



ATLANTIC MEMO #31

How to Invest in Afghanistan's Long-Term Stability

The West should secure a positive legacy to its Afghanistan mission before the transition of responsibility in 2014 by strengthening the rule of law, promoting female education, introducing smarter energy solutions and solidifying Afghan sovereignty.

Although Osama Bin Laden is dead, NATO and its partners still have to invest many resources to secure sustainable development and future stability in the country. All contributors to this memo participated in the competition "*Women on Transatlantic Security*" sponsored by the United States Mission to NATO and the NATO Public Diplomacy Division.

1. Strengthen the rule of law by redefining policing and justice.

Current approaches to training the Afghan National Police (ANP) lack an emphasis on accountability and governance necessary for a sustainable political solution in the country. While the ANP should be an instrument for the rule of law, current training efforts focus almost exclusively on the role of police in counter-insurgency. To ensure future stability, NATO must increase its commitment to turning the ANP into a legitimate law enforcement agency. This should accompany justice sector reform by training judges, strengthening judicial institutions, reinforcing links between the police and justice sectors, and fighting corruption (Gross).

2. Promote stability by educating women.

Educating Afghan women should become a central focus as this will create sustainable and long-term stability in the region. An educated girl is more likely to teach her mother and eventually her children how to read. Educated adult women are more likely than men to promote education for their families and their communities. When women are educated, population and infant mortality rates decline while the quality of health increases. An educated mother is less likely to condone her son's involvement with insurgent groups. The majority of the funds should be allocated to the rural areas where 80 percent of Afghans live (Bubel).

3. Increase mission effectiveness through smarter energy.

With a collaborative, strategic approach to energy, NATO forces can overcome enemy insurgents and promote human development in Afghanistan. Soldiers carry 20-40 pounds of batteries for a typical 72-hour mission. Using alternative energy sources like solar-powered communication systems increases the capability of forces operating in tough environments by reducing the need for fuel resupply and improving operational flexibility. Some of the technologies deployed by troops today can also be used to aid Afghans. Since only 15.6 percent of the Afghan population has access to electricity, many communities lack basic services like lighting, refrigeration and water purification systems. NATO should introduce the technology to provide these basic services to Afghans now as part of its counter-insurgency strategy and leave the technology behind after the transition to promote human development in the country (Posner).

4. Solidify Afghan sovereignty through international agreement.

The West must strengthen its resolve to South Asia otherwise regional players will continue to hedge their bets and problems will remain intractable. The international community should secure an agreement among all stakeholders that Afghanistan will remain a permanently neutral country, its territory will not be used against the interests of its neighbors, its neighbors cannot use their territory against the interests of Afghanistan, the Durand Line will be recognized by all parties as the Afghan-Pakistani border, and the United States and NATO will act as guarantors of this agreement. Such a treaty would calm the fears of abandonment among Afghanistan's neighbors and prevent hedging strategies (Royall).

Atlantische Initiative e.V.

Wilhelmstraße 67
10117 Berlin
Germany

Tel: +49.30.206 337 88
Fax: +49.30.206 337 90

Atlantic Memo Contributors

Basia A. Bubel,
New York University

Eva Gross,
Institute for European Studies,
Free University Brussels

Rachel A. Posner,
United States Department of
Defense

Elizabeth Royall,
Georgetown University

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.