



ATLANTIC MEMO # 9

Afghan Police and Economy: Lynchpins for Success

[Atlantic-community.org](http://atlantic-community.org) has launched its project “[Focus Afghanistan](#),” which aims to develop policy recommendations on how to proceed in Afghanistan. Here are the Atlantic Community members’ first proposals: A majority agrees that the international community should remain involved in Afghanistan but urges key contributing countries to revise their strategies. Members could not agree on NATO’s future in Afghanistan, the role of Iran, or negotiations with the Taliban:

1. No withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The international community cannot afford to withdraw from Afghanistan at the present time. Although [Lucke](#) emphasizes that any foreign-troop presence incites insurgency, most argue that a quick withdrawal would detrimentally destabilize both Afghanistan and the region. Leaving Afghanistan could recreate the repercussions of the Soviet troop withdrawal – “another civil war and the rise of international terrorism” ([Daiyar](#)).

2. EU, US and Germany must strengthen Afghan police and economy.

- **EU:** Since EU member states are hesitant to contribute militarily to the mission, the EU should find other areas in which to increase its efforts: More police trainers are needed for EUPOL; the EU should therefore pledge an additional 500 officers and civilian experts for police training ([Smith](#)). In addition, more civilian experts need to be sent to implement economic development programs through agri-businesses and micro-finance distribution ([Rusila](#)).
- **US:** Any American surge should focus on training local police. Afghan National Police forces (ANP) are more than just police, they are “paramilitary forces fighting an insurgency.” ([Broschk](#)) Successfully training the ANP would require around 2,200 foreign officers and experts, a long-term security effort more important than a simple troop surge ([Sheeran](#)).
- **Germany:** As a leading European nation, Germany must rethink its strategies both domestically and within Afghanistan. Three issues are vital: Advancing domestic dialogue concerning Afghanistan must be spearheaded by parliament through public hearings resulting in benchmarks and targets for the extended troop deployment ([Benner / Zimmermann](#)). Also, the government needs to eliminate national caveats ([Rashid](#)). And the Bundeswehr must refocus on human intelligence gathering and cultural and language training for police mentors in Afghanistan ([Broschk](#)).

3. NATO needs international support.

NATO’s role in Afghanistan remains disputed. [Lucke](#) echoes popular concern: NATO is divided and thus ineffective. However, [Eversteijn](#) still considers the NATO alliance essential for progress and calls on members to make good on promised contributions. More global participation could allow NATO to scale down its Afghanistan commitments ([Swierczynski](#)).

4. Iran cannot be ignored.

While most members agree that regional actors must cooperate to solve Afghanistan’s problems, there is little consensus on how to make Iran a positive factor in the region. Some believe that Iran can assist in Afghanistan, especially in combating drug production and sales ([Parsa](#)). But community members are divided on how to make Iran cooperate: [Rashid](#) suggests immediate dialogue with Iran, and [Stadler](#) argues that the financial crisis and the falling oil price could bring Iran to the negotiating table. Others suggest strong sanctions, like an embargo on gasoline imports ([Hadjisky](#)).

5. Consider negotiations with the Taliban.

Opinion on negotiations with the Taliban is divided. Some members argue that negotiating is a form of surrender. Furthermore, [Daiyar](#) argues that negotiations should only take place under certain pre-conditions: the insurgents must lay down their arms and join the democratic process. [Broschk](#) disagrees: “having your opponent lay down their arms is what you want to achieve in negotiations, not a pre-condition.” Eventually negotiating and sharing government power with “ex-Taliban” and Pashtun leaders is probable ([Stadler](#)).

Atlantic Memos showcase the best ideas and arguments from debates in the Open Think Tank on atlantic-community.org. All policy recommendations in this document were made by registered members of the Atlantic Community.

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