific lessons these recommendations relate to are listed after each recommendation.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The U.S. Congress should consider (1) establishing a commission to review the institutional authorities, roles, and resource mechanisms of each major U.S. government stakeholder in SSA missions, and (2) evaluating the capabilities of each department and military service to determine where SSA expertise should best be institutionalized.**

[Lesson 1]

In the FY 2017 NDAA, the U.S. Congress mandated the Secretary of Defense undertake a study of DOD security cooperation activities, to be led by an independent organization of experts. This is a step in the right direction; however, we recommend that the mandate be expanded to include State, Justice, and other key SSA stakeholders. Our recommended study should include an analysis and evaluation of the authorities-based relationships and coordination mechanisms of U.S. government departments and agencies, and suggest ways to improve their effectiveness. Additionally, because the reliance on contractors to meet the needs of the U.S. SSA program in Afghanistan was not effective, the U.S. government should formalize and institutionalize SSA expertise within its military and civilian elements.

2. **The U.S. Congress should consider mandating a full review of all U.S. foreign police development programs, identify a lead agency for all future police development activities, and provide the identified agency with the necessary staff, authorities, and budget to accomplish its task.**

[Lesson 6]

The Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) is staffed with law enforcement professionals experienced in the design, delivery, and management of foreign police development programs and security sector construction. While ICITAP uses federal and non-federal police advisors and trainers, it does not contract out the responsibility for program management and accountability. ICITAP has no independent budget and is fully dependent on State or DOD for funding and guidance. State does not have a staff of law enforcement professionals, but does have the required authorities and funding. In high-threat environments, DOD will by default assume a significant role in police development programs and, therefore, elements within DOD must be considered in the congressional review. During this review, the U.S. government should identify the lead agency for training both foreign police units involved in civil policing and also paramilitary police forces similar to the European gendarmerie. The U.S. government would benefit from having deployable experts capable of conducting training in both facets of policing.

EXECUTIVE AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **DOD and State SSA planning must include holistic initial assessments of mission requirements that should cover the entire range of the host nation's security sector. [Lesson 10]**

Future missions that require reconstruction of a host nation's security sector should include the development of the host nation's judiciary and corrections systems, in addition to the police and military forces. U.S. military officials must pace the overarching development of the security sector to ensure each line of effort is being developed in tandem. A rapidly developed security force without the necessary corrections infrastructure and judicial systems will ultimately undermine security sector efforts overall. The Office of the Secretary of Defense for Security Cooperation has already taken positive steps with the introduction of DOD Instruction 5132.14, *Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy of the Security Cooperation Enterprise*, which mandates an assessment of the host country's security sector needs prior to the initiation of the SSA program.

2. **DOD and State should coordinate all U.S. security sector plans and designs with host-nation officials prior to implementation to deconflict cultural differences, align sustainability requirements, and agree to the desired size and capabilities of the force. DOD and State should also engage with any coalition partners to ensure unity of effort and purpose. [Lesson 2]**

In post-conflict nations and fragile states, coordination and synchronization with an underdeveloped host-nation government will be a challenge. However, as the government matures, host-nation ownership of SSA activities is critical. While extremely lengthy and slow to develop, the U.S. Security Governance Initiative (SGI) currently implemented in six African countries has been praised for its unique focus on host-nation ownership, joint planning, and long-term forecasting. According to White House documents, SGI's distinctive approach "focuses on the systems, processes, and institutions that reinforce democratic security sector governance; uses vigorous analysis, shared data and agreed upon goals, and is supported by regular measurement and evaluation; and relies on commitment and accountability for results on the part of the United States and our partners."¹⁰⁸² The 2004 *Securing Afghanistan's Future* report, published by the UN, World Bank, and government of Afghanistan, noted that "the only actor that can effectively coordinate the security sector reform process and fill the leadership void over the medium to longer term is the Afghan Government. Sustainable reform cannot be achieved if it is donor driven."¹⁰⁸³

- 3. DOD, in partnership with State, should reinforce with host-nation leaders that the United States will only support the development of a national security force that is inclusive of the social, political, and ethnic diversity of the nation. [Lesson 3]**

The U.S. military attempted to strictly enforce ethnic diversity quotas in the early ANA; however, these quotas failed to address political and social diversity. While Pashtun quotas were met, Pashtun representation from southern Afghanistan—the Taliban’s homeland—was minimal. Capping Tajik representation to minimize Northern Alliance domination failed to recognize the ethnic diversity of the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance. Pashtun commanders affiliated with the Northern Alliance were appointed to meet quotas, but this also ensured their political dominance of the force.

- 4. To prevent the empowerment of one political faction or ethnic group, DOD, in coordination with State and the intelligence community, should monitor, evaluate, and assess all formal and informal security forces operating within a host nation. DOD should also identify and monitor both formal and informal chains of command and map social networks of the host nation’s security forces. DOD’s intelligence agencies should track and analyze political associations, biographical data, and patronage networks of senior security force and political leadership. [Lesson 3]**

While access may be limited before the start of the SSA program, key identifiers can be obtained during initial training and advising missions. From 2001 to 2006, the U.S. military largely ignored transitional or informal security forces operating throughout Afghanistan, allowing security to deteriorate to a point that could no longer be mitigated by the newly trained ANDSF. Transitional forces, left unmonitored, eroded the legitimacy of the national government and security sector institutions. Multiple SIGAR interviews with former Afghan military officials and U.S. advisors noted that Afghanistan has a history of informal chains of command, often based on personal relationships and familial ties. These informal chains of command were often empowered over the formal chains of command, which the United States was attempting to develop.

- 5. DOD, State, and other key SSA stakeholders should enhance civilian and military career fields in security sector assistance, and create personnel systems capable of tracking employee SSA experience and skills to expedite the deployment of these experts. [Lesson 1]**

Despite more than 15 years of SSA in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. government has very limited institutional expertise for SSA missions beyond unit-level training. Compared to other offices in DOD, State, or Justice, SSA offices and training centers are small and inadequately

resourced. No department has the required cadre of trained experts to draw upon for SSA missions beyond normal foreign military sales (FMS), small unit train, advise, and assist missions, and multinational joint military exercises. Commands created to facilitate SSA missions, such as CSTC-A, were “pick-up” teams of brave and well-meaning personnel who lacked the necessary experience, relationships, continuity, organizational coherence, and pre-deployment training. They were forced to learn on-the-job within their 6–12 month rotations, which led to many lessons being lost as individuals rotated out of country. This problem was magnified as the SSA missions in Afghanistan competed for attention, talent, and resources with the high-priority mission in Iraq.

Developing such professional expertise in DOD and State will enable U.S. officials to better forecast timelines and resource requirements needed for successful SSA missions. More professional expertise will also increase the probability that U.S. officials will recognize and address problems such as corruption and malign influence. In Afghanistan, U.S. officials chronically underestimated these and other issues, including their impact on realistic readiness and reform timelines, which deeply impacted the overall SSA effort.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness should leverage internal DOD databases to track military and civilian experts in security sector governance for future efforts to advise ministerial-level security sector personnel in key areas of logistics, human resources, internal affairs, and finance.

6. DOD and State should mandate professional development and training for all civilian and military members involved in SSA activities, as well as review curricula from the current training programs to align training with mission requirements and fully prepare deploying SSA personnel. [Lesson 1]

Mandatory professional development and training should apply to both career professionals and rotational civilian and military trainers and advisors. DOD and State currently have professional development institutions aimed at providing support to SSA initiatives, including the Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies (DISCS), the Air Force’s Air Advisor Academy, and the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). These institutes provide tactical to strategic and regional-specific programs to career and deployable rotational advisors. DISCS provides mobile training teams to Afghanistan to train deployed advisors. Despite the capability of these institutions to train several hundred new students per year, pre-deployment training at any of these institutions was not mandated for U.S. trainers and advisors deployed to support the development of the ANDSF.

This resulted in a cadre of U.S. military and civilians without the proper training and education to complete the mission they were tasked to perform.

Former and current advisors who had pre-deployment training identified deficiencies in the curricula and noted the training's failure to properly prepare them to execute mission requirements. Therefore, pre-deployment training programs should be continuously reviewed and updated with current lessons learned in order to prepare advisors for the dynamic requirements of an SSA environment. To institutionalize this capability, DOD, State, and Justice should create a Security Cooperation Workforce Development program for SSA professionals to ensure these individuals have the required training and intellectual foundations required at the onset of future SSA efforts.

- 7. To overcome staffing shortages within a coalition, DOD and State should bolster political and diplomatic efforts to ensure better compliance with agreed-upon resource contributions from partner nations and, if unsuccessful and unable to fill the gaps, reassess timeframes and anticipated outcomes to accommodate new realities.**

[Lesson 7]

Senior DOD and State officials should continue international outreach to NATO member states to fill gaps in NATO requirements in Afghanistan. If NATO countries are unwilling to commit, or chronically delay deployments of NATO personnel, the United States should consider filling the gaps with United States personnel. The U.S. will likely have more success filling NATO requirements if an assessment of mission requirements is matched to the political and military limitations of the assigned NATO member.

From 2010 to 2011, staffing of required trainer positions at NTM-A remained under 50 percent. Furthermore, due to the national caveats of some NATO countries, deployed trainers were unable to be appropriately assigned throughout Afghanistan. In late 2011, ANP trainers in Kabul were overstaffed by 215 percent, while police trainers in hostile and non-permissive areas of eastern Afghanistan were at a shortfall of 64 percent, leaving the advisory mission severely understaffed. Chronic understaffing remains today, as Resolute Support still has gaps in its advisory program.

DOD-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Prior to the initiation of an SSA mission—and periodically throughout the mission—DOD should report to the U.S. Congress on its assessments of U.S. and host-nation shared SSA objectives, alongside an evaluation of the host nation’s political, social, economic, diplomatic, and historical context, to shape security sector requirements. [Lesson 2]**

These reports should be designed to appropriately align DOD activities with long-term U.S. funding, serve as a tool for congressional oversight, and improve transparency. DOD’s assessments should include different courses of action for SSA missions based on (1) the U.S. political strategy, (2) the U.S. military capacity, (3) the impact that improving a partner nation’s operational and governing capabilities has on long-term sustainability, and (4) any dependency concerns. DOD must obtain input from State, Justice, and the intelligence community when drafting these assessments. Finally, DOD should request independent, third-party assessments to ensure “groupthink” and “mirror imaging” issues are identified and mitigated.

2. **DOD should lead the creation of new interagency doctrine for security sector assistance that includes best practices from Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Vietnam. [Lesson 1]**

The United States lacks an interagency framework and decision-making processes for SSA sufficient to address the scope and magnitude of issues that arise in post-conflict or developing-world nations. Doctrine that addresses raising, training, and fiscally supporting an entire military and police force and its sustainment institutions and infrastructure is critical, because these efforts are very different from the typical SSA models where the United States provides advanced military support to a standing force, for example, in Pakistan, Jordan, Japan, or Israel. Constructing an entire security sector for a partner nation is likely to occur in post-conflict, fragile states and in the developing world, where construction of the nation’s critical infrastructure will be a requirement for the development and training of the national security forces. Any commitment to undertake security sector construction activities will require DOD, State, Congress, and the White House to commit to long-term planning and resourcing.

The lack of security sector construction models undermines the U.S. government’s ability to develop a sound approach to security force development and appropriately link training combat forces with the necessary critical infrastructure and equipment requirements. The absence of common language and authoritative concepts has impeded

communication and coordination within the U.S. government and partner nations, and often pulled efforts in different directions.

3. DOD should review the evolution of command structures and assessment methodologies used in Afghanistan and Iraq to determine best practices and a recommended framework to be applied to future SSA missions. DOD should design new monitoring and evaluation tools capable of analyzing both tangible and intangible factors affecting force readiness. [Lesson 5]

For more than 15 years, the United States has been involved in large-scale security sector reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. In both theaters of conflict, the U.S. military has used a variety of command structures and assessment tools to manage and evaluate the development of the host nation's security forces. However, in each theater (and even over a period of time in each theater), the United States used approaches that differed organizationally and programmatically. To establish a baseline and be able to more accurately assess progress over time, a comprehensive methodology must be developed and, importantly, remain in use without substantive changes.

U.S. officials had difficulty measuring the effectiveness of the Afghan army and police units. Too often, they relied upon tangible data, such as staffing, equipping, and training status, to assess readiness. In the U.S. military, such factors do not necessarily correlate to unit performance or battlefield effectiveness; intangibles such as leadership and unit cohesion play critical, often decisive, roles. In developing-world militaries, the correlation is likely to be even more tenuous due to the heightened impact of intangibles. Leadership and cohesion play key roles, but so do dependency, political influence, corruption, and malign activities. Readiness evaluations must take greater account of such factors.

Assessments of institutional performance and capacity were even more challenging due to the Afghan political-military interface that was often opaque to U.S. military officials. Improved assessments will also help senior U.S. officials more clearly and reliably gauge strategic risk to U.S. interests and objectives.

DOD should create an internal mechanism to leverage independent subject matter experts to provide regular assessments of SSA programs. Expert analysis must then be compared against internal DOD assessments and intelligence community assessments to identify irregularities and discrepancies. Additionally, any changes to assessment methodology must be noted, and historical reports must be annotated and updated, as needed.

4. DOD should conduct a human capital, threat, and material needs assessment of the host nation and design a force accordingly, with the appropriate systems and equipment. [Lesson 4]

If the host nation requires less advanced systems and equipment, DOD should consider leveraging foreign military allies to provide material and sustainment support to the U.S.-led SSA program. Through literacy programs, education, and long-term partnering, the U.S. military can gradually improve and advance systems and equipment to meet the changing human capital profile of the force. Prior to deployment, U.S. advisors should receive training in equipment and systems suitable for the host nation's security forces, or develop agreements with partner nations who can provide training expertise the United States does not have.

5. When creating specialized units such as special forces, DOD should submit human capital assessments and sustainability analyses for both the specialized and conventional forces to the House and Senate Appropriations and Armed Services Committees. Force capability assessments must determine the best course of action, including redesigning requirements for each unit. [Lesson 4]

Human capital assessments should identify the strengths and limitations of the current force demographics within each service and the potential pool of recruits available. They should also take into account expected rates of attrition. Based on the capabilities of each service, the United States should clearly define a strategy as to what the force is expected to accomplish. As part of the report, DOD should include an assessment on the impact specialized units could have on the civil-military relations of the host nation, to include risk assessments on the potential of a military coup or the likelihood specialized units could be used as personal security for senior government officials.

Removing the most literate and capable recruits while simultaneously continuing to design a modern conventional force with Western systems and weapons will slow the conventional force's development. If specialized units are required in a developing-world nation, then the design of the conventional forces must be revisited.

6. DOD should diversify the leadership assigned to develop foreign military forces, to include civilian defense officials with expertise in the governing and accountability systems required in a military institution. [Lesson 8]

Uniformed military personnel often prioritize enhancing foreign military capabilities with less focus on the critical items of reform, management, and leadership. The U.S. government deploys a senior military commander

to oversee U.S. military operations in a foreign country. However, when the mission involves the development of a foreign security force, the deployment of a DOD civilian to oversee security sector governance and institutional development often does not occur. This leaves a void in subject matter expertise and experience required to help develop the non-kinetic aspects of the host nation's security forces.

- 7. DOD and the military services should institutionalize security sector assistance and create specialized SSA units that are fully trained and ready to deploy rapidly for immediate SSA missions. DOD should create an institution responsible for coordinating and deconflicting SSA activities between the services and greater DOD, provide pre-deployment training, and serve as the lead proponent for security sector governance requirements, including defense institution building. [Lesson 1]**

In 2017, the U.S. Army announced the creation of six Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB). This is a positive first step, and we recommend other services consider similar models. Currently, at Moody Air Force Base in Georgia, the U.S. Air Force has a group of air advisors who are serving four-year tours training Afghans on the C-29. Institutionalizing that program could serve as a positive first step for the U.S. Air Force to create a long-term internal capability.

DOD should also consider creating an institution responsible for security sector governance. Since most U.S. military units primarily focus on—and are better suited to address—the needs of the fighting force, an institutional capability with a deployable force of experts in defense institution building ensures the United States provides holistic support to the host nation's security needs.

AFGHANISTAN-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

While the United States continues to support the development and professionalization of the ANDSF, there are several actions that can be taken now to improve our SSA efforts.

Executive Agency Recommendations

1. **Realign the U.S. advisor mission to meet the operational and organizational roles and responsibilities of the ANDSF, MOD, and MOI. [Lessons 2, 6, 9]**

DOD and State, working with DOJ, DHS, and NATO military leadership, should support an Afghan government top-to-bottom reevaluation of the operational and organizational roles and responsibilities of each element of the ANDSF. Under the proposed Afghanistan four-year plan, ANCOP and Afghan Border Police will transition to the MOD, and ANA special forces and the Afghan Air Force will be expanded to meet offensive operational requirements. The ANP will assume the role of community policing with a focus on rule of law. As the ANP becomes a community police force, DOD and State should review mission requirements and properly align U.S. advisors to train the ANP accordingly. An analysis of the ALP mission should be conducted to determine if the program should continue to exist and, if so, how the force should be properly aligned to mission requirements. A review of the proper alignment of the Afghan Air Force is needed to determine if it should be a separate military service that requires its own governing backbone or an element reliant on ANA institutional infrastructure. Finally, with the allocation of additional forces to MOD, a correlated increase of governing personnel, for example, in human resources, payroll, training and medical, is necessary. The United States should restructure its ministerial advisory effort to align with the new changes in force to ensure full coverage of critical security sector governing elements.

2. **Re-create proponent leads for the ANA and ANP. [Lessons 1, 2, 6]**

DOD, State, DOJ, and DHS must identify the proper agency to serve as the proponent lead for the ANA and ANP. Both the Afghan special forces and Afghan Air Force have proponents in Afghanistan that serve as the lead element for the professional development of the force and at times serve as a key advocate for the force with the larger international community. Proponent leads are able to speak on behalf of the entire force and can ensure international assistance is properly aligned. Proponent leads for the ANA and ANP no longer exist, which removes an international advocate and results in support being provided at the regional level, but not throughout the entire chain of command.

3. Create a rear element to provide persistent and comprehensive support to CSTC-A and the TAACs. [Lessons 1, 2]

DOD, State, DOJ, and DHS should create an element in the Washington, DC, area responsible for providing persistent and comprehensive support to forward-deployed elements involved in the train, advise, and assist mission. This organization should have a habitual relationship with CSTC-A and the TAACs, to include a rotation of deployed personnel to Afghanistan. Currently, the rotational schedules at CSTC-A and the regional and functional TAACs preclude the United States from optimizing its ability to assess ANDSF development and the effectiveness of the U.S. advisory mission over the long-term. A stateside element should be staffed with civilian and uniformed personnel on tours of no less than four years in support of the Afghanistan four-year plan.

4. Synchronize troop decisions with NATO force generation conference schedules and begin discussions for post-2020 NATO support to Afghanistan. [Lesson 7]

The White House and DOD should synchronize troop decisions with NATO force-generation conference schedules. NATO typically meets twice per year to decide on NATO troop contributions for NATO-approved missions. Failure to synchronize the decision-making process in Washington and Brussels could result in extended timelines for NATO troop deployments. With a four-year plan to enhance the ANDSF under review, deployment of additional trainers and advisors with the required skillset will need to be decided soon. The White House and NATO should also synchronize support to the ANDSF post-2020, as draft design changes for the ANDSF will likely result in necessary training beyond the 2020 commitment.

5. Mandate SSA pre-deployment training at service-level training centers. [Lessons 1, 5, 8, 11]

DOD and State should require all future trainers, advisors, and SSA monitoring and evaluation personnel to attend an SSA certificate program at service-level training centers (like the Air Advisor Academy or the new Army Advisor Academy) or one of the department-level training centers, such the Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies or the Foreign Service Institute. DISCS and FSI should modify programs and curricula to prioritize training for deploying units and ensure courses are focused on their country-specific requirements. CSTC-A advisors currently involved in plans to develop a “CSTC-A Academy” for deployed personnel should synchronize needs and pre-deployment requirements with stateside training missions.

6. Create incentives for military and civilian personnel with expertise in SSA. [Lesson 11]

DOD and State should consider enticements for deployed military and civilian personnel who are experts in SSA activities and engaged in training and advising host-nation military and security forces. DOD should consider an equivalent of joint credit for deployed uniformed and civilian personnel in SSA missions. Congress should evaluate the pay cap threshold for deployed civilian Senior Executive Service (SES) personnel to ensure they receive full financial compensation during their deployment to an active combat zone. Additional incentives should be considered for personnel willing to commit to deployments of 24 months or more.

7. Improve ANDSF governing, oversight, and accountability systems. [Lessons 2, 3, 10]

The U.S. government must continue to support aggressive anticorruption investigations into the ANDSF leadership. While the Afghan government has taken some steps to investigate and arrest corrupt ANDSF leaders, more needs to be done. The United States should devote additional uniformed and civilian experts to partner with Afghan MOD and MOI personnel to develop improved governing, oversight, and accountability systems.

8. Impose stringent conditionality mechanisms to eliminate the ANDSF's culture of impunity. [Lessons 2, 5]

The U.S. military and civilian leadership should continue to use stringent conditionality mechanisms to eliminate the ANDSF's culture of impunity. Historically, the United States provided blanket support for ANDSF development and increasing support to offset ANDSF weaknesses. For many, the ANDSF was “too big to fail.” It is imperative that senior Afghan leaders assume greater responsibility to sanction corrupt officials to break the cycle of expectation that positions of power lead to personal gain at the expense of those under their command. Where conditionality has been imposed, positive movement has been possible.

9. Develop a civilian cadre of security sector governance personnel at MOD and MOI. [Lessons 1, 2, 8]

DOD, State, and other key civilian agencies should support Afghan initiatives to create a civilian cadre of security sector governance personnel at MOD and MOI. Supporting the growth of a civil service should balance the current dominance of Afghan uniformed military in governing and sustainment departments.

10. Institutionalize rotational schedules that allow for continuity in mission and personnel. [Lessons 1, 5, 11]

DOD, State, and other key stakeholders should institutionalize new rotational schedules that allow for continuity in mission and personnel. Many senior military officers in Afghanistan are attempting to fix the “brain drain” issue that has plagued the ANDSF development mission; however, these efforts are based on personal initiative and have not been institutionalized as a best practice.

11. Increase civilian advisors to the ANDSF, MOD, and MOI. [Lessons 6, 8]

The United States should increase the number of civilian advisors to the ANDSF, MOD, and MOI. SSA is a whole-of-government mission; however, military forces and contractors continue to dominate the train, advise, and assist mission, with limited to no parallel civilian effort. While the current advisory mission will help the development of kinetic and operational capabilities, the lack of comparable civilian advising on security sector governance and institutional development will cause the sector to lag. Based on the non-permissive environment and the requirement for a high level of security for personnel movements, the increase in civilian advising capabilities needs to be accompanied by an increase in security personnel to improve freedom of movement.

DOD-Specific Recommendations

1. Implement best practices and develop mitigation strategies for the Afghan Air Force recapitalization. [Lessons 1, 2, 4, 5, 8]

With congressional funding approved, DOD should apply best practices and develop mitigation strategies for the potential challenges the United States may encounter during the Afghan Air Force’s recapitalization (RECAP), based on lessons identified over the past 15 years in Afghanistan. DOD must ensure that operational requirements do not reduce the training and professional development standards required for the transition from Mi-17s to UH-60 Black Hawks. Also, with the introduction of over 100 UH-60 Black Hawks, the regional TAACs should increase training for ANA infantry units on combat arms integration between ground forces and air power. With the introduction of the UH-60 platform, the U.S. train, advise, and assist mission for the AAF should become a joint mission between the USAF and U.S. Army. The TAAC-Air advisory mission would benefit from and should consider a hybrid command structure between the two services and between the fixed-wing and rotary platforms of the AAF. As we have seen with the USAF’s training for the A-29, the U.S. Army must fully own the mission and requirements for the UH-60 transition.

At a minimum, DOD should consider mitigation strategies for the following potential situations. First, as this report highlights, operational requirements are routinely prioritized over the training and professional development of the force. With the planned introduction of UH-60 Black Hawks during the 2018 fighting season, DOD must identify what the U.S., NATO, and Afghan plans are to transition combat and lift capabilities when operational requirements are at their highest. Within this analysis, DOD must also acknowledge and resolve the Afghan army's dependence on airlift and close air support during this time. Second, if the Afghans decide to maintain a higher level of Mi-17 airpower, either through leasing airframes from another NATO member or through other means of support, DOD must show how that will impact the initial training plans for the UH-60, which rely on the downsizing of the Mi-17 platform. Third, based on historically high levels of attrition, DOD must identify how the U.S. Army's training plans will properly forecast the development of more than 100 pilots, most of whom are likely not part of the current Afghan Air Force. Fourth, with the current deficit in U.S. Army warrant officers, DOD must determine how the U.S. Army will staff the trainer and advisor needs of RECAP. Finally, DOD must identify the mechanisms the United States will put in place to prevent overuse of the UH-60, which would result in an increase in maintenance requirements and a shorter airframe life cycle.

2. Conduct a human capital assessment of the ANDSF conventional and special forces. [Lessons 2, 4, 5, 9]

The U.S. military leadership in Afghanistan should conduct a human capital assessment of the ANDSF conventional and special forces. Afghan special forces and the Afghan Air Force have proven to be the most capable and formidable offensive forces in the Afghan military, while the conventional forces struggle to implement the necessary security sector reforms, accountability, and oversight. Future efforts to bolster the ANDSF must be grounded in a better understanding of the strengths and limitations of the current human capital of each service and the potential pool of recruits available. If only certain recruits receive higher-end capabilities and advanced training, we need a clearly defined strategy as to what each component of the force is expected to accomplish.

3. Review combat and logistics enabler support to the ANA. [Lessons 1, 2, 5]

DOD should review combat and logistics enabler support to the ANA and draft a transition plan for aviation requirements. In part, the U.S. military's train, advise, and assist efforts since 2002 resulted in conventional ANA units dependent on close air support, medical evacuation, route clearing, protected mobility, accurate fires overmatch, and ISR capabilities. This lack of combat enablers and resulting equipment losses and high casualty rates

has resulted in fewer offensive operations for larger conventional forces who are more prone to stay on base in the absence of combat enablers. Afghan combat enablers were not part of initial design decisions and are still largely underdeveloped, compared to the operational requirements. As shown recently, the development of the Afghan A-29 close air support platform has resulted in more combat mobility for offensive operations by larger ANA formations. In 2017, the U.S. military has dramatically increased U.S. airstrikes to support the ANDSF; however, less support has been provided in the form of medical evacuation and logistics.

4. Increase advisory capacity in ANA military academies and ANA and ANP training centers. [Lessons 1, 2, 10]

DOD should place advisors in ANA military academies and training centers to develop and improve the ANA's military doctrine and professional development system. The U.S. military greatly benefits from the value added by the U.S. academies and training centers, such as the Army's Combined Arms Center, TRADOC, War College, and other institutions that leverage battlefield experience to improve future generations of the force. The ANA would likely derive equal benefits from similar professional development opportunities.

In addition to prioritizing advisor support for these institutions, DOD should leverage U.S. and coalition institutional training, service schools, and academies to create ANDSF subject matter experts who have the knowledge base needed to deliver instruction and to define and develop training, doctrine, and force structure. Long-term sustainment and development of the ANDSF requires that ANDSF has resident subject matter experts. The current "train-the-trainer" model needs to be modified to ensure that real depth and expertise is developed.

5. Expand the train, advise, and assist mission below the corps level. [Lessons 1, 2]

DOD should expand the current train, advise, and assist mission to allow for close, enduring partnerships and increased opportunities for mentoring below the corps level. In 2012, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey testified, "You can't commute to work to train and advise.... The bond between our forces and the Afghan forces will ultimately be what gets [the Taliban] defeated." If expansion below the corps level is implemented, DOD needs to provide guidance to military advisors to be wary of capacity substitution, furthering the dependency of Afghan units. A balance between close mentoring by U.S. subject matter experts and allowing the Afghans to lead and learn is critical.

6. Consider security requirements, such as guardian angels for trainers and advisors, when making decisions on contributing additional troops.
[Lessons 1, 2, 8]

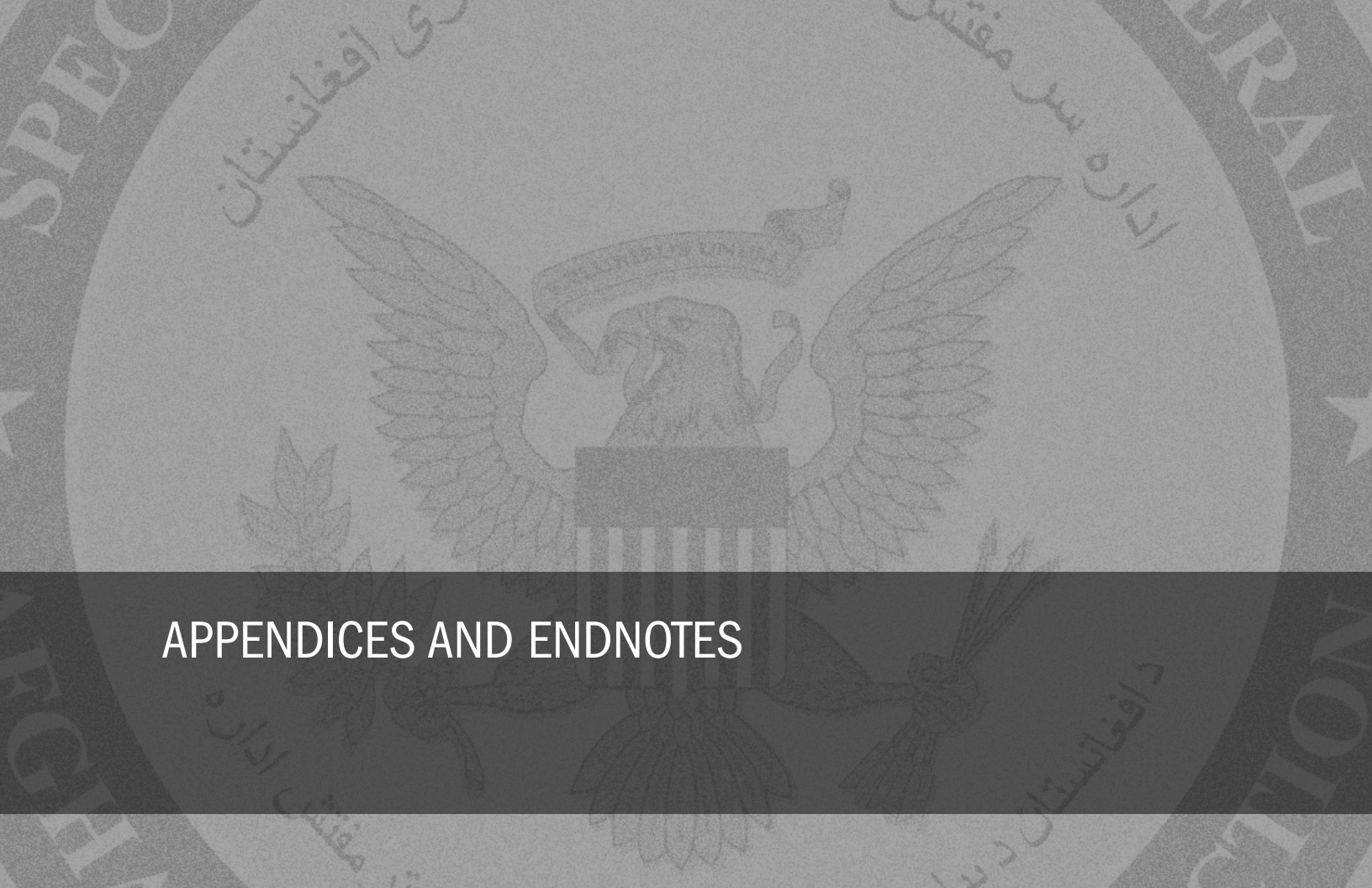
SIGAR observed during a spring 2017 visit to Afghanistan that diminishing security has increased security requirements for U.S. military and civilian trainers and advisors. According to current U.S. military advisors, the military calculates guardian angel requirements based on the current threat, ranging from one to three security personnel for every advisor. For civilians, those numbers are significantly higher. Therefore, to get 3,000 to 5,000 additional U.S. military advisors, the U.S. would have to deploy 3,000 to 15,000 additional security personnel.

7. Ensure that the necessary technical oversight is available when maintenance or training tasks are delegated to support contracts.
[Lessons 1, 4]

DOD must ensure that sufficient U.S. government expertise is provided to oversee contracts providing logistics, maintenance, or training support for the development of the ANDSF. In the case of training, there must be clearly articulated and measurable performance standards and methods to evaluate the quality of the training being provided.

8. Consider deploying law enforcement professionals to advise the ANP.
[Lessons 6, 8]

Conventional U.S. military units are ill-suited to train a foreign police force on community policing methods and rule of law. If U.S. civilian agencies (State or DOJ) remain risk-adverse and are unwilling or unable to deploy advisors to the sub-national level because of security concerns, DOD should consider leveraging the National Guard to deploy law enforcement professionals or use Military Police with expertise in community policing to perform the ANP advisory function.



APPENDICES AND ENDNOTES

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

SIGAR conducts its lessons learned program under the authority of Public Law 110-181 and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and in accordance with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's *Quality Standards for Federal Offices of Inspector General* (commonly referred to as “the Silver Book”). These standards require that we carry out our work with integrity, objectivity, and independence, and provide information that is factually accurate and reliable. SIGAR's lessons learned reports are broad in scope and based on a wide range of source material. To achieve the goal of high quality and to help ensure our reports are factually accurate and reliable, the reports are subject to extensive review by subject matter experts and relevant U.S. government agencies.

The *Reconstructing the ANDSF* research team drew upon a wide array of sources. Much of the team's documentary research focused on publicly available material, including reports by DOD, State, GAO, NATO, ISAF, Congressional Research Service, and coalition partner nations, as well as congressional testimony from government officials and experts. The team also consulted declassified material from an archive maintained by former Secretary of Defense

Donald Rumsfeld. These official sources were complemented by hundreds of nongovernmental sources, including books, think tank reports, journal articles, press reports, academic studies, international conference agreements, field research, and analytical reports by international and advocacy organizations.

The research team also benefited from SIGAR's access to material that is not publicly available, including thousands of documents provided by U.S. government agencies. State provided cables, internal memos and briefings, opinion analysis reports, and planning and programmatic documents. DOD provided documents on the U.S. military's plans and programs to develop the ANDSF. NATO provided access to the NATO archives that allowed our researchers to view reports concerning NATO's plans and assessments of ANDSF development. Team researchers also reviewed documents obtained from the U.S. Army Center of Military History. A body of classified material, including U.S. embassy cables and intelligence reports, provided helpful context; however, as an unclassified document, this report makes no use of that material. Finally, the team also drew from SIGAR's own work, embodied in its quarterly reports to Congress and its investigations, audits, inspections, and special project reports.

While the documentary evidence tells a story, it cannot substitute for the experience, knowledge, and wisdom of people who participated in the Afghanistan reconstruction effort. Therefore, the research team interviewed or held informal discussions with more than 100 individuals with direct and indirect knowledge of facts on the ground that affected U.S. efforts to train, advise, assist, and equip the ANDSF. Interviews and informal roundtable discussions were conducted with U.S., Afghan, and other international experts from academia, think tanks, NGOs, and government entities; current and former U.S. civilian and military officials deployed to Afghanistan; and personnel from intelligence agencies and the Departments of Defense, State, and Justice. The team also drew upon dozens of interviews conducted by other SIGAR researchers and auditors.

Interviews provided valuable insights into the rationale behind decisions, the debates within and between agencies, and the frustrations that spanned the years, but often remained unwritten. Due, in part, to the politically sensitive nature of security sector assistance efforts, a majority of the interviewees wished to remain anonymous. For those still working in the government, confidentiality was particularly important. Therefore, to preserve anonymity, our interview citations often cite a "senior U.S. official" or "U.S. military advisor." We conducted our interviews during research trips to military installations and Afghanistan, and in visits to U.S. government departments and agencies in Washington.

Reconstructing the ANDSF reflects careful, thorough consideration of the wide range of sources; however, it is not an exhaustive treatment of the topic. Given the timeline and scale of the U.S. engagement in Afghanistan and the divided responsibility of security sector assistance among the coalition and military services, the report does not aim to fully address how tens of thousands of U.S. civilian and military officials dealt with the SSA mission on a daily basis since 2002. Rather, the report focuses on certain key events and issues, and provides context on the development of the ANDSF, relevant U.S. policies and initiatives, and competing U.S. priorities. From these, we derive lessons and recommendations to inform current and future contingency operations.

The report underwent an extensive process of peer review. We sought and received feedback on the draft report from six subject matter experts; five additional subject matter experts reviewed the draft lessons and recommendations. These experts included Americans, Afghans, and Europeans, each of whom had significant experience working on or in Afghanistan. These reviewers provided thoughtful, detailed comments on the report, which we incorporated, as possible.

Over the course of this study, the team routinely engaged with many officials at the Departments of Defense, State, and Justice to familiarize them with our preliminary findings, lessons, and recommendations and to solicit formal and informal feedback to improve our understanding of the key issues, as viewed by each department. DOD, State, and Justice were also given an opportunity to formally review and comment on the final draft of the report. In addition, we met with departmental representatives to receive their feedback on the report firsthand. Although we incorporated agencies' comments where appropriate, the analysis, conclusions, and recommendations of this report remain SIGAR's own.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF RELEVANT AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS

Since its establishment in 2008, SIGAR has conducted a series of audits and inspections focused on U.S. reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. Of those, 49 were related specifically to the development of the ANDSF:

- Capabilities of the ANDSF and assessments of those capabilities (5 reports)
- Infrastructure (27 reports)
- Contracting and management (5 reports)
- Equipment and other resources provided to the ANDSF, and maintenance of that equipment (8 reports)
- Training (1 report)
- Personnel management of the ANDSF (3 reports)

This is a summary of these 49 audits and investigations.

Capabilities

1. SIGAR Audit 10-11, *Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments*, June 29, 2010.

SIGAR found that the rating system in use at the time, the Capability Milestone (CM) system, had not provided reliable or consistent assessments of ANDSF capabilities, had overstated ANDSF operational capabilities, and had inadvertently created disincentives for ANDSF development. Moreover, the highest-level rating criteria for ANDSF units did not include the capability of sustaining independent operations.

2. SIGAR Audit 13-13, *Afghan Special Mission Wing: DOD Moving Forward with \$771.8 Million Purchase of Aircraft that the Afghans Cannot Operate and Maintain*, January 17, 2013.

SIGAR found that, as of January 2013, challenges facing the Afghan Special Mission Wing (SMW) included: 1) having less than one-quarter of the necessary personnel to achieve full strength; 2) ongoing recruitment difficulties due to illiteracy and vetting requirements; 3) lack of a plan to achieve full strength; 4) DOD contractors performing 50 percent of maintenance and repairs and 70 percent of logistics for the SMW's current fleet; and 5) only 7 of the 47 Afghan pilots assigned to SMW were fully mission qualified to fly with night-vision goggles.

3. SIGAR Audit 14-33, *Afghan Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Effort*, February 2014.

SIGAR found that Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT) rating definition levels for ANDSF units assessed from January 2012 to July 2013 showed there was some improvement in the ANDSF's capacity to man,

train, and equip its forces. However, the number of ANA and ANP units not assessed also increased during this time due to the drawdown of coalition forces. As coalition forces draw down and fewer advisor teams are assigned to ANDSF units, IJC officials stated they will have less insight into the ANDSF's capabilities and will rely more on the ANDSF for assessment data. Officials stated, this will decrease their overall confidence in ANDSF assessments as a whole. SIGAR noted that the IJC had developed a new assessment tool, the Regional ANDSF Assessment Report (RASR), because the CUAT was too difficult to read, inconsistently applied, and not useful.

4. SIGAR Audit 16-03, *Afghan Local Police, October 2015.*

SIGAR found that the effectiveness of the ALP was hindered by lack of logistical support, including supplies that were often diverted, delayed, of inferior quality, or heavily pilfered, increasing the likelihood of attrition. SIGAR also identified several payroll irregularities, primarily regarding the salary disbursement process

5. SIGAR Audit 16-15, *Afghan National Engineer Brigade, January 2016.*

SIGAR found that the National Engineer Brigade (NEB) was incapable of operating independently, largely due to delays in basic training and the provision of engineer training equipment, even after USFOR-A lowered the goal to train the NEB by December 31, 2014, to a “partially capable” level.

Infrastructure

1. SIGAR Audit 10-09, *ANA Garrison at Kunduz Does Not Meet All Quality and Oversight Requirements; Serious Soil Issues Need to Be Addressed, May 30, 2010.*

SIGAR found that the project was behind schedule and identified construction problems, serious soil stability issues (including severe settling of the soil under several garrison structures), and improper grading at the site that put the U.S. investment in the garrison at risk. In addition, SIGAR found that Afghanistan Engineer District-North did not meet certain U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) requirements for conducting oversight and maintaining contract files.

2. SIGAR Audit 10-10, *ANA Garrison at Gamberi Appears Well Built Overall but Some Construction Issues Need to Be Addressed, May 30, 2010.*

SIGAR found that overall, the garrison appeared to be well-built, but some construction issues needed to be addressed, including poor flood-control measures, inadequate grading, and a deteriorating bridge, as well as potential difficulties securing the weapons training range.

3. SIGAR Audit 10-12, ANP Compound at Kandahar Generally Met Contract Terms but Has Project Planning, Oversight, and Sustainability Issues, July 22, 2010.

SIGAR found there were several project delays and inadequate project planning. In addition, USACE quality assurance procedures were not fully adhered to. CSTC-A officials stated GIROA did not have the financial or technical capacity to sustain ANDSF facilities in the near term once they were completed.

4. SIGAR Audit 10-14, ANA Garrison at Farah Appeared Well Built Overall, but Some Construction Issues Should Be Addressed, July 30, 2010.

SIGAR observed some construction issues related to site grading, asphalt roads, and silt accumulation that needed to be addressed, but overall contract management and oversight met contract requirements. SIGAR also found that, according to CSTC-A, GIROA did not have the financial or technical capacity to sustain all ANDSF facilities.

5. SIGAR Audit 11-03, ANP District Headquarters Facilities in Helmand and Kandahar Provinces Have Significant Construction Deficiencies Due to Lack of Oversight and Poor Contractor Performance, October 27, 2010.

SIGAR found that the project was delayed and that minimal funds were withheld from contractor payments to cover deficient work. Although USACE and the Afghan contracted firm, Basirat Construction, developed project-specific quality assurance and control plans, these plans were not implemented effectively. USACE made payments based on incomplete quality assurance reports and photographs taken by the contractor.

6. SIGAR Audit 11-06, Inadequate Planning for ANSF Facilities Increases Risks for \$11.4 Billion Program, January 26, 2011.

SIGAR found that CSTC-A had not developed a long-term construction plan, placing the facilities program at risk of not meeting ANDSF strategic and operational needs. In addition, portions of the ANDSF Comprehensive Plan for Facilities Development were out of date, and most ANDSF facilities plans were not completed; nevertheless, this plan was the most complete listing and analysis of ANDSF facilities that CSTC-A could provide. SIGAR also found that CSTC-A did not have a maintenance plan linking requirements to long-term construction plans.

7. SIGAR Audit 11-09, *ANA Facilities at Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat Generally Met Construction Requirements, but Contractor Oversight Should Be Strengthened*, May 25, 2011.

SIGAR found that the projects at Mazar-e Sharif and Herat experienced cost increases and project delays, but the quality of construction at both sites generally met the terms of the contract requirements. However, SIGAR identified minor problems, including inadequate grading in some areas that could lead to flooding. Although U.S. Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment (AFCEE) and CSTC-A have taken steps to provide for the sustainment of the Mazar-e Sharif and Herat facilities, these efforts did not occur in a timely manner.

8. SIGAR Audit 12-02, *Better Planning and Oversight Could Have Reduced Construction Delays and Costs at the Kabul Military Training Center*, October 26, 2011.

SIGAR found that the Kabul Military Training Center's (KMTC) construction cost more and took longer than planned. Costs for the project increased by \$12.5 million and were delayed by over 18 months. In addition, inadequate quality assurance contributed to electrical problems. Finally, KMTC may be unsustainable without continued U.S. assistance.

9. SIGAR Audit 12-03, *Afghan National Security University Has Experienced Cost Growth and Schedule Delays, and Contract Administration Needs Improvement*, October 26, 2011.

SIGAR found that construction at the Afghan National Security University (ANSU) experienced cost growth and schedule delays. The task order ceiling price grew from \$70.2M to \$91.5M, and the scheduled completion was delayed from June 2010 to October 2011. The cost growth and schedule delay were due to a combination of added work, costs the contractor incurred while waiting for site demining, CSTC-A's changing design preferences, and increased construction costs. Overall, AFCEE paid \$21.3 million more for 18 fewer facilities and eight fewer projects than originally planned.

10. SIGAR Inspection 12-01, *Construction Deficiencies at Afghan Border Police Bases Put \$19 Million Investment at Risk*, July 30, 2012.

SIGAR found construction deficiencies at the three bases it inspected. One base, Lal Por 2, had no viable water supply and therefore was not being used. The Nazyan base was also deemed to be potentially uninhabitable in the future if the septic system continued to back up into the pipes, causing overflow.

11. SIGAR Inspection 13-01, *Kunduz ANA Garrison: Army Corps of Engineers Released DynCorp of All Contractual Obligations despite Poor Performance and Structural Failures, October 25, 2012.*

SIGAR found that, despite the unsatisfactory performance of the contractor, DynCorp, in completing construction at the site, USACE released DynCorp from further contractual liability in December 2011 and paid it \$70.8 million as part of a negotiated settlement. SIGAR found USACE did not comply with provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 49.107(a), which required an independent audit and review of a settlement proposal exceeding \$100,000.

12. SIGAR Audit 13-01, *Afghan National Security Forces Facilities: Concerns with Funding, Oversight, and Sustainability for Operations and Maintenance, October 30, 2012.*

SIGAR found that the Afghan government would likely be incapable of fully sustaining ANDSF facilities after the transition in 2014 and the expected decrease in U.S. and coalition support. The Afghan government's challenges in assuming operations and maintenance responsibilities included a lack of sufficient numbers and quality of personnel, as well as undeveloped budgeting, procurement, and logistics systems.

13. SIGAR Inspection 13-02, *Wardak Province National Police Training Center: Contract Requirements Generally Met, but Deficiencies and Maintenance Issues Need to be Addressed, October 30, 2012.*

SIGAR found that, although the building intended as a fire station met contract requirements, the National Police Training Center (NPTC) did not have any firefighters or firefighting equipment. In addition, the living quarters intended for firefighting staff were being used to house visiting personnel. Deficiencies included roof leaks around the vehicle exhaust ventilation pipes in the vehicle maintenance building and a missing storm water outlet grating in the perimeter wall, which could enable a person to gain unauthorized access to the compound. In addition, lack of maintenance had allowed silt and construction debris to accumulate in the storm drain system, which could result in flooding and sediment buildup.

14. SIGAR Inspection 13-03, *Gamberi Afghan National Army Garrison: Site Grading and Infrastructure Maintenance Problems Put Facilities at Risk, October 2012.*

SIGAR found several problems with flood control measures, site grading, and a deteriorating bridge at the \$129.8 million Gamberi garrison site. SIGAR also observed that USACE had done little to prevent or repair problems with a deteriorating bridge near the entrance which was then being replaced, and its site grading efforts were ineffective. Further, SIGAR

determined that the hydraulic design had flaws that could lead to a future structural failure, making the culvert unsafe or unusable.

15. SIGAR Inspection 13-04, *Kunduz Afghan National Police Provincial Headquarters: After Construction Delays and Cost Increases, Concerns Remain about the Facility's Usability and Sustainability*, January 2013.

SIGAR's inspection identified usability and sustainability issues with the facility. Specifically, a failure of the facility's only source of power could lead to significant sewage overflows that would threaten the health and safety of the facility and its occupants. There were also no plans for an operations and maintenance contract or to train Afghans to keep complex systems such as sewage treatment and electrical power in good working order.

16. SIGAR Inspection 13-05, *Iman Sahib Border Police Company Headquarters in Kunduz Province: \$7.3 Million Facility Sits Largely Unused*, January 2013.

SIGAR's inspection was limited, covering only portions of three buildings at the 12-building facility because most buildings were locked and on-site personnel did not have keys. No major construction quality issues were identified at the buildings SIGAR inspected. Built with a capacity for 175 persons, only about 12 Afghan personnel were on site during SIGAR's inspection, and they were unaware of plans to move additional staff to the facility. Additionally, there was neither an operations and maintenance contract nor a plan to train Afghan personnel to operate and maintain equipment, raising questions about the Afghan government's ability to sustain the facility.

17. SIGAR Inspection 13-06, *Afghan National Police Main Road Security Company, Kunduz Province, Is behind Schedule and May Not Be Sustainable*, April 2013.

SIGAR observed a soil compaction process that put the ANP Main Road Security Company compound at risk for future structural failure. Further, at the time of the inspection, no plans existed for who would be responsible for operations and maintenance of the facilities when the site was transferred to the Afghan government. Failure to address the soil compaction, back-up power source, and operations and maintenance issues could place the \$1.7 million U.S. investment in this facility at risk.

18. SIGAR Audit 13-18, *Afghan National Security Forces: Additional Action Needed to Reduce Waste in \$4.7 Billion Worth of Planned and Ongoing Construction Projects*, September 13, 2013.

CSTC-A lacked a comprehensive basing plan for the ANDSF that considered future ANDSF reductions and excess capacity in existing facilities.

Current construction requirements reflected the approved 352,000 ANDSF personnel level and did not take into account planned reductions in the number of ANDSF personnel. As a result, when the ANDSF decreased to 228,500 personnel, ANDSF facilities would have excess personnel capacity. Using CSTC-A's 2012 base construction schedule, SIGAR identified 52 projects that might not meet ISAF's December 2014 construction deadline, increasing cost and oversight risks if these projects were continued. SIGAR's assessment differed from that of CSTC-A, which estimated that only one facility, worth \$16 million, would not meet the 2014 ISAF construction deadline.

- 19. SIGAR Inspection 14-05, *Archi District Police Headquarters: Extensive Mold, Lack of Running Water, and Inoperable Electrical Systems Show Facilities Are Not Being Sustained, October 2013.***
SIGAR found that, although the force protection measures appeared to be well constructed, it was unable to determine whether they had been built in accordance with contract requirements and applicable construction standards, because USACE officials could not locate the project's essential construction files, including documents such as the contract's technical specifications and requirements. Additional buildings had been constructed on site, but neither USACE nor Afghan officials knew who built these additional buildings, when they were built, or how much they cost. SIGAR found during its November 2012 inspection that these additional facilities were in a state of disrepair, with an estimated 40 ANP personnel living and working in facilities with extensive mold.
- 20. SIGAR Inspection 14-41, *Camp Monitor: Most Construction Appears to Have Met Contract Requirements, but It Is Unclear if Facility Is Being Used as Intended, March 12, 2014.***
SIGAR found that the facilities inspected at Camp Monitor appeared to be well constructed, but SIGAR could not fully assess the camp's lighting, heating, water, sewer, and other mechanical systems because the generators were not operational at the time of inspection. The camp's greatest shortcoming was the lack of a dining facility, which prevented the ANA from occupying and using the facility.
- 21. SIGAR Inspection 15-25, *ANA Camp Commando Phase II: Power Plant and Fuel Point Not Fully Operational Nearly Two Years after Project Completion, January 6, 2015.***
SIGAR found that USACE accepted all three facilities built under Phase II at Camp Commando and paid the contractor the full amount of the contract, roughly \$18.7 million. However, during SIGAR's inspections in February and April 2014, SIGAR found that the generators were not synchronized and could

only provide about 25 percent of the planned total power output, that the fuel pumps at the fuel point had not been used, and that the dining facility was built for 280 Afghan soldiers but was handling 1,600 soldiers. SIGAR was concerned that the U.S. government had issued a new contract, which included approximately \$3.1 million in Phase III to complete work on or make repairs to the camp's power system and construct another fuel point.

22. SIGAR Inspection 15-27, *Afghan Special Police Training Center's Dry Fire Range: Poor Contractor Performance and Poor Government Oversight Led to Project Failure, January 13, 2015.*

SIGAR found that within four months of the U.S. government spending nearly a half a million dollars to construct the Afghan Special Police Training Center's Dry Fire Range (DFR), the range's buildings began to disintegrate. This disintegration was caused by the contractor failing to adhere to contract requirements and international building standards, and using substandard materials. Further, the DFR's construction was plagued by poor government oversight throughout all phases of the contract. RCC failed to ensure proper design of the facility and failed to hold the contractor accountable for its work. Due to the range's safety and long-term sustainability being compromised, Afghan authorities demolished the DFR and were rebuilding it with funds from the MOI.

23. SIGAR Inspection 15-51, *Afghan National Army Slaughterhouse: Stalled Construction Project Was Terminated After \$1.25 Million Spent, April 20, 2015.*

SIGAR found that the ANA slaughterhouse construction project in Kabul Province was terminated for convenience in October 2013, nine months after construction began and the contractor was paid \$1.25 million for incurred costs. Prior to termination, in September 2013, USACE suspended the contract because of the contractor's unsatisfactory performance. At the time of the suspension, ISAF was terminating or de-scoping some construction projects, in order to reduce the ANDSF's infrastructure inventory, to increase the likelihood that the Afghans would be able to sustain some of the facilities following ISAF withdrawal. The slaughterhouse was terminated as part of this process, with ISAF citing the potential for saving the U.S. government \$10.5 million in additional construction costs.

24. SIGAR Inspection 15-74, *\$14.7 Million Warehouse Facility at Kandahar Airfield: Construction Delays Prevented the Facility from Being Used as Intended, July 15, 2015.*

SIGAR found that the \$14.7 million warehouse facility was well-built, but lengthy construction delays led to the facility never being used as intended.

SIGAR also found that the U.S. Army, which developed the requirement for the warehouse, did not take action to prevent more than \$400,000 in modifications from being made to the project after the August 2013 decision was made to end the Defense Logistics Agency's (DLA) mission in Kandahar.

25. SIGAR Inspection 16-16, *Afghan Ministry of Defense Headquarters: \$154.7 Million Building Appears Well Built, but Has Several Construction Issues that Should Be Assessed*, February 11, 2016.

SIGAR found that the MOD headquarters in Kabul, with some exceptions, generally met contract requirements and appeared well-built. However, delays resulting from the ANA refusing the contractor access to the site, and others such as weather, security, and funding issues, emerged. As a result, the cost to complete the building rose from \$48.7 million to \$154.7 million, or more than three times the original estimated cost. Similarly, although the headquarters building was essentially complete, it took almost five years longer to complete than originally anticipated. As of January 7, 2016, the building was not fully occupied.

26. SIGAR Inspection 16-26, *Afghan Air Force University: Contract Requirements were Generally Met, but Instances of Non-compliance, Poor Workmanship, and Inadequate Maintenance Need to be Addressed*, March 30, 2016.

SIGAR found that the Afghan Air Force University's renovation work and new construction was largely completed according to the terms of the contract. However, during the inspection, SIGAR found some instances of noncompliance with the contract, as well as some instances of poor workmanship. Noncompliance issues involved the lack of required plumbing insulation, missing ventilation fans, and the lack of protective metal strips on stairways. SIGAR also found that the contractor substituted lower-grade materials in at least 14 buildings without prior approval, worth roughly \$80,000 in cost adjustments.

27. SIGAR Inspection 17-03, *Special Mission Wing Facilities at Kandahar Airfield: Construction Generally Met Contract Requirements, but Problems with Noncompliance, Maintenance, and Quality Assurance Need to be Addressed*, October 14, 2016.

SIGAR found that the Special Mission Wing facilities and infrastructure were generally constructed in accordance with contract requirements and technical specifications. However, SIGAR found five instances in which ECC did not fully comply with contract requirements and technical specifications, some of which had health and safety implications, and that USACE did not fully comply with its own quality assurance procedures.

Contracting and Management

1. **SIGAR Audit 9-01, *Contract Oversight Capabilities of the Defense Department's Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) Need Strengthening*, May 19, 2009.**

SIGAR found that CSTC-A lacked effective contract oversight capabilities. Although CSTC-A was responsible for the management of training programs for the ANDSF, it did not have mechanisms necessary to ensure that U.S. funds were managed effectively and spent wisely.

2. **SIGAR Audit 13-03, *Afghan Police Vehicle Maintenance Contract: Actions Needed to Prevent Millions of Dollars From Being Wasted*, January 2013.**

SIGAR found that CSTC-A unnecessarily paid \$6.3 million from April 2011 to September 2012 because the U.S. Army Contracting Command and CSTC-A based the firm fixed-price rates on vehicles purchased for the ANP, but they did not account for vehicles that had not been seen for service in over a year or had been destroyed. CSTC-A took steps to address these concerns beginning on December 30, 2012, by removing 7,324 vehicles that not been seen for service in over a year or which had been destroyed. CSTC-A estimated the changes would save the government approximately \$5.5 million per year.

3. **SIGAR Audit 13-15, *Afghanistan Public Protection Force: Concerns Remain about Force's Capabilities and Costs*, July 30, 2013.**

SIGAR found that the effect of the transition to the Afghanistan Public Protection Force (APPF) had been minimal on projects in SIGAR's sample, but only because implementing partners hired risk management companies (RMCs) to fill APPF capacity gaps and perform critical functions. Without RMCs, the APPF would be unable to provide the full range of security services needed by USAID implementing partners. Implementing partners reported that APPF personnel provided little benefit and were unable to perform required duties.

4. **SIGAR Audit 13-06, *Contracting With The Enemy: DOD Has Limited Assurance that Contractors with Links to Enemy Groups Are Identified and their Contracts Terminated*, April 11, 2013.**

SIGAR identified several weaknesses in DOD's process for ensuring U.S. government contracting funds were not provided to persons and entities supporting the insurgency and opposing U.S. and coalition forces. As a result of these weaknesses, millions of contracting dollars could be diverted to forces seeking to harm U.S. military and civilian personnel in Afghanistan and derail the multi-billion dollar reconstruction effort.

Equipment, Resources, and Maintenance

1. **SIGAR Audit 12-04, *DOD Improved Its Accountability for Vehicles Provided to the Afghan National Security Forces, but Should Follow Up on End-Use Monitoring Findings*, January 12, 2012.**

SIGAR found that CSTC-A had not previously submitted claims for vehicles damaged or equipment and parts lost or stolen during transit, and so was not reimbursed by the transportation contractors. Rather, CSTC-A paid separately for repairs and replacement of missing equipment and parts. SIGAR also observed that CSTC-A was providing fuel to the ANA for vehicles that had, in fact, been destroyed.

2. **SIGAR Audit 12-14, *Interim Report on Afghan National Army Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants*, September 10, 2012.**

SIGAR found that CSTC-A did not have accurate or supportable information on how much U.S. money was needed for ANA fuel, where and how the fuel was actually used, or how much fuel had been lost or stolen. Despite these significant weaknesses, CSTC-A proposed to increase future ANA petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) funding levels through direct ASFF contributions. SIGAR determined that, before investing additional resources and transferring fuel responsibilities to the Afghan government, CSTC-A needed to develop accurate and supportable ANA fuel requirements and address outstanding fuel accountability issues.

3. **SIGAR Audit Report 13-04, *Afghan National Army: Controls over Fuel for Vehicles, Generators, and Power Plants Need Strengthening to Prevent Fraud, Waste, and Abuse*, January 2013.**

SIGAR found CSTC-A lacked accountability in the process used to order, receive, and pay for POL for the ANA. Deficiencies included missing records, incomplete and inaccurate records, and overestimates of the amount of POL required by the ANA. SIGAR was also critical of CSTC-A's plans to directly contribute more than \$1 billion in U.S. funds to the Afghan government to purchase fuel for the ANA in light of the questionable ability of the MOD to act as a responsible steward of these resources.

4. **SIGAR Audit Report 14-01, *Afghan National Police Fuel Program: Concerted Efforts Needed to Strengthen Oversight of U.S. Funds*, October 2013.**

SIGAR found that the U.S. Central Command Joint Theater Support Contracting Command (C-JTSCC) and CSTC-A had limited oversight of fuel purchases for the ANP.

5. Audit Report 14-03, *Afghan National Army: Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan Lacks Key Information on Inventory in Stock and Requirements for Vehicle Spare Parts, October 2013.*

SIGAR found that CSTC-A was placing orders for vehicle spare parts based on inaccurate information provided by the ANA. The ANA had not consistently maintained inventory records and continued to place orders for parts without accurate demand or usage data. The audit arose after the ISAF Commander's Advisory and Assistance Team reported in October 2012 that CSTC-A could not account for about \$230 million worth of spare parts and had ordered \$138 million of additional parts without sufficient accountability. SIGAR also found that CSTC-A could not provide adequate documentation to confirm transfers to the ANA of vehicle spare parts delivered from 2010 through 2012.

6. SIGAR Audit 14-84, *Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Weapons Accountability, July 2014.*

SIGAR found that errors and discrepancies often occurred between the two main systems used by DOD to account for weapons provided to the ANDSF because they were not linked to each other and required manual data entry.

7. SIGAR Audit 16-49, *Afghan National Army Technical Equipment Maintenance Program: DOD Has Taken Steps to Remedy Poor Management of Vehicle Maintenance Program, July 2016.*

SIGAR found that the capacity of the Afghans to manage the supply chain was lacking, the costs of spare parts were significantly underestimated, performance metrics did not accurately assess the contractor performance or progress, ANA maintenance capability did not develop as anticipated, contract oversight declined due to deteriorating security conditions, and the contractor was paid based on the number of vehicles in the fleet, instead of the number of vehicles repaired.

8. SIGAR Audit 14-85, *Afghan Mobile Strike Force Vehicles: Contractor Met Requirements, but Long-Term Operation and Maintenance Remain a Concern, July 2014.*

SIGAR found that all of the vehicles were properly documented and transferred to DOD. In addition, as of March 25, 2014, DOD had transferred 419 Mobile Strike Force Vehicles (MSFV) to the ANA and could account for the remaining 215 vehicles, 204 of which would eventually be transferred to the ANA and 11 of which DOD would retain as test vehicles. One of the two contractors involved, Textron, also met other contract requirements, such as receiving and inspecting MSFVs upon arrival; providing initial spare parts; and maintaining training vehicles.

Training

1. **SIGAR Audit 14-30, *Afghan National Security Forces: Despite Reported Successes, Concerns Remain About Literacy Program Results, Contract Oversight, Transition and Sustainment*, January 2014.**

SIGAR found that, despite a \$200 million literacy training contract, the overall literacy rate of the ANDSF was unknown. Additionally, the training programs focused heavily on the numbers of graduates, neglecting to track how many graduates remained on active duty, became casualties, or left the force.

Personnel Management

1. **SIGAR Audit 11-10, *Despite Improvements in MOI's Personnel Systems, Additional Actions are Needed to Completely Verify ANP Payroll Costs and Workforce Strength*, May 25, 2011.**

SIGAR found that many weaknesses identified earlier by other U.S. government audit agencies, such as irreconcilable and unverified data, a lack of data-reconciliation and verification procedures, and difficulties implementing electronic systems, continued to pose challenges to CSTC-A, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), and the MOI and MOF.

2. **SIGAR Audit 15-26, *Afghan National Police Personnel and Payroll Data*, January 2015.**

SIGAR found problems with tracking and reporting ANP personnel and payroll data that could result in personnel being paid for days not worked. This was data that CSTC-A and UNDP relied on the MOI and ANP to collect and accurately report.

3. **SIGAR Audit 15-54, *Afghan National Army Personnel and Payroll Data*, April 2015.**

SIGAR found that, despite U.S. and coalition efforts to develop effective ANA personnel and payroll processes, those processes exhibited extensive internal control weaknesses. Essential human resource management tools in place in Afghanistan relied on the MOD and ANA to collect and accurately report ANA personnel and payroll data; however, the ANA's process for collecting unit-level attendance data, upon which all ANA personnel and payroll data was based, had limited oversight and weak controls, and was not consistently applied across ANA locations.

APPENDIX C: ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Definition	Acronym	Definition
AABIS	Afghan Automated Biometric Identification System	CTC	Central Training Center
AAF	Afghan Air Force	CUAT	Commander's Unit Assessment Tool
AAN	Afghanistan Analysts Network	DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
AECA	Arms Export Control Act	DHS	Department of Homeland Security
AHRIMS	Afghan Human Resource Information Management System	DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
AIA	Afghan Interim Authority	DIAG	Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups
ALP	Afghan Local Police	DIB	Defense Institution Building
AMF	Afghan Militia Force	DIRI	Defense Institutional Reform Initiative
ANA	Afghan National Army	DISCS	Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies
ANAAC	Afghan National Army Air Corps	DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
ANAP	Afghan National Auxiliary Police	DOD	Department of Defense
ANASF	Afghan National Army Special Forces	DODIG	Department of Defense Inspector General
ANCOP	Afghan National Civil Order Police	DOJ	Department of Justice
ANDSF	Afghan National Defense and Security Forces	DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces	EAP	Expeditionary Advisory Package
ANDSF ID	ANDSF Identification Card System	EF	Essential Function
ANP	Afghan National Police	EPS	Electronic Payroll System
ANASOC	Afghan National Army Special Operations Command	ETT	Embedded Training Team
APPF	Afghan Public Protection Force	EU	European Union
AP3	Afghan Public Protection Program	EUPOL	European Union Police Mission for Afghanistan
APPS	Afghan Personnel Pay System	FDD	Focused District Development
ASFF	Afghanistan Security Forces Fund	FID	Foreign Internal Defense
AUP	Afghan Uniformed Police	FMF	Foreign Military Financing
AWOL	Absent Without Official Leave	FMS	Foreign Military Sales
BPC	Building Partner Capacity	FRAGO	Fragmentary Order
CAPTf-A	Combined Air Power Transition Force-Afghanistan	FSI	Foreign Service Institute
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command	FY	Fiscal Year
CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Program	G8	Group of Eight
CFC-A	Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan	GAO	Government Accountability Office
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	GPPT	German Police Project Team
CJSOR	Combined Joint Statement of Requirements	GVHR	Gross Violation of Human Rights
CLS	Contractor Logistics Support	HRW	Human Rights Watch
CM	Capability Milestone	ICG	International Crisis Group
COIN	Counterinsurgency	ICITAP	International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
COMISAF	Commander, International Security Assistance Force	IED	Improvised Explosive Device
CRS	Congressional Research Service	IJC	ISAF Joint Command
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan	IMET	International Military Education and Training
		INCLE	International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement
		INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION

Acronym	Definition	Acronym	Definition
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force	SEN	Shura-e Nazar
IWA	Integrity Watch Afghanistan	SES	Senior Executive Service
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting	SFA	Security Force Assistance
JANIB	Joint Afghan-NATO Inteqal Board	SFAB	Security Force Assistance Brigade
JCMB	Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board	SFAT	Security Force Assistance Team
KMTC	Kabul Military Training Center	SGI	Security Governance Initiative
LOTFA	Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan	SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
MAAR	Monthly ANDSF Assessment Report	SIGIR	Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction
MOD	Ministry of Defense	SOAG	Special Operations Advisory Group
MOF	Ministry of Finance	SPP	State Partnership Program
MOI	Ministry of Interior	SRAP	Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan
MODA	Ministry of Defense Advisors	SSA	Security Sector Assistance
MPRI	Military Professional Resources, Incorporated	SSC	Security Sector Coordinator
NATC-A	North Atlantic Treaty Organization Air Training Command-Afghanistan	SSR	Security Sector Reform
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	TAA	Train, Advise, and Assist
NADR	Nonproliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs	TAAC	Train, Advise, and Assist Command
NCO	Noncommissioned Officer	TAF	The Asia Foundation
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act	TF	Task Force
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization	UAE	United Arab Emirates
NTM-A	North Atlantic Treaty Organization Training Mission-Afghanistan	UK	United Kingdom
OCO	Overseas Contingency Operation	UN	United Nations
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
OFS	Operation Freedom's Sentinel	UMAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
OIR	Operation Inherent Resolve	UNSC	United Nations Security Council
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom	UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
OMC-A	Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan	USAF	U.S. Air Force
OMLT	Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams	USFOR-A	U.S. Forces-Afghanistan
OND	Operation New Dawn	USIP	United States Institute of Peace
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense	VSO	Village Stability Operations
USD(C)	Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)		
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations		
PMT	Police Mentoring Team		
POMLT	Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team		
PPBE	Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution		
PPD	Presidential Policy Directive		
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team		
PSC	Private Security Contractor		
RASR	Regional ANDSF Status Report		
RC	Regional Command		
RS	Resolute Support		
RTC	Regional Training Center		
SASC	Senate Armed Services Committee		

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The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 (P.L. 110-181) established the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

SIGAR's oversight mission, as defined by the legislation, is to provide for the independent and objective

- conduct and supervision of audits and investigations relating to the programs and operations funded with amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.
- leadership and coordination of, and recommendations on, policies designed to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the administration of the programs and operations, and to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse in such programs and operations.
- means of keeping the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense fully and currently informed about problems and deficiencies relating to the administration of such programs and operation and the necessity for and progress on corrective action.

Afghanistan reconstruction includes any major contract, grant, agreement, or other funding mechanism entered into by any department or agency of the U.S. government that involves the use of amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Source: P.L. 110-181, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008," 1/28/2008.

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