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Challenging the Warlord Culture

*Security Sector Reform in
Post-Taliban Afghanistan*

Challenging the Warlord Culture:

Security Sector Reform in Post-Taliban Afghanistan

by Mark Sedra



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About the Author

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1. Introduction

An historic opportunity for long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan emerged with the fall of the Taliban in November 2001. For the Afghan people to seize this opportunity, they require the concerted and sustained support of the international community. After 23 arduous years marked by foreign invasion and internecine fighting the country lacks the resources and capacity to rebuild its shattered infrastructure and restore security and stability without external assistance. International organizations, donor countries, and NGOs should provide the money and technical expertise to facilitate reconstruction; however, if this process is to succeed in the long-term the Afghan people must take ownership of the process. A significant step toward the ultimate objective of a stable and economically viable Afghanistan was taken in December 2001 at the International Donors Conference in Tokyo when US \$4.5 billion was pledged by donor countries for the reconstruction effort. Following this landmark meeting, talks were held in Geneva, attended by major donor countries, UN representatives and the Afghan Interim Administration (AIA), to devise a detailed plan for security sector reform in Afghanistan. The meeting resulted in an explicit commitment of donor countries to address what they recognized to be the most pertinent threat to reconstruction and peace-building efforts, namely the general lack of security caused principally by the resurgence of warlordism.

Since the fall of the Taliban, regional warlords have set out to consolidate their positions, aggressively carving out fiefdoms throughout the country. Their power is rooted in their esteemed image as *mujahidin*, warriors who liberated Afghanistan from the Soviet occupation, and the patronage they receive from foreign powers such as Pakistan and Iran. Relying on illegal activity for resources, including extortion, cross border smuggling and the drug trade, and responsible for a litany of human rights violations against ethnic minorities, warlords represent an imposing challenge to the stability of Afghanistan. Accordingly, the overarching question that this paper will address is: How can the security sector be reformed to curtail the power and influence of the warlords and challenge the underlying culture of warlordism that is so deeply ingrained in Afghan society?

Security sector reform is a term that can be widely interpreted, as evinced by the voluminous amount of literature produced on the subject in recent years. This study will focus on three specific elements of the security reform agenda that have been prioritized by stakeholders in the Afghan reconstruction process because of their significance to ongoing efforts to restore a basic level of security and stability to the country. These three pillars are: the reconstruction of a broadly representative national armed forces, the creation of a national police force, and the

implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs on the regional and national level. Comprehensive security sector reform is not limited to these pillars. Quite the contrary, they should serve as a foundation upon which further reform initiatives, such as judicial and prison reform, can be developed. This report aims to identify and assess the plans established to address the three pillars, the progress made thus far in the implementation of these plans, and the challenges that face the reform process at various levels.

Successful security sector reform efforts in post-conflict situations recognize and strengthen potential synergies and areas of collaboration between reconstruction and reform initiatives. Development activities cannot be undertaken without a minimum level of security throughout the country, and conversely the success of security reform, most notably demobilization initiatives, necessitates a certain level of economic development. For instance, the prevailing economic incentives for Afghan men to take up arms on behalf of regional warlords should be counterbalanced through the provision of development aid. The interconnected nature of the state-building process necessitates the utilization of a holistic and flexible approach to security sector reform. This report will attempt to elucidate various areas where collaboration and coordination among the various elements of the Afghan reconstruction agenda can be established and augmented with an eye to alleviating overall insecurity.

After systematically detailing the current security situation in the various regions of Afghanistan, with analyses of particularly ominous security breakdowns, this report will examine factors that have emerged in the context of the reconstruction process that have exacerbated insecurity. The report will proceed to explain how security sector reform can ameliorate these conditions. It will assess the progress of planning and implementation of reform initiatives up until September 2002 and identify obstacles that have obstructed the process. The report will conclude by offering concrete recommendations about how to make the security sector reform process more effective and productive.

2. The Re-emergence of the Warlords

Before embarking on an analysis of security conditions in Afghanistan, it is important to define the fundamental problem of warlordism and identify the causes for its resurgence. Afghanistan's warlords are regional power brokers, most often tribal chieftains or militia commanders, who control militias and assert political sovereignty over areas of varying size. While the euphemistic term regional commander has been used extensively by the Western press in reference to these powerful figures, the term warlord, with its pejorative meaning intact, is the most

Who are the warlords?

appropriate means to describe them. True to the term, these figures rely on war, violence and general instability to generate resources and consolidate their power. In the absence of such volatile conditions their ability to project and perpetuate their power is limited, thus they invariably seek to promote turmoil and instability in the interest of self-preservation.

The existence of warlordism in Afghanistan is not surprising, as the country lacks a tradition of strong central government. Power and authority has traditionally been widely dispersed with tribes, factions, and local military strongmen maintaining de facto control over most of the country outside Kabul. Afghanistan is divided predominantly along ethnic lines with most warlords drawing their support from ethnically homogenous constituencies. Even at the height of the Taliban's power, a significant proportion of the country remained beyond its control, particularly in the North where the Northern Alliance retained authority over large swathes of territory.

Warlords generate resources to support their rule through criminal activity, aid from foreign states, duties on trade and most importantly, through taxation of their constituents. In return for the provision of taxes warlords have, to varying degrees, provided populations under their control with protection, security and a minimal level of basic services. Warlords such as Rashid Dostum and Ismail Khan maintain well-equipped private militias responsible for enforcing their rule. This is a clear violation of the terms of the Bonn Agreement, endorsed by both Dostum and Khan, which stipulates that "all mujahidin, Afghan armed forces and armed groups in the country shall come under the command and control of the Interim Authority" (*Bonn Agreement*, Section V. Article 1). These two figures, perhaps Afghanistan's most powerful warlords, also control the dissemination of information in their strongholds through their control of the local media.

The unremitting tension and conflict between rival warlords that is an omnipresent feature of contemporary Afghanistan is also well established in the country's history. The only force that has traditionally united the disparate tribes and ethnic groups of Afghanistan has been foreign invasion. When external threats have been absent, Afghans have normally retreated into their ethnic enclaves and engaged in hostilities with rival groups over resources and territory. However, currently, the most influential factor generating conflict is the voracious personal ambition of individual warlords.

While it is clear that the warlords pose a unique and daunting challenge to the new regime, any process to sideline them would encounter a violent reaction that the central government would likely be unable to handle without outside intervention. While it is unrealistic to assume that the influence of Afghanistan's warlords can be eliminated in the short-term, it is conceivable that they can be reigned in or subordinated through an approach combining

incentives with coercion. During this tenuous period of state-building it is unwise to pursue a policy of centralization too far; to gain the acquiescence of warlords it may be wise for the Afghan Transitional Authority (ATA) to accord them a certain degree of regional autonomy. This is expedient because as long as the government lacks security forces capable of controlling and subordinating these figures, regional warlords represent the only force capable of maintaining security in many areas. It is inevitable that certain recalcitrant warlords will remain unresponsive to the appeals and threats of the central government, thereby necessitating the use of force. In such cases, the international community, and particularly coalition military forces active in the continuing war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, must provide the central government with their full support to ensure that its writ is upheld.

3. Continuing Insecurity

3.1 The Loya Jirga and its Aftermath

The opening of the Emergency Loya Jirga on 10 June 2002 represented a seminal moment in the recent history of Afghanistan. Considering the fact that the country had emerged from a 23-year civil war only eight months before, this experiment with democracy was remarkably successful. 1575 delegates from all of Afghanistan's 33 provinces, including 200 women¹, descended upon Kabul for the first expression of democracy in the country in over 20 years (*IWPR*, 11 June 2002). The very fact that the Loya Jirga was held without major incident was a success in of itself. However, it was impeded by a myriad of problems that clearly illustrate the imposing challenges that lie ahead for the transitional government in its effort to stabilize Afghanistan.

From its inception, the assembly's proceedings were fraught with both technical and broader security related problems. Reports indicate that during the delegate selection process prior to the Loya Jirga, at least eight prospective members of the assembly were killed (*IRIN*, 27 May 2002). Although the motives behind the slayings remain uncertain, most observers indicate that they were probably politically motivated. Following the Loya Jirga, Lakhdar Brahimi, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Afghanistan, lamented that the process was marred by "intimidation, violence, bribery and harassment of delegates by local warlords" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 June 2002).

¹ Three of the 21 members of the assembly's commission were women. Several women were directly elected to the assembly but the majority were selected by the Loya Jirga organizers.

Loya Jirga

The assembly began inauspiciously with the chairman of the Loya Jirga Commission, Ismail Qassimyar, issuing delegate status to the governors of all 33 provinces and an undisclosed number of major and minor warlords. These individuals had been barred from the earlier selection process due to a vague provision of the Bonn Agreement stipulating that past perpetrators of violence against the Afghan people, a veiled description of the warlords, would be excluded from the process. An equally ominous sign was the presence of tens of unarmed agents of the *Amaniyat* or National Security Directorate (NSD), controlled by the powerful Panjshiri Tajik faction. Ostensibly present to provide security, numerous delegates complained that they were subjected to intimidation by the *Amaniyat*. (*New York Times*, 21 June 2002) Needless to say, these developments greatly encumbered the ability of delegates to freely express themselves.

Compounding the consternation and frustration of delegates was a general feeling that the democratic process had been circumvented by backroom deals brokered by external powers such as the United States. A delegate from Khost, known only as Assadullah, expressed the palpable sense of exasperation shared by delegates in a statement to an Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) correspondent. He stated: “We feel the issues have already been resolved and our presence is only needed as a rubber stamp” (*IWPR*, 17 June 2002). Former King Zahir Shah’s decision to remove himself from candidacy for president in spite of the fact that a large proportion of the Pashtun delegates at the assembly supported him, a move which had all the hallmarks of U.S. intervention, appeared to confirm this fear. U.S. envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, made no effort to refute the perception that the U.S. had meddled in the process, candidly stating that he had secured a postponement of the assembly “to ascertain the true position of the king” (*IWPR*, 17 June 2002). It is widely accepted that during this delay the U.S. envoy exerted tremendous pressure on the Shah to renounce his candidacy, ensuring that Hamid Karzai would have no major challenger in the presidential selection process. Pashtun delegates already displeased by their lack of representation in the interim administration and incidents of discrimination and ethnic violence carried out against Pashtun communities since the fall of the Taliban, reacted with fury to the announcement. It appeared that one of the very purposes of the Loya Jirga, to attain a consensus among Afghanistan’s disparate ethnic groups, was imperiled in a moment. Yet the subsequent election of Karzai, also a Pashtun, seemed to allay the concerns of many delegates.

Election of Karzai

In the first broadly representative election held in Afghanistan since the last Loya Jirga was held in 1977, Hamid Karzai won 1,295 of 1,575 ballots, defeating his two challengers, one of whom made history by being the first woman to run for president in the country (*New York Times*, 14 June 2002). The

enthusiasm generated by the historic democratic expression soon dissipated with the announcement of Hamid Karzai's cabinet. The hopes of many delegates and ordinary Afghans that the new administration would distance itself from the warlords that epitomized Afghanistan's violent past were dashed with the announcement that several prominent warlords were awarded cabinet posts (See Box A for list of ATA cabinet). During a press conference on 19 June at which he disclosed his cabinet choices, Karzai averred that the goal of striking an ethnic balance inspired his selections. Quoting from an Afghan proverb, he explained, "If a Tajik is not part Pashtun he is not a Tajik. And if a Pashtun is not part Tajik he is not a Pashtun" (*Financial Times*, 19 June 2002). These poetic words did little to console reform minded Afghans who felt Karzai's cabinet formulation undermined efforts to distance the central government from the warlords and specifically the powerful Panjshiri Tajik faction.

BOX A: List of Ministers in the Afghan Transitional Administration

President:

- Hamid Karzai, Pashtun.

Deputy Presidents:

- Mohammed Fahim, Tajik
- Karim Khalili, Hazara
- Abdul Qadir, Pashtun

Special Advisor on Security:

- Yunis Qanooni, Tajik.

Cabinet:

- Defense Minister: Mohammed Fahim, Tajik.
- Foreign Minister: Abdullah, Tajik.
- Finance Minister: Ashraf Ghani, Pashtun.
- Interior Minister: Taj Mohammed Wardak, Pashtun.
- Planning Minister: Mohammed Mohaqiq, Hazara.
- Communications Minister: Masoom Stanakzai, Pashtun.
- Borders Minister: Arif Nurzai: Pashtun but from a Tajik-dominated party.
- Refugees Minister: Intayatullah Nazeri, Tajik.
- Mines Minister: Juma M. Mahammadi, Pashtun.
- Light Industries Minister: Mohammed Alim Razm, Uzbek.
- Public Health Minister: Dr. Sohaila Siddiqi, Pashtun.
- Commerce Minister: Sayed Mustafa Kasemi, Shiite Muslim.
- Agriculture Minister: Sayed Hussain Anwari, Hazara.
- Justice Minister: Abbas Karimi, Uzbek

- Information and Culture Minister: Saeed Makhdoom Rahim, Tajik.
- Reconstruction Minister: Mohammed Fahim Farhang, Pashtun
- Haj and Mosques Minister: Mohammed Amin Naziryar, Pashtun
- Urban Affairs Minister: Yusuf Pashtun, Pashtun
- Public Works Minister: Abdul Qadir, Pashtun
- Social Affairs Minister: Noor Mohammed Karkin, Turkman
- Water and Power Minister: Ahmed Shakar Karkar, Uzbek
- Irrigation and Environment Minister: Ahmed Yusuf Nuristani, Pashtun
- Martyrs and Disabled Minister: Abdullah Wardak, Pashtun
- Higher Education Minister: Sharif Faez, Tajik
- Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister: Mir Wais Saddiq, Tajik
- Transportation Minister: Saeed Mohammed Ali Jawad, Shiite
- Education Minister: Yunis Qanooni, Tajik
- Rural Development Minister: Hanif Asmar, Pashtun
- Minister of Women's Affairs: Mahboba Hoqooqmal

Source: *Associated Press*, 22 June 2002

Led by Marshall Mohammad Qasim Fahim, the Panjshiri faction retained its predominant position in the fledgling government, receiving one of the five newly created vice president posts and two of the three "power ministries", Defense (Fahim) and Foreign Affairs (Dr. Abdullah). The group was stripped of the Interior Ministry portfolio, which it held in the Interim Administration, when Yunis Qaooni stepped down in favor of Pashtun Taj Mohammad Wadrak. The impact of this change has been limited since no alterations were made to the leadership structures of the army, police, and intelligence services, which remain firmly under the grip of the Tajiks. Also, in a concession to Qaooni, who became dissatisfied with the Minister of Education portfolio that he was allocated in the Karzai cabinet, he was also appointed Special Advisor on Internal Security, a position that allows him to continue to wield influence over the security apparatus. Members of the security services have already unofficially indicated that they do not support Wadrak, an 80-year-old naturalized American who only returned to Afghanistan earlier this year. Under these adverse conditions it remains questionable whether Wadrak can enact the changes needed to reform the security services.

Although the majority-Pashtuns were awarded more cabinet positions than any other ethnic group including the key ministries of Finance, Communications, and Reconstruction, they remain underrepresented in the government and it is clear that balance of power rests with the Tajiks. The appointments have served to

ATA cabinet

enhance Pashtun suspicion of both Karzai and the central government, arousing accusations that Karzai is a puppet of the Panjshiri Tajiks and America. It is widely accepted that Pashtun support is essential for the survival of the new central government, thus the trend of growing Pashtun discontent is extremely disconcerting. Many observers fear that Pashtun frustration may be channeled into renewed support for extremist groups such as the Taliban or Hizb-e-Islami, the extremist Islamist party led by former Prime Minister Gulbaddin Hekmatyar. Anti-government factions and other disaffected groups are beginning to coalesce around Hekmatyar and the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in the south and east, creating a potent force, fiercely opposed to the present regime. In an interview with Ahmed Rashid, a respected author and journalist who has covered Afghanistan for many years, an anonymous Western aid worker stated: "The Pashtuns are fed up...there is seething unrest in the eastern and southern provinces" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 September 2002)

Pashtun discontent

The Pashtun community was not alone in its disappointment regarding Karzai's cabinet choices; other Afghan ethnic groups, including the Hazaras and the Uzbeks, as well as Western diplomats and UN officials have voiced their concern and displeasure. According to one senior European diplomat in Kabul, "Karzai has only demonstrated his weakness and his inability to take hard decisions, which will increase instability outside Kabul and infuriate the Pashtuns" (*Eurasia Insight*, 26 June 2002). Many observers castigated Karzai for failing to build upon the momentum generated by the massive endorsement he received at the Loya Jirga. It was hoped that this wave of popular support would provide him with the political maneuverability necessary to take on the warlords and assert the central government's control over the entire country.

Realistically, Karzai had little choice but to incorporate the warlords and especially the Panjshiri Tajik faction into the administration. The Panjshiri Tajiks, and particularly Minister of Defense Fahim, possess the most powerful military force in the country; to exclude them from decision-making would likely be imprudent and self-defeating. By conferring a semblance of political legitimacy to warlords within the new regime, Karzai hopes to persuade these individuals to abandon the kalashnikov in favor of the ballot box. In spite of such efforts, critical regional figures such as Ismail Khan in the West and Rashid Dostum in the North continue to steadfastly resist the efforts of Karzai to subordinate them to Kabul, turning down prominent postings that would have required their permanent presence in the capital. It is essential that both figures, who have flouted Karzai's authority on several occasions, be persuaded to recognize the sovereignty of the transitional government.

Insecurity in
Kabul

Continuing factional violence throughout the country has illustrated the fragility of Karzai's government. Kabul appeared to be immune from such instability, primarily due to the presence of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF); however, in July and August 2002 a series of events illustrated the potential vulnerability of the capital. The assassination of Vice President Abdul Qadir, a powerful Pashtun warlord and member of the Northern Alliance, viewed as one of the few figures who could act as a bridge between the Pashtun community and Afghanistan's other ethnic groups, has prompted many to question the viability of the transitional government. Qadir was killed on 6 July 2002 in broad daylight outside the Ministry of Public Works where he served as minister in addition to his position as Vice President. A commission was established to investigate the assassination and ISAF has actively assisted their investigative efforts, but other than the arrests of several of Qadir's bodyguards who are suspected of colluding in the murder, little progress has been made in the case. There are numerous theories about the killing currently circulating, ranging from the contention that Al Qaeda was responsible to vague allegations that the Panjshiri Tajiks are implicated, yet none have been substantiated by any semblance of fact (*AP*, 16 July 2002; *New York Times*, 29 July 2002).

The assassination sent shock-waves through Afghanistan and the international community. An immediate consequence of the murder, and the subsequent suspicions that the Panjshiri Tajiks were implicated, was Karzai's decision to replace the bodyguards assigned to him by the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) with U.S. Special Forces. In September 2002, the U.S. State Department Diplomatic Security Service are scheduled to replace the 70 U.S. Special Forces soldiers currently guarding Karzai and will retain this role for the foreseeable future. While this bold political decision reassured the international community, petrified by the prospect of Karzai's assassination, it has exacerbated tension between Karzai and the Defense Ministry.

Cabinet
assassinations

It will not be easy to weed out the culprits of the killing since Qadir, like most Afghan warlords, had no shortage of enemies. Nevertheless, with the February assassination of Tourism and Aviation Minister Abdul Rahim unsolved, the credibility of the Karzai administration will be irrevocably damaged if the investigation does not result in the capture of the assassins.

The Pashtun community has viewed the killing as merely another indication of the existence of a conspiracy against it. On 26 July, 3,000 Pashtuns, including numerous tribal leaders and government officials, rallied in Jalalabad to demand that the government arrest the killers of Qadir, warning that failure to do so could spark unrest among the majority Pashtun community (*AP*, 26 July 2002). A similar demonstration, attended by thousands of demonstrators, was held on 2 August 2002 in Khost

City. It is clear that if the government cannot insulate its cabinet from the instability that engulfs the country the people will lose faith in its capacity to govern.

The tenuous position of the ATA and the rising level of insecurity in Kabul were further revealed by incidents which transpired on 7 August and 5 September 2002. On 7 August, 15 people were killed after an Al Qaeda guerilla force, allegedly composed predominantly of Arabs and Pakistanis, attacked an Afghan Army outpost on the outskirts of Kabul (*AP*, 7 August 2002). One month later in Kandahar, a gunman opened fire on the motorcade of Hamid Karzai, narrowly missing the ATA President. Within hours of the assassination attempt, a car bomb was detonated in Kabul, killing 30 people and injuring hundreds (*International Herald Tribune*, 7-8 September 2002). The attacks have been attributed to Hekmatyar, Al Qaeda and the Taliban. These events, which will be described in more detail later in this report, suggest that Al Qaeda and the Taliban are far from a spent force. Reports that remnants of Al Qaeda and Taliban have joined forces with Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami faction lend credence to this view (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 September 2002). Attacks against the government have gradually increased in intensity and severity in 2002, a disturbing trend that may be a sign of two important developments: the anti-government opposition is organizing and consolidating its position and the new regime is beginning to unravel.

3.2 Deteriorating Security Conditions Outside Kabul

Violence and turmoil, spurred by economic stagnation and ethnic tension, wracked numerous regions of the country in the summer of 2002. Similar strife during the early 1990s – by many of the same parties that are now in power locally – involved serious and widespread violations of human rights and paved the way for the rise of the Taliban. The historical parallels between the present security situation and that which existed immediately prior to the Taliban's ascent to power, while limited, should not be overlooked. Security conditions in certain regional centers appear to have reverted to the *status quo ante* of 1992. Some Afghans have begun to question whether their lives were better off under the repressive Taliban. As one man from Khost, who asked not to be identified, told an IWPR correspondent: “The Taliban were dangerous for the world but they were better for us because they brought security. When the Western forces drove them out, we were left in the middle of local conflicts like before” (*IWPR*, 2 August 2002). The following section will provide a regional breakdown of the security situations in the country.

Insecurity:
North

3.2.1 North

The predominantly ethnic Tajik Jamiat-i-Islami forces control the northeast and compete for power in the rest of the northern provinces with the ethnic Uzbek-dominated militia Junbish-i-Milli and the mostly Hazara militia, Hezb-Wahadat. Long-standing tensions between AIA Deputy Defense Minister Rashid Dostum (Uzbek, Head of Junbish-i-Milli and Transitional Government Special Representative to the North) and Mohammad Usta Atta (Tajik, Jamiat-i-Islami commander, and officially Corps Commander for four northern provinces) have erupted into clashes throughout the north since November. There have been two bouts of serious fighting in the region this year, once in January, when dozens of men were killed in fighting in the vicinity of Mazar-i-Sharif, and again in early May. In May, clashes in Sar-i-Pul and Sholgara, just south of Mazar-i-Sharif claimed the lives of 30 people (*AFP*, 01 May 2002). A truce was reached on 2 May 2002 following UN-mediated negotiations. The truce included an agreement to prohibit weapons in Mazar-i-Sharif except for members of a new 600-person police force made up of fighters from the various factions in the area (*AFP*, 01 May 2002). Like many agreements that preceded this one, it was short-lived. Fighting between the rival militias, particularly between the forces of Dostum and Mohammad Atta, have periodically erupted in and around Mazar-i-Sharif ever since. The implications of the instability caused by these clashes have been devastating for the local population numbering more than two million.

The lawlessness, which pervades the region, has seriously hindered the efforts of the UN and the international aid community to deliver humanitarian assistance, arousing fears of an impending humanitarian disaster. A string of disturbing attacks on aid bodies has prompted the UN to consider suspending aid operations and some NGO's to withdraw altogether. In mid-June, unknown assailants fired upon the convoy of an American aid organization, and two Swedish Committee for Afghanistan staff members were shot and wounded after refusing to give a ride in their vehicle to a group of militiamen (*IRIN*, 17 July 2002). The most disturbing incident, however, occurred on 8 June 2002 when a French aid worker was dragged from her car and gang raped near Mazar-i-Sharif (*IRIN*, 17 May 2002). Following this attack, the UN withdrew all female aid staff from field missions in the North and the UN's special envoy to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, issued a stern warning to Hamid Karzai stating that relief work was at risk from "the climate of fear and insecurity in the region" (*AP*, 25 June 2002).

The steady flow of refugees into the North has exacerbated instability; approximately 180,000 refugees have returned to the six provinces of the region since the fall of the Taliban (*AFP*, 11 July 2002). UNHCR briefly suspended refugee repatriation

programs in the north in early June due to a wave of abuses against ethnic minorities, in particular the Pashtun minority. In March, Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented more than 150 cases of murder, looting and gang-rape of ethnic Pashtuns in the north, where they are a minority among ethnic Uzbeks and Tajiks (*AFP*, 25 June 2002). UNHCR resumed its repatriation efforts only after receiving assurances from the north's principal warlords that steps would be taken to protect returning refugees.

In an effort to reduce tension in the north, the UN has interceded to mediate an end to the continuing hostilities. The forces of Dostum and Atta, in addition to representatives of the Hazara community, began UN-brokered talks on disarming their men in July. Disarmament is seen as the key to peace in the region by many observers and residents. However, the problem far exceeds that of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, for what makes the stand-off at Mazar-i-Sharif different from that of other violent flash-points in the country is the fact that all sides possess heavy weaponry, including tanks and artillery. Dostum and Atta have surrounded Mazar-i-Sharif with tanks on numerous occasions, although they have not been involved in any fighting (*IWPR*, 02 August 2002).

Fueling the rivalry is the external support provided to Dostum and Atta by the Uzbek government and the Afghan Ministry of Defense respectively. Dostum receives some support, although it is not clear how much, from the government of Uzbekistan. He is currently guarded by a close protection unit seconded from the Special Forces of Uzbekistan (*Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 2002). Atta, who commands Defense Minister Fahim's 7th Army Corps based at Mazar-i-Sharif, receives material and political support from the Afghan Ministry of Defense (*Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 2002). Hostilities will persist until the support being funneled to these factions is cut off. The north, and Mazar-i-Sharif in particular, can be seen as a litmus test by which the long-term viability of the Karzai regime can be assessed. Unfortunately, the government's record in this region has been less than exemplary and the tension that currently engulfs the area shows no sign of diminishing. One potential solution to this problem would be the extension of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Mazar-i-Sharif, but as will be explained later, prominent members of the international community have displayed a reluctance to support such an initiative.

3.2.2 West

Ismail Khan, the nominally Jamiat but fiercely independent governor of Herat province, is the dominant power in the West, primarily due to the patronage of Iran. Khan is likely Afghanistan's most powerful regional leader; his support is

Rivalry in Mazar

Insecurity:
West

essential if the government wishes to extend its authority to the western provinces of Afghanistan. Although this region was, for the most part, spared from the instability and violence that engulfed the rest of the country in the months immediately following the fall of the Taliban, fighting has emerged in late July and early August 2002 between Ismail Khan and two of his Pashtun rivals, Amanullah Khan and Kareem Khan.

In late July 2002, skirmishes between the ethnic Tajik forces loyal to Ismail Khan and the ethnic Pashtun followers of Amanullah Khan erupted around a former military base about 80 miles west of Herat, Ismail Khan's stronghold (*Washington Post*, 25 July 2002). The base marks the point of convergence between the-Tajik dominated northwest and the majority-Pashtun southwest; it has been heavily contested since the withdrawal of the Soviets. The Karzai administration, determined to halt the spread of instability to this key region straddling the border of Iran, and eager to enhance its profile and authority in the area, dispatched a delegation consisting of a vice president and three cabinet ministers to broker a truce to the conflict. Since Karzai lacks the capability to enforce the peace he is intent on fostering the impression that the ATA is at least capable of mediating disputes. This has emerged as one of the dominant strategies of the ATA to raise its profile around the country; they have sent a multitude of commissions and delegations in recent months to various parts of the country to negotiate with regional commanders and serve as interlocutors in local disputes.

Ismail Khan

This strategy has been marginally successful in the west only because Ismail Khan chose to cede a role to Kabul in negotiations to resolve hostilities. In a statement issued after consultations with the government delegation, Khan affirmed: "Afghanistan is one country, and the central government has the right whenever there's a dispute or difficulty to go there and solve the problem" (*Washington Post*, 25 July 2002). However, in spite of this declaration of support for the central government, Khan continues to represent a salient risk to the Karzai government. He has been reluctant to fully cooperate with the development of a national army or to hand over tax revenues from trade with neighboring Iran.² Perhaps what is most disturbing though is the steady rise in the incidence of violent confrontations between Khan's militias and those of less powerful warlords in the region.

In a replay of the events of late July, Ismail Khan's forces fought pitched battles with a Pashtun militia under the command of Mohammad Kareem Khan in early August 2002. The Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported that 50 soldiers and

² There is speculation that Khan generates upwards of US \$200,000 per day from duties imposed on cross border trade with Iran (Kingma, interview, 21 September 2002).

civilians were killed in fighting on 1 August near Ghurian, some 40 miles west of Herat City (*Reuters*, 02 August 2002). Spokespersons for Ismail Khan claimed that the governor's forces had attacked the Pashtun militia to curb its continued involvement in smuggling and looting. Conversely, representatives of Kareem Khan claimed that they were protecting Pashtun villages from frequent raids and looting of Tajik forces (*Reuters*, 02 August 2002). Although these conflicting allegations have not been independently substantiated, the clashes are the byproduct of the ongoing power struggle between Ismail Khan, supported by Iran, and the western Pashtun communities.

3.2.3 East

Eastern Afghanistan is controlled by a diverse array of Pashtun commanders, most notably Pacha Khan Zadran. While the continuing conflict in the North is surely the most potentially explosive problem in the country, Pacha Khan Zadran can be described as the biggest thorn in the side of the central government. Zadran was appointed governor of Paktia Province in the initial days of the AIA; however, the Gardez *Shura* (governing council) rejected his appointment. The AIA responded by appointing an alternative civilian governor, Taj Mohammed Wadrak (*AP*, 29 April 2002). Refusing to accept this decision, Zadran launched rocket attacks on the central bazaar of Gardez, the provincial capital, killing several people. Zadran's fighters subsequently surrounded Gardez; he indicated that they would not withdraw until Wadrak's appointment was annulled. Hundreds of combatants and civilians have been killed in factional fighting in Paktia Province since November (*New York Times*, 6 August 2002).

Insecurity:
East

A similar situation has emerged in Khost province where Zadran has also refused to accept the authority of the AIA-appointed governor. Pacha Khan Zadran's brother, Karmal Khan, has occupied the governor's office since December 2001. Accordingly, the new governor, Hakim Taniwal, a retired sociologist who had been living in Australia, has been unable to assert his authority. On 24 May 2002, the AIA threatened to send troops to dislodge Zadran's forces if he did not back down; Zadran appeared unmoved by the threat. In a decision that greatly damaged the credibility of the central government, Karzai backed down from his threat.

The rift between Karzai and Zadran is deep, dating back to the Bonn Conference in December when Zadran was promised the governorship of Paktia Province, an offer that was subsequently rescinded. Zadran's disenchantment with Karzai was made ever more apparent at the June Loya Jirga when he walked out in protest at ex-King Zahir Shah's withdrawal from the presidential race. Zadran, a Pashtun like the ex-King, publicly

declared that the assembly's failure to elect the Shah head of state would lead to bloodshed.

Zadran is intent on uniting the four southern Pashtun provinces of eastern Afghanistan, Paktia, Logar, Paktika and Khost, into greater Paktia. He has been able to assert effective control over Khost, Paktia, and Paktika, but there are now rumblings that the Karzai government is prepared to challenge his authority. In a press conference during the week of 5 August 2002, a spokesperson for Mr. Karzai, Omar Samad, stated that the government, while endeavoring to show restraint with Zadran, was beginning to lose its patience. He went on to say that the ATA may have to "resort to other means" in dealing with Zadran, however, he was unwilling to elucidate what that meant (*New York Times*, 6 August 2002).

It is certainly desirable and in the best interests of the transitional government to dislodge Zadran. The provinces under his control are in a state of anarchy with crime and lawlessness rampant. In Khost City, young men and boys as young as 12 years of age carry arms and few policemen patrol the streets (*IWPR*, 2 August 2002). The adverse security situation would be ameliorated considerably if the central government were able to consolidate its position in the east at the expense of Zadran; however, under current conditions it is unlikely that it will be able to do so without a significant amount of bloodshed. Apart from the loss of life that will almost assuredly ensue from any operation launched against Zadran, there is another danger that may render such a move prohibitive. If Zadran successfully resists the assaults of the central government, the impotence of the Karzai regime would be revealed for all to see. Such a perception of infirmity could very well plunge Afghanistan back into civil war.

One of the main complications hindering ATA attempts to oust Zadran is the fact that he is still actively supported by the United States military in their efforts to eradicate the last vestiges of Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in southern and eastern Afghanistan. According to Zadran, out of the 6,000 soldiers under his command, 600 are in the direct pay of America (*New York Times*, 6 August 2002). The Americans have also equipped Zadran with weapons and sophisticated communications equipment such as satellite phones. America's continued support of Zadran has effectively given him *carte blanche* to continue his destabilizing activities in the southeast. If he is to be removed, the United States must cease supporting him and lend weight to any ATA initiative to remove him from the political scene.

3.2.4 South

Southern Afghanistan, predominantly composed of Pashtuns, is controlled by a myriad of Pashtun warlords. Human Rights Watch reported in a June report, based on a fact-finding mission

carried out in this region, that the Taliban and Hizb-e-Islami, the extremist Islamist movement led by former Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, had reemerged in many of the southern provinces. While the influence of these groups is exaggerated by the HRW report, their mere existence is a sign that the government's position in this vital region is precarious. The report observed "a general absence of the rule of law" and described an atmosphere of intimidation, violence, and repression (*Human Rights Watch*, June 2002). According to an unidentified Afghan journalist in Zabul Province, the administration from the Taliban era remains largely intact; the notorious Ministry of Prevention of Vice and Virtue, a Taliban agency responsible for maintaining social control and enforcing Sharia law, was supposedly still meting out punishments.

The principal southern city of Kandahar is marred by widespread violence and criminality, most of which is carried out by soldiers under the employ of the government. The following is an account of the manager of one of Kandahar's hospitals:

They [soldiers] steal everything they get their hands on. Sexual relations between men and boys are still around... Their conduct is still the way it was under the Taliban. They do not understand the value of what has happened in the past few months (*Human Rights Watch*, June 2002).

As in eastern Afghanistan, the ability of the government to bring the southern warlords to heel is constrained by their ties to U.S. and coalition forces. The warlords' support of American military operations has imbued them with the impression that as long as this cooperative arrangement remains intact they can act with impunity. This perception must be vigorously resisted by the United States and the ATA.

3.3 Ominous Incidents

In addition to documenting general conditions of insecurity, it is important to highlight particular incidents and occurrences that illustrate broader threats to Afghan stability. In particular there are six events that deserve mention: the assassinations of cabinet ministers Abdul Rahman and Abdul Qadir, the two assassination attempts on Hamid Karzai, the grenade attack against a UN office, and the Al Qaeda assault on an Afghan army outpost on the outskirts of Kabul.

3.3.1 Cabinet Assassinations

The assassinations of Abdul Rahman, Interim Minister of Aviation and Tourism, in February 2002 and Abdul Qadir, ATA Vice President and Minister of Public Works, in July 2002 are telling signs of the fragility of the central government and the

general lack of security in both Kabul and the rest of the country. Both men were killed in broad daylight under suspicious circumstances – Rahman was beaten to death on his plane by a mob of pilgrims incensed over being forced to wait hours for flights to Mecca and Qadir was shot outside his office in Kabul – neither case has been solved. These murders are especially irksome because rumors have linked both to members of the government associated to the Panjshiri Tajik faction. Shortly after the murder of Rahman, Hamid Karzai accused three government officials, who are all members of Jamiat-i-Islami, including an intelligence chief in the Interior Ministry, of involvement in the murder (*Dawn*, 28 February 2002). Similarly, there is a great deal of speculation circulating in Afghanistan that General Fahim may be implicated in the assassination of Qadir (*New York Times*, 29 July 2002). Fahim has strenuously rejected such allegations, referring to them as “malicious rumors” (*New York Times*, 18 August 2002). Whether or not the speculation about Tajik involvement in the two assassinations is founded in fact, these murders revealed deep fissures in the transitional government. In particular, tension between Karzai and Fahim, once latent, has been brought to the fore.

Karzai-Fahim Rivalry

Since being elected President of the ATA, Karzai has gradually shown a greater willingness to challenge the authority of Fahim. In late July, he went as far as ordering Fahim to drastically reduce the number of Panjshiris in the Defense Ministry and replace them with non-Tajiks, a move which infuriated Fahim (*Washington Post*, 5 August 2002). Karzai’s growing boldness has aroused fears among his supporters that Fahim may respond violently to these unexpected challenges. According to a close aid of Karzai, “for six months Fahim dictated to Karzai, and he was the most powerful man in Afghanistan. Now he is worried that may change.... he [Karzai] is in danger” (*Washington Post*, 5 August 2002). Karzai’s decision to sack the body guards assigned to him by the Defense Ministry in favor of U.S. Special Forces was intended to allay fears for his safety, but in effect it has heightened growing tension within the cabinet.

At the bequest of the international community, Fahim has dismissed reports of a rift between him and Karzai. At a 17 August 2002 news conference following talks between Fahim and U.S. Afghanistan envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, Fahim affirmed: “In the cabinet and in particular between me [Fahim] and Karzai there is no difference and we have close and sincere working relations” (*Reuters*, 17 August 2002). In spite of such hollow declarations, assuredly made for American consumption, Karzai has few options but to continue to assail the power-base of Fahim. Unity cannot be achieved as long as the Panjshiris retain such a disproportionate amount of power in the central government. A clash between Karzai and Fahim appears almost inevitable in light of their divergent visions of Afghanistan’s

future. To avoid a resumption of civil war and ensure that the gains made thus far in the state-building process are preserved, the U.S. government and the international community must resolutely back Karzai in this looming dispute.

3.3.2 Karzai Assassination Attempts

Two attempts to assassinate Hamid Karzai, uncovered within two months of each other, illustrate that Karzai, and by extension the government which he leads, is extremely vulnerable. The first attempt came on 29 July 2002 when a would-be suicide bomber, with more than half a ton of explosives packed into a car, was apprehended several hundred yards away from the President's office after he was stopped by police due to a chance traffic accident (*Washington Post*, 30 July 2002). An Afghan intelligence chief announced a day after the incident that the assailant admitted to interrogators that he had been ordered by Al Qaeda to assassinate President Karzai, or failing that, to kill foreigners (*AP*, 31 July 2002). The intelligence official went on to say that the bomb involved was extremely sophisticated and that the plot originated in Pakistan (*AP*, 31 July 2002).

Attacks on Karzai

The second attempt on Karzai's life, which transpired on 5 September 2002, came alarmingly close to succeeding. The attack occurred during a visit by Karzai to the southern city of Kandahar. A lone gunman, a man recently hired by provincial security officials, opened fire on Karzai's motorcade as it left the residence of Kandahar Governor Gul Agha Sherzai. The assailant, who was killed by U.S. Special Forces assigned to protect Karzai, wounded Governor Sherzai and killed three Afghans (*International Herald Tribune*, 7-8 September 2002). Kandahar security officials announced the day after the attack that 14 Afghan suspects had been arrested in connection to the crime, including the security director of the governor's mansion. They also claimed that the plot was masterminded by Al Qaeda (*New York Times*, 7 September 2002). Accentuating the shock generated by this incident was the fact that within three hours of the assassination attempt a massive car bomb, identified by the ATA as the work of Al Qaeda and/or Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, was detonated in Kabul, killing 30 and wounding 170 (*New York Times*, 7 September 2002).

The death of Karzai would undoubtedly be a catastrophic blow to the ATA; he represents the lynchpin in the tenuous multi-ethnic consensus that underlies the nascent regime and is the symbol of Afghanistan's renewed legitimacy on the international stage. Remove Karzai and this fragile consensus will disintegrate and foreign support for reconstruction will dissipate due to a lack of international confidence in the stability of the regime. Essentially, the ATA will collapse like a house of cards.

Terrorist attacks

3.3.3 Attack on UN Agency

On 1 August 2002, two men hurled a hand grenade at a building housing a UN Agency in Kandahar; the first attack on the United Nations since it returned to Afghanistan following the collapse of the Taliban. According to a UN spokesperson, two men aboard a motorcycle drove up to a building housing the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and threw a grenade onto its front lawn (*New York Times*, 4 August 2002). The two men escaped by foot after they inadvertently crashed their motorbike while fleeing. The investigation into the attack yielded few results. This incident reveals that spoilers in Afghanistan may be adopting a new strategy in their efforts to destabilize the regime. Most terrorist attacks carried out against international targets up until August 2002 have been directed at U.S. and coalition military forces; this attack indicates that civilian targets may be attacked more frequently in the future. Aware of the vital importance of international assistance to the Afghan reconstruction effort, as well as the potential vulnerabilities of these organizations, such an approach could elicit tangible results. Accordingly, the transitional government must be vigilant in its efforts to safeguard international organizations operating in Afghanistan from both crime and terrorist attack.

3.3.4 Al Qaeda Assault on Kabul Outpost

At 7 a.m. on 7 August 2002 armed gunmen, later identified as Al Qaeda operatives, stormed an army outpost on the outskirts of Kabul, sparking a three hour gun battle that left 16 people dead. This represents the bloodiest incident to take place in and around the capital since the fall of the Taliban (*Washington Post*, 8 August 2002). The commander of the base, Bismullah Khan, reported that the attackers were Arabs and Pakistanis. The fact that an attack of this magnitude was launched only six miles from the center of Kabul, indicates that spoilers in Afghanistan are capable of unseating the new government at any time (*New York Times*, 18 August 2002).

The overall security situation in Kabul and the rest of the country is precarious at best. It would be incorrect not to recognize the extraordinary strides made by the ATA to restore security and stability; however, it is untenable that the process of reconstruction and state-building can proceed under current conditions. In addition to widespread crime and corruption, numerous local low-intensity conflicts waged among rival factions have hindered reconstruction in various regions. Coupled with the fact that the United States is still waging a war against the remnants of Al Qaeda and Taliban, who appear more resilient than earlier anticipated, insecurity remains the norm in Afghanistan.

4. Factors Exacerbating Instability

Much of the instability that plagues Afghanistan is a natural outgrowth of the end of the 23-year civil war and the fall of the Taliban regime, a product of economic stagnation, factionalism, and warlordism. However, it should be recognized that several factors have emerged in the context of the international reconstruction effort that have served to exacerbate these adverse conditions. Specifically, there are three factors that require analysis: the slow disbursement of international aid pledged by donor countries at the January Tokyo Conference, the faster than expected return of refugees and America's strategy in their continuing military operations.

4.1 Slow Disbursement of International Aid

The outcome of the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, held in Tokyo on 21-22 January 2002, was extremely encouraging. Co-chaired by Japan, the U.S., the European Union and Saudi Arabia, the conference brought together ministers and representatives from 61 countries and 21 international organizations. Apart from discussing aid priorities, experts met to exchange views on demobilization, military and police training, demining, and counter-narcotics issues. The conference recognized the vital importance of security issues to the success of reconstruction, and placed emphasis on providing systemic follow-up and sufficient assistance to ensure steady and irreversible progress. Donor countries and international organizations committed US \$1.8 billion in aid for 2002, and a total of US \$4.5 billion over five years. During his speech at the Tokyo conference, President Karzai recognized the vital importance of linking development and security, a connection emphasized repeatedly during the conference's proceedings. He said:

“... security and development are two sides of the same coin because over a million Afghan combatants cannot be absorbed into the mainstream of society and economy without imaginative developmental efforts” (*Speech of Hamid Karzai, 7 December 2001*).

While the conference was hailed as a success by both the AIA and other participants, an assessment of the impact and effectiveness of the aid regime as of September 2002 would be less than exemplary. Of the US \$1.8 billion promised to Afghanistan for 2002, only about US \$1 billion had been dispensed by September. During such a volatile and fractious period this delayed disbursement of aid has crippled the ATA in its efforts to establish security and extend its authority throughout the country. During a speech at a Washington-based think-tank, Afghan

Tokyo Conference

Establishment of
aid regime

Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah warned that Afghanistan would slide into chaos if the money pledged for reconstruction was withheld (*AP*, 25 July 2002). According to ATA Reconstruction Minister Farhang, most of the US \$1 billion received by Afghanistan in 2002 has been allocated to food and shelter; only US \$150 million has been available for reconstruction (*AP*, 25 July 2002). The shortfall in funds delivered to Afghanistan has prevented the ATA from fulfilling its development promises to the Afghan populace. This has had the effect of undermining the authority and credibility of the central government in the eyes of the people. In a country lacking a strong tradition of political centralization, the central government must, to a certain degree, prove its worth to the civilian population. To build confidence in the democratic framework initiated at Bonn the Afghan people require a peace dividend from the new government.

Some observers have indicated that donors have been reluctant to release funds pledged to the Afghan government because of the volatile nature of the security situation in the country. A common refrain of reticent donors is that they lack faith in the ATA's ability to absorb large volumes of aid in a transparent and accountable fashion. Other reasons for the slow disbursement of funds are "donor fatigue", triggered by a combination of overzealous aid pledges and shifting budgetary priorities, and bureaucratic delays (*Wall Street Journal*, 18 July 2002). Of the major donors, the U.S., Ireland, and Australia have paid out over 90 percent of what they promised in the first year, while the EU and Japan are both 25 percent down on their pledges (*IWPR*, 02 August 2002).

Delayed aid
disbursement

Just as problematic as the delayed dispersion of aid is the fact that just 16 percent of funds for 2002, roughly US \$87 million, goes directly to the Afghan government – the rest flows primarily via UN agencies and NGOs (*IWPR*, 2 August 2002; *New York Times*, 27 September 2002). By the end of September 2002, the ATA's 2002 budget deficit had reached US \$166 million (*New York Times*, 27 September 2002). If this desperate economic situation persists, the ATA will be forced to curtail the provision of basic services to the population and may be unable to pay the salaries of government employees. Karzai claims that Western aid agencies, which have flooded the country since the Taliban fell, have squandered funding and created a myriad of other problems for native Afghans, such as inflating housing prices and wage levels to unreasonably high levels. According to Afghan officials, this money would be more effectively spent if it were funneled directly to the ATA. The World Bank vehemently disputes this notion, citing the ATA's lack of organizational and logistical capacity to absorb and distribute such large amounts of money as justification for the decision to distribute the bulk of the aid budget to NGOs and UN agencies rather than to the Afghan government (*IWPR*, 2 August 2002).

If it is ill-advised to disburse a larger proportion of the international aid budget to the ATA due to organizational and bureaucratic deficiencies, then the international community is obliged to double its efforts to expand this vital capacity. For the reconstruction effort to succeed, Afghans must be encouraged to take ownership of the process; to do so they must have greater control over the resource base intended to underwrite it. The ATA should dictate the pace and direction of state-building with international organizations limited to an advisory role. As one senior Afghan official explained, the dilemma faced by the transitional government is clear: “Unless we get more money now, you won’t get reconstruction. And without reconstruction, you won’t get security” (*IWPR*, 2 August 2002).

It is important to note that frontline humanitarian agencies have not been immune from the debilitating funding shortages that have encumbered the ATA. Both the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organization of Migration (IOM) suspended or cut back on programs during the first eight months of 2002 due to poor donor responses to funding appeals and rising costs. Perhaps the worst affected organization, however, was UNHCR. UNHCR’s gross underestimate of the number of Afghan refugees that would return in 2002 has raised the specter of a humanitarian crisis. Original UNHCR estimates predicted that 800,000 Afghans – of some 4 million living abroad – would return during 2002. Based on those estimates, the organization secured funding of US \$271 million to feed and supply refugees with the basics to rebuild their homes. Revised estimates affirm that up to 2 million refugees will return in 2002, leaving a funding gap of US \$65 million (*AP*, 21 July 2002). Describing the gravity of the situation, Ragnmilla Ek, a spokeswoman for UNHCR, explained, “if the international community does not get its act together soon, we are on a threshold of a major humanitarian crisis” (*AP*, 14 July 2002).

4.2 Refugee Repatriation

From November 2001 to July 2002, 1.2 million Afghan refugees returned from Pakistan, Iran and other neighboring countries. According to UN officials, this was the fastest voluntary refugee influx in history (*AP*, 14 July 2002). This massive influx has done more than strain the budgets of aid organizations assisting refugee returns; it has produced a significant amount of tension in communities throughout Afghanistan. The returns have stretched already scarce resources, generating animosity between existing residents and returnees in communities absorbing large volumes of refugees. This animosity has degenerated into violent confrontations in many areas that has, in turn, led to widespread human rights abuses. For example, in northern Afghanistan, where 180,000 refugees have returned to their former homes, the

Refugee influx

familiar combination of economic insecurity and ethnic difference produced a wave of violence against refugees, particularly directed against those of Pashtun origin. The situation was so volatile that UNHCR considered halting its repatriation program to the north (*AFP*, 11 July 2002). In an interview with a Reuters correspondent, Pashtun refugee Maulavi Gulbuddin, who is unwilling to return to Afghanistan from a camp in Pakistan, expressed the concerns and cynicism shared by many refugees: “I will go anywhere if there are no beatings – but who will protect us in Afghanistan? The government cannot even protect its own ministers” (*Reuters*, 8 August 2002). The Afghan government must place more emphasis on protecting and reintegrating the wave of returning refugees; in doing so they will greatly alleviate the destabilizing effect this unexpected phenomenon has had on the country.

4.3 U.S. Military Strategy

Continuing U.S. operations to uproot and eradicate the last pockets of Al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan has enflamed internal rivalries in the Afghan political sphere, weakened the central administration, and alienated much of the populace. Although the American government has repeatedly affirmed its determination to bolster the central government of Hamid Karzai, its policy of allying itself with regional warlords has, in contrast, contributed to the country’s fragmentation. The U.S. has indirectly helped the warlords consolidate their regional power-bases, effectively devolving power and authority from the center to the regions. U.S. strategy has been fixated on striking a balance between regional and central control, a difficult balance to achieve since the former often negates the latter.

An illustrative example of the detrimental effects of U.S. policy revolves around its patronage of Pacha Khan Zadran. As explained earlier in this paper, Zadran is a military commander from eastern Afghanistan who continues to openly defy the authority of the central government. His glaring audacity can be partially explained by his close cooperation with U.S. forces. The four eastern provinces in which he operates have been one of the most active areas for U.S. military activities. Beginning in March, Zadran’s forces aided U.S. troops in Operation Anaconda, a major sweep for Taliban and Al Qaeda forces along the border with Pakistan (*AP*, 5 August 2002). Zadran’s militia, whom Karzai’s office has referred to as “a group of bandits”, occupy checkpoints along major roads to extort money, and take every opportunity to flout the authority of government-appointed provincial governors. Yet in spite of Zadran’s disruptive activities, the U.S. government has refrained from discontinuing its strategic relationship with him. U.S. officials view such regional partnerships as indispensable as long as Al Qaeda and Taliban

forces continue to operate and present a threat to the central government (*AP*, 8 August 2002).

There are few indications that U.S. policy will undergo any drastic shifts in the near future. The Bush administration's aversion to Clinton-styled nation-building has undermined the efforts of the Afghan Administration and the UN to restore stability to the troubled country. The reluctance of the U.S. to strenuously support the disarmament and neutralization of Afghanistan's warlords vitiates any attempts at state-building. By implicitly legitimizing the authority of Afghanistan's warlords, the U.S. has emboldened them to challenge the nascent regime. A precondition for the success of reconstruction and state-building efforts is a minimum level of security; in the Afghan context this requires the taming of the warlords and more centralization of political power.

Another aspect of continuing U.S. operations that has had negative implications for overall security in Afghanistan has been its indiscriminate use of air power in its counterinsurgency activities. On 1 July 2002 a U.S. air strike on four villages in southern Afghanistan, believed to be harboring Al Qaeda operatives, killed 54 people and wounded over 120 (*New York Times*, 14 July 2002). The U.S. aircraft that carried out the attack claimed to have been fired upon by anti-aircraft batteries in the vicinity of the towns; however, a UN investigation could not find any evidence to corroborate this claim (*New York Times*, 30 July 2002). The tragedy engendered widespread hostility among the Afghan populace, directed not only at the U.S. but also at its client government in Kabul.

Understanding the dire consequences of the attacks, Karzai reacted with uncharacteristic sternness towards his superpower patron, demanding greater consultation on military operations in the future. This bombing, the latest of four such incidents that have shaken Afghanistan since November 2001, was particularly problematic for Karzai because its victims were ethnic-Pashtuns, the constituency that forms his principal power-base. Following the bombing, a frustrated Karzai stated: "The surprising thing is that in all four incidents – this one and the three earlier [bombing] incidents – the civilians being targeted [by the U.S.] are my own people and my strongest allies and in the forefront in the war against the Taliban." (*Eurasia Insight*, 10 July 2002).

Although the United States issued a belated apology to the ATA, few safeguards have been erected to ensure that such a tragedy will be avoided in the future. The attack in Oruzgan province was by no means an isolated incident. On 21 July, the *New York Times* published a report detailing on-site reviews of 11 locations in Afghanistan where air-strikes killed as many as 400 civilians (*New York Times*, 21 July 2002). According to the report, the U.S. air campaign "has produced a pattern of mistakes that have killed hundreds of Afghan civilians" (*New York Times*, 21 July

U.S. military
operations

2002). Such careless heavy-handedness can only undermine the authority of the Karzai regime and drive the population into the arms of the extremists, eagerly awaiting an opportunity to regain power.

5. Security Sector Reform

Security sector reform is a term that can have many meanings in contemporary political discourse depending on the context in which it is applied. In the case of Afghanistan, three vital pillars of the security sector reform agenda are: the creation of a broadly representative national army, the formation of a professional police force, and the initiation of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants program. A major donor country accepted responsibility for the supervision of each of these areas – the United States, Germany, and Japan respectively – under the auspices of the Geneva process. The Geneva Conference on security sector reform developed a comprehensive plan to confront the imposing problems of instability and insecurity that emerged in the political vacuum created by the fall of the Taliban. The security sector reform agenda, devised through the process established at Geneva, rests on five pillars; in addition to the three already mentioned, it includes Judicial Training (Italian/European Commission lead) and Counter-Narcotics (UK lead). These two pillars are less relevant to ongoing efforts to restore a basic level of security throughout the country, thus they are outside the scope of this study. The following sections will attempt to identify the major initiatives being implemented in respect to the three pillars and the problems and difficulties facing them.

Geneva process

5.1 Creation of a National Army

The creation of an Afghan National Army (ANA) that is under the control of the central government and representative of the country's ethnic diversity is one of the most important and difficult tasks facing the ATA and the international community. The United States has accepted principal responsibility for overseeing the training and development of a multi-ethnic ANA. Instructors from the US Army's 1st Battalion 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) began training an initial intake of Afghan recruits on 1 May at the country's former military academy on the outskirts of Kabul (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002). On 14 May 2002 the recruits began a 10-week program of instruction to prepare the first infantry and border guard battalions. The U.S. has allotted US \$50 million to train and equip 18,000 Afghan soldiers over 18 months; two training programs, consisting of 10-week cycles, will be operated simultaneously (Manuel and Singer, 2002). The French government has also contributed a group of army instructors to the U.S. led program. They began training the

second battalion of the Afghan army on 8 June. In an effort to build the capacity of the Afghan military and form a capable cadre of Afghan army instructors, the U.S. has implemented a “train-the-trainer” course that will run parallel to other training activities. By the end of 2002, Afghans are expected to gradually take over training responsibilities, at which time the military academy should be fully restored. The completion of the training process is expected to take anywhere between two and five years (*The Economist*, 8 August 2002).

U.S. training efforts have not been limited to the centrally controlled ANA. In southern Afghanistan, where the war against elements of Al Qaeda and Taliban continues, U.S. Special Forces have trained and funded “anti-Al Qaeda units”, often drawn from the militias of local warlords, to act as U.S. proxies. The government in Kabul has not been involved or consulted in the establishment and operation of these units, and thus far there are no plans to subordinate them to the ANA. The formation of these units has had a deleterious impact on the process to create a national army for two reasons: First, the rate of pay for soldiers in these U.S.-led units, up to US \$150 per month, is three times higher than that offered to troops in the ANA (Kingma, interview, 21 September 2002). This has fostered resentment and dissention in the ranks of the ANA and has prompted many capable soldiers to abandon the national army in favor of these covert units (Manuel and Singer, 2002). Second, the provision of training and equipment to rural militias loyal to recalcitrant warlords has strengthened them at the expense of the ATA’s centralizing drive. The potential of these figures to act as spoilers has thus been greatly enhanced.

The Karzai administration, in conjunction with the United States and the rest of the international community, has stated its intention to create a ground force of 60,000 soldiers, supported by a border guard of 12,000 and an air force of 8,000 (*Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002). The ATA has already outlined its military budget for next year, which amounts to US \$300 million. The budget includes payment of salaries, provision of basic equipment and renovation of barracks. To meet any unexpected shortfalls in funding UNAMA has established a trust fund for the payment of salaries and the provision of non-lethal equipment for the Afghan armed forces (*UN Secretary General*, 2002b).

The ANA could be molded to fulfill the following functions: keep the major roads open so food and other assistance can flow unimpeded to rural areas; prevent terrorists from taking refuge in the country; contain inter-tribal and inter-regional conflicts; provide support for local police in the maintenance of law and order; and patrol the borders. The ANA can be seen as both a product and tool of the nation-building effort. The ANA can be used to expand education and provide technical training to the country’s youth; it can be presented as a national symbol to instill

Afghan military
reform

a sense of national pride among the diverse populace; and finally, it can be used to carry out reconstruction and relief efforts, such as the rebuilding of roads and the distribution of humanitarian aid.

An encouraging sign concerning the process to create the ANA came in early June 2002 when the Afghan MoD formed a Military Commission intended to monitor and facilitate the training process (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 19 June 2002). The new consultative body, unveiled by Defense Minister Fahim at an 8 June 2002 press conference, includes virtually all of Afghanistan's regional military strongmen (See Box B for membership list of the Military Commission). This is an important initiative for it ties both Fahim and some of Afghanistan's most powerful warlords to the ANA; their unwavering support is needed for it to flourish. By giving these men a stake in the process of creating the army it is hoped they will provide the new force with their unconditional support. Although this initiative is undoubtedly a positive development, the future of the ANA is by no means assured; steps must be taken to generate more political and material support for the force and the training process must be accelerated and refined.

5.1.1 Obstacles Facing the Creation of the Army

A myriad of problems have hindered efforts to give birth to the ANA. One of the most serious of these problems regards the crucial task of assembling an ethnically and regionally balanced group of recruits. Approximately 50 percent of the recruits enrolled in the U.S. training program for the first battalion of the ANA were ethnic Tajiks (*New York Times*, 6 June 2002). This gross disparity reflects the larger problem posed by the excessive power enjoyed by the Panjshiri Tajik faction over the Afghan defense establishment. The leadership of the army is almost exclusively composed of Tajiks drawn from the small Panjshiri Valley. To illustrate this fact, of the approximately 100 generals named by Defense Minister Fahim during the interim administration, 90 were Panjshiri Tajiks (Manuel and Singer, 2002). The emerging reality of Tajik domination of the army has fed the suspicions of the majority Pashtun population, as well as members of minority groups, that the new army will be used as a tool to solidify and expand Tajik control of the government. To allay the legitimate concerns of these groups, the government should reshuffle the army leadership and impose strict ethnic-based quotas on recruitment. Such measures will ensure that each of the country's ethnic groups is proportionately represented in the new army. This may prolong the training period, but in the long run it will serve to ameliorate tension and suspicion between the country's main ethnic groups.

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reform

Attracting recruits for the nascent army has also proved to be a significant problem. In a country with a poor communications infrastructure, enticing new recruits has proved difficult. Also, misinformation over rates of pay, conditions of training and the contracted length of service (four years) are persistent problems. A large proportion of troops who began the training program for the first battalion quit within days after discovering that the monthly rate of pay for a trainee was US \$30, rising to US \$50 after graduation (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002). According to U.S. military officials, many recruits had been led to believe that wages would be significantly higher, English lessons would be provided, and opportunities would exist to train and travel abroad (*New York Times*, 23 July 2002). To prevent the recurrence of such misunderstandings, Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) teams have been positioned at regional recruitment offices to ensure that recruits are provided with accurate information regarding rates of pay and conditions of service (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002). The problems that have plagued the army training program are reflected in desertion rates; one third of the soldiers who completed the training program for the first battalion deserted (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002).

Perhaps the most acute problem facing the process to build a national army is the tepid support accorded to the program by the Afghan MoD. Recruits for the first battalion complained that the MoD was late in paying their monthly salary and had issued them decrepit assault rifles (*New York Times*, 6 June 2002). The ANA training program is short of basic weaponry including Kalashnikov series assault rifles, medium machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, recoilless rifles and mortars (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002). The lack of assault rifles was partially alleviated by a Romanian donation of 1,000 AK-47s and over 200,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, delivered in the first week of June, but the problem of a lack of functional equipment remains acute (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002).

Afghan Minister of Defense Fahim commands an army of 18,000, the largest and most efficient fighting force in the country. It is believed that Fahim is reluctant to antagonize this group, so crucial to the maintenance of his own power-base, by apportioning scarce resources to the ANA (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002). Since its formulation, Fahim has quietly resisted the UN designed blueprint for the ANA. While the UN plan calls for the creation of an 80,000-strong army, the Afghan MoD has proposed forming a massive 200,000-strong force. The tremendous disparity, in terms of troop numbers, between the two proposals demonstrates that Fahim's vision of the future of the ANA differs considerably from that of Karzai and the international community, a reality that does not bode well for the future of the force.

Another question surrounding the ANA concerns the potential effectiveness of the training program that has been implemented. U.S. instructors and regional observers have indicated that the 10-week training period is too short a time-frame to form disciplined and efficient operational battalions (Davis, 2002). Educational levels and language barriers have slowed training considerably; 70 percent of the recruits of the first battalion were illiterate (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002). Consequently, U.S. instructors have revised initial estimates regarding the time-frame needed to conduct training, indicating that a six-month cycle would be more appropriate (Davis, 2002). According to General Tommy R. Franks, chief of the U.S. Central Command, under current conditions, only 3,000 to 4,000 soldiers will be trained by the end of this year and 13,000 by the end of 2003 (*Washington Post*, 8 August 2002). Such a force will hardly meet the daunting security challenges that face Afghanistan during the 18-month transitional period before democratic elections are held. It will most likely take up to five years to mold an effective fighting force capable of enforcing the authority of the central government.

BOX B: Members of Afghan Military Commission

Abdul Rashid Dostum, the ethnic Uzbek strongman based in the northwest.

Ismail Khan, master of the western region.

Gul Agha Sherzai, a Pashtun warlord based in Kandahar.

Karim Khalili, head of the Shi'a Hizb-e-Wahdat faction

Sayyed Hussein Anwari, leader of the smaller Shi'a faction, the Harakat-i-Islami (Islamic Movement)

General Atta Mohammed, based in Mazar-i-Sharif

General Baryali, based in northern Kunduz

General Mohammad Daoud from northeastern Takhar

General Bismullah Khan, Kabul garrison commander

Chief of Army General Staff Asif Delawar

Source: *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 19 June 2002

5.2 Police Reform and the Role of ISAF

The creation of a professional national police force is a crucial step in the process of security sector reform. Many areas in the country lack a legitimate police presence altogether, leaving these communities susceptible to violence and criminality. If the new regime hopes to expand its authority and undercut the power of the regional warlords it must assert itself as the guarantor of the people's security. Only by proving that the state possesses a monopoly on the use of force and is capable of safeguarding the

property and livelihoods of the populace will Afghans place their trust in the new central government. However, the task of constructing a multi-ethnic and accountable police force is a difficult one that will take several years to achieve. Therefore, in the meantime, the international community should step forward to fill the security void. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established by the UN Security Council in December 2001 to serve this purpose. Although its mandate has been limited to Kabul, it has been praised by Afghan authorities and the international community for its excellent work in maintaining order in the capital. Although Afghan officials have expressed a strong desire to see the expansion of ISAF to other cities of the country, donor states are wary of the increased burden in personnel and money that such an initiative would entail.

5.2.1 Police Reform

The government of Germany has assumed the responsibility for co-ordinating external support for Afghan police reform. On 13 February 2002, 18 nations and 11 international organizations attended an international conference in Berlin to discuss international support for the Afghan police. Germany pledged 10 million euros for police reform in 2002 after presenting a report from a fact-finding mission it had dispatched to Kabul in January. This money is going towards training, the renovation of the national police academy and the reconstruction of police stations in Kabul. The German government also donated 50 police vehicles that were delivered in late March to Kabul (*UN Secretary General, 2002a*).

At a subsequent meeting in Berlin on 14-15 March 2002, Germany presented a comprehensive plan for the training and reform of the Afghan National Police. The first team of German police officers arrived in Kabul on 16 March to implement this plan (*UN Secretary General, 2002a*). Since that date, a total of 82 officers have completed the “train-the-trainers” course. These newly appointed instructors began training 3,200 police recruits in the first week of August 2002 (*UN Secretary General, 2002b*). The latest pool of trainees is extremely diverse, comprising 100 people from each province, including 100 women. Although women still represent a small percentage of the force, the police leadership has tried to raise their profile and encourage other women to join the police by displaying them prominently at public events. The Karzai administration envisions the national police force numbering around 75,000, including the fire brigade and prison services (*Economist, 8 August 2002; Kingma, interview, 21 September 2002*).

Despite the obvious progress made on police reform, the situation remains quite dire. According to UNDP, which is

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responsible for managing a trust fund that pays police salaries, there are only 7,000 policemen on the payroll today, almost all of whom are situated in Kabul. It is hoped that this figure can be doubled by next year, with more presence in the provinces where the security problems are most acute. UNDP estimates that US \$27 million will be needed this year, and another US \$38 million next year just to cover salaries and basic communications equipment needed to facilitate this enlargement (*The Economist*, 8 August 2002).

While international efforts on this issue have been very constructive, in the end it is the responsibility of the ATA, and particularly its Interior Ministry, to enact change. The ATA Interior Ministry has established a 15-member Security Committee and a National Commission on Police Reform, but their impact has been limited. One of the biggest problems facing police reform that has yet to be addressed is the lack of ethnic diversity in the upper echelons of the police hierarchy. For example, in Kabul 12 of the 15 police stations are headed by Panjshiri Tajiks (*Eurasia Insight*, 26 June 2002). Until such blatant inequities are rectified, the police will not engender the widespread support of the populace.

Progress on police reform has been tangible to this point but only time will tell whether it will help alleviate the insecurity that plagues the country. It will take years before a new cadre of police officers, trained at the National Police Academy in Kabul, will be able to fan out throughout the country, and when they do, a basic level of security will have to exist if they hope to have any impact.

5.2.2 International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was inaugurated on 20 December 2001 by UN Security Council Resolution 1386. ISAF is composed of approximately 5,000 troops drawn from at least 19 different countries (*BBC News*, 20 June 2002). ISAF's mission is currently limited to Kabul and its immediate environs; any move to expand the force outside Kabul would require the authorization of the UN Security Council. As explained earlier, ISAF has been quite effective. According to a report issued by the UN Secretary General on 25 April 2002, crime rates across the city declined by 70 percent since ISAF assumed its duties and 89 percent of Kabul residents polled expressed approval of the presence of the force (*UN Secretary General*, 2002b). Apart from its policing and peacekeeping duties in the city, ISAF provided security for the Loya Jirga and has helped recruit and train units of the fledgling ANA. As of August 2002, ISAF had trained 600 soldiers for the ANA drawn from throughout Afghanistan; by the end of the year it expects to have trained a total of 4,000 troops. ISAF was initially led by Britain, who had contributed the largest number of troops to the force.

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However, on 20 June Turkey assumed command of the mission. Turkey has ruled out extending its command of ISAF when its six-month term expires on 20 December 2002. Germany has indicated that it would be willing to take over control of the force, possibly in a joint command with the Netherlands (*New York Times*, 20 September 2002).

The success of ISAF coupled with the rise of insecurity elsewhere in the country has prompted numerous calls from Afghan political figures, aid organizations, and the UN for the force to be expanded and deployed to other population centers. On 20 June 2002, a group of 70 international relief organizations, operating under the umbrella of the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), appealed to the UN Security Council for the deployment of the force to the north of the country, specifically around Mazar-i-Sharif, where attacks on aid organizations threatened to curtail all humanitarian relief (*IRIN*, 21 June 2002). Both Hamid Karzai and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan have endorsed the statement, strongly advocating an expansion of ISAF (*UN Secretary General*, 2002b). Although the UN Security Council extended ISAF's mission for six months on 23 May 2002, its limited geographical mandate was upheld (*AP*, 28 May 2002).

The principal obstacle to the expansion of the peacekeeping force has been the obstinate positions adopted by the United States and some key European countries, who have claimed that the costs of expanding the mission are prohibitive. The U.S., who has more than 7,000 troops in Afghanistan, has resolutely declared that it is not willing to dispatch more military personnel to the country. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said the Bush administration was not categorically opposed to expanding the force but other nations would have to provide the necessary troops because the U.S. would not commit more soldiers to Afghanistan. Reflecting the opinions of much of the U.S.'s allies on the issue, Wolfowitz went on to say: "There aren't lots of people coming forward to volunteer for this mission" (*New York Times*, 27 June 2002). Wolfowitz's wry remark is astute; Germany, one of the largest contributors of troops to ISAF with over 1,000 personnel, has virtually ruled out supporting an expansion of the force outside Kabul (*AP*, 26 July 2002). During a 26 July 2002 visit to Afghanistan, German Defense Minister Peter Struck told reporters that ISAF's mandate would probably be extended past its September deadline, but Germany would not be willing to send large numbers of additional troops required for the force's expansion (*AP*, 26 July 2002). Nevertheless, there are encouraging signs that this rigid view regarding ISAF may be shifting, particularly in the United States.

The murder of Vice President Abdul Qadir, the attempted assassinations of Hamid Karzai, and the Al Qaeda attack on the

Expansion of ISAF

Afghan military outpost just outside Kabul, have generated concern that the Karzai regime may not survive the winter without a greater international commitment to security. On 26 June 2002, senior Senators from both major U.S. political parties urged the Bush administration to support the expansion of ISAF to cities outside Kabul. The Democratic Chairman and the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee asserted in a 26 June congressional hearing that Afghanistan's reconstruction would be nearly impossible without a nationwide security force. Committee Chairman, Senator Joseph Biden Jr., and Republican, Senator Richard Lugar, exhorted the Bush administration to rethink its position on this issue. In an effort to exert pressure on the Bush administration to act, the Committee unanimously approved a bipartisan bill authorizing US \$1 billion over the next two years to fund ISAF's expansion (*Washington Post*, 8 August 2002).

While insisting that congressional mandates do not drive policy, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, previously categorically opposed to the idea of expanding ISAF, announced in early August that he had become more open to the idea of altering the role of ISAF (*Washington Post*, 8 August 2002). The Bush administration took this shift a step further in late August when Pentagon officials indicated that they were amenable to the prospect of enlarging ISAF and extending its mission outside Kabul. Described by a senior Bush administration official as a "mid-course correction", the chances that this plan, advocated by ATA and UN officials for months, will be implemented has been greatly increased (*New York Times*, 30 August 2002). However, the U.S. government cautioned against over-optimism generated by the policy shift. It warned that finding nations to contribute to such a force will be difficult and even if troops are found it will be some time before they are deployed and the strength of the contingent will likely be more modest than many would hope.

5.3 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (DDR)

A disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program is a vital component of the security sector reform drive. Even if a national army and police force would be successfully erected, their position would be untenable in a country rife with armed militias. Although Japan accepted a leadership role for DDR under the Geneva framework, it has increasingly deferred to the expertise of UNAMA in terms of program design and negotiation. Japan remains the principal donor for DDR initiatives, but other states have also made significant commitments, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Sweden (See Table 1.). The following section will provide an overview of the problem posed by the proliferation of

arms and the pervasiveness of militiamen in Afghanistan and detail the DDR initiatives currently being planned or implemented to confront this dilemma.

Table 1: Tentative donor commitments to demobilization and reintegration

Country	Tentative commitment (in millions of US dollars)
Japan	15.0 – 20.0
United States	6.0
United Kingdom	3.0
Canada	2.2
Sweden	1.0

Source: Kingma, interview, 21 September 2002

5.3.1 Disarmament

The disarmament of Afghan civilians is perceived by many to be a precondition for security and stability in Afghanistan. Determining how many arms are circulating in the country is very difficult. Afghanistan was inundated with weapons during the past 23 years of civil war. Firearm ownership is the norm for adult men thus it is likely that armed Afghans number in the millions. Trade in guns, particularly in towns and villages along the border with Pakistan, is brisk; a Kalashnikov can be purchased on the black market for anywhere between US \$150 and US \$200 (*Christian Science Monitor*, 6 August 2002). In the summer of 2002, an unnamed Western intelligence official explained to a reporter of the *Christian Science Monitor* that “what used to be the old silk route [in Afghanistan] is the new weapons route” (*Christian Science Monitor*, 6 August 2002).

The government of Hamid Karzai is certainly aware of the gravity of the problem of arms proliferation and has taken some steps to confront it. In mid-July 2002, a high-level government commission was established to oversee the collection of unauthorized weapons. Deputy Defense Minister General Atiqullah Baryalai, was appointed the president of the nascent National Disarmament Commission (NDC). The stated goal of the commission is to collect “a million weapons and pieces of military equipment” (*IWPR*, 25 July 2002). This is a lofty objective considering the innate resistance to disarmament displayed by Afghans throughout the country. Afghan men are reluctant to give up their arms for three reasons: First, guns have become an inalienable part of Afghan culture, a sign of manhood that are fired in the air at celebrations such as weddings or to mark the birth of a child. This ‘gun culture’ will be difficult to diffuse in the short-term. Second, with the security situation so

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precarious, Afghan men are unlikely to relinquish their weapons for they serve as the principal guarantor of their property and physical security. Lastly, with a lack of employment opportunities in the country, weapons are a source of income for men; often militias are the only employment option for men.

The NDC has coordinated collection programs in five northern provinces: Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Parwan and Kapeesa (*IWPR*, 25 July 2002). According to the Afghan government, 50,000 pieces of military equipment have been collected thus far, including 100 mortars, 13 armored vehicles and 40 tanks (*IWPR*, 25 July 2002). The weapons are currently being stored in local facilities, but eventually all the arms will be transferred to a national depot in Kabul (*IWPR*, 25 July 2002). Although General Sher Mohammad Karimi, a member of the NDC, has stated that “the collection process will be applied all over Afghanistan in the next six months,” a great deal of ambiguity surrounds how the process was carried out (*IWPR*, 25 July 2002). Despite the apparent initial success of the program, uncertainty over security and compensation has cast a pall of suspicion over the process. Many of the men who gave up their weapons claimed that they have not received the compensation that they were promised. Also, contrary to government pronouncements, allegations have circulated that guns in some areas have merely been registered, not relinquished (*IWPR*, 25 July 2002). The government has released scant information regarding the procedures and methodology utilized in the collection process, a lack of transparency that has generated skepticism.

It should also be noted that in the past six months ad-hoc disarmament initiatives, spearheaded by regional commanders and international organizations, have been implemented with mixed levels of success across the country. A disarmament program initiated in March in Mazar-i-Sharif and its environs collected some 400-500 weapons, an estimated 10 percent of the weapons in the area (*IRIN*, 22 July 2002; *AFP*, 20 July 2002). The commanders of the three main factions in the region, Jamiat, Jumbesh, and Hizb-e-Wahdat have, in conjunction with the UN, formed a local disarmament commission to facilitate the process. The three groups voluntarily delivered weapons to designated collection points monitored by village elders (*IRIN*, 22 July 2002). Once collected, the arms were transported to military depots outside of Mazar-i-Sharif belonging to the various parties. There, the weapons were registered and kept under guard by Jamiat and Jumbesh forces; UNAMA has been given the right to monitor the safekeeping of the arms (*IRIN*, 22 July 2002).

Authorities in Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat have also carried out limited disarmament programs. The approach adopted by authorities in Kabul differs considerably from that instituted in Mazar-i-Sharif; forcible confiscation rather than voluntary

submission serves as the cornerstone of Kabul's collection policy. The ATA Interior Ministry has reported that security services in Kabul have confiscated 10,000 illegal guns in and around the capital. Critics of this approach contend that the small arms problem can only be solved if the populace is persuaded to voluntarily give up their arms, thus a program utilizing the stick rather than the carrot can only have a superficial impact. While the progress made thus far in disarmament has been tangible, it has been plagued by shortfalls in resources, a lack of transparency, and deficiencies in coordination. Steps must be taken to rectify these shortcomings. Yet, even if corrective measures are implemented, prospects for disarmament are bleak in a country marred by such volatile security conditions.

5.3.2 Demobilization and Reintegration

A demobilization and reintegration initiative providing incentives for Afghan militiamen and soldiers to disarm and reenter civil society is a crucial element of security sector reform. Poverty and the absence of economic opportunity are the principal stimuli inducing Afghans to enter militias or engage in criminal activity. With the Afghan economy in a state of ruin and much of the population wallowing in abject poverty, taking up arms on behalf of regional warlords is often the only means of subsistence for Afghan men. A DDR program is needed to counter the long-standing relationship of exploitation between the country's impoverished masses and the warlords. It is clear that the sentiments of duty and fealty which Afghan militiamen and other armed elements display for the warlords is based on the distribution of gains rather than ethnic or community allegiance (Kingma, interview, 21 September 2002). Essentially, the decision of men to take up arms on behalf of warlords is largely market-driven. Only by providing the Afghan people with the tools to become economically self-sufficient can the cycle of poverty and violence be broken.

The first step in establishing a demobilization and reintegration program is to determine the extent of the problem. Estimates of the number of Afghans currently under arms vary considerably from 500,000 to 800,000 (Kingma, interview, 21 September 2002). A significant proportion of these men are expected to join the national armed forces and police, but these bodies will not be able to absorb all those under arms who wish to join. The end result of any demobilization and reintegration initiative will be determined by the immediate availability of short- and long-term jobs, training, and aid for those entering the agricultural sector. Jobs in reconstruction and humanitarian projects are a crucial source of immediate short-term employment during the country's current transition phase. Aid organizations

Demobilization and
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implementation

and the Afghan government should be strongly encouraged to draw on demobilized personnel for such reconstruction projects.

There is a consensus among all the stakeholders in Afghanistan's future that DDR is a priority. UNAMA and UNDP have been working closely with the Japanese government and the ATA to coordinate local and international efforts on this front. In September 2002, General Bismullah Khan, the Deputy Minister of Defense and Commander of the Kabul Garrison, explained in an interview to BICC Researcher Kees Kingma that 700 ATA officials trained in aspects of demobilization were fanning out throughout the country to prepare the ground for a demobilization program. However, the nature of the training these officials received, the mandate they had been given, and the time frame for their mission was not disclosed and remains ambiguous (Kingma, interview, 21 September 2002).

More significantly, in spring 2002 the Japanese government introduced a proposal to establish a military demobilization agency based in Kabul. The plan was first disclosed to the Karzai government by Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi during her visit to Kabul in early May. The establishment of the agency is the end result of trilateral negotiations between Tokyo, the ATA and the United Nations (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 June 2002). Earmarked to serve as a coordinating body for the implementation of demobilization and reintegration initiatives by NGOs, international organizations, and the ATA, the agency will operate for a period of up to five years (Davis, 2002). The plan stipulates that the agency will be composed of a secretariat under an Afghan director-general and eight regional branches. The principal role of the agency is to register former combatants; following registration each ex-combatant will be issued an identity card entitling them to take part in job-training, employment promotion and small business training programs. The program will not provide cash benefit packages like the World Bank-run DDR program in Cambodia. The much-maligned Cambodian program was marred by major discrepancies between UN figures of the number of combatants entitled to benefits and the number of Cambodians who registered.

In June 2002, UNAMA in conjunction with the Japanese government released a draft proposal, still under consideration, for a DDR pilot program. Entitled the Afghan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program (ADDRP), it is scheduled to last for a period of 12 months at a cost of US \$20 million (UNAMA, August 2002). The program aims to demobilize 20,000 ex-combatants and former soldiers in six areas: Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar, Hazarajat and Nangarhar. A National Commission on Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (NCDDR) will be established to supervise and coordinate the program. The results of the pilot phase will be

utilized as a basis to devise a long-term DDR strategy for Afghanistan.

The draft proposal aptly recognizes that the situation in Afghanistan makes comparisons with other demobilization cases problematic; it is new territory in which traditional assumptions and techniques are difficult to apply. This is not meant to imply that proven methodologies and practices developed in other countries should not be utilized in Afghanistan, it is merely a reminder of the need to remain circumspect when making such parallels. The desired outcome of the program is “the establishment of a national capacity to direct, manage, implement and develop policy on issues relating to Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration” (UNAMA, August 2002). This project provides an opportunity to test theories and conduct research while building the capacity of Afghan stakeholders to carry out such initiatives in the future.

The pilot project consists of five core activities. The first, and perhaps most important activity is ‘Registration for Peace’, in which candidates for demobilization and reintegration chosen by the Afghan MoD and regional powerbrokers are registered, screened and assigned to different program areas. This component includes the establishment of a comprehensive database storing the profiles of all individuals registered in the program. Each registrant will be assigned a counselor who will be responsible for monitoring their individual progress.

The second part of the program, called ‘Training for Peace’, involves the provision of vocational training to demobilized personnel. A wide variety of training options will be offered such as carpentry, masonry, construction trades, textiles, retailing, book-keeping etc... Micro-finance will be offered to individuals wishing to engage in farming and a ‘tool-kit’ will be provided to those intent on starting a small-business. Apprenticeships and on-the-job training schemes will be introduced for young ex-combatants. Also, to ensure that Afghans can assume control of this training process at some point in the future, a “train the trainers” course will be established to convey to Afghan officials the knowledge and expertise needed to operate such a complex program.

‘Return to Communities for Peace’ is the title given to the third component of the program. It focuses on facilitating the return of ex-combatants to their home communities. Communities will be provided with resources and support to assist them in absorbing the ex-combatants. Major development needs of communities, whether it is the resurfacing of roads, the repair of public buildings or the construction of infrastructure will be identified and addressed. This element of the program is intended to ease the transition to normalcy for both ex-combatants and the communities to which they will be returning.

The fourth part, 'Livelihoods for Peace', endeavors to integrate returning combatants into the government's broad reconstruction and investment strategy. The purpose of this element of the program is to establish and exploit synergies with existing development and reconstruction initiatives, such as the Rapid Employment in Afghanistan Program (REAP). This UNDP-run program recruits men and women for Afghan contractors to assist in development and rehabilitation activities, such as clearing away rubble from damaged or destroyed buildings. By April 2002, REAP had given work to over 9,600 Afghans in rehabilitation projects at 40 sites in and around Kabul (UNDP, January 2002). Due to its initial success and the generous sponsorship of the Japanese government, the program has been extended for three years and expanded to eight other Afghan cities. With an operating budget of US \$90 million, it aims to provide short-term employment to 100,000 Afghans over the next three years (UNDP, January 2002).

'Mine Action for Peace' is the final component of the pilot project. It aims to provide mine clearance and awareness training to demobilized Afghans so they can be employed in ongoing demining activities. Mine action programs provide a valuable source of employment for Afghan ex-combatants. By most statistical measures, Afghanistan's problem with mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) can be considered the worst in the world; 732 square miles of its territory is mined, much of it farmland or adjacent to population centers, and the casualty rate is 150-300 per month (UNDP, January 2002). This problem was greatly exacerbated by the coalition bombing of Afghanistan that created large swathes of new contaminated areas. Although Afghanistan's mine clearance program, led by the Mine Action Program for Afghanistan (MAPA), has been remarkably successful and cost efficient, it requires an immediate infusion of personnel and resources. UNDP has set an objective of recruiting 4,000 new staff for de-mining activities (UNDP, January 2002). Ex-combatants are ideal candidates for such work due to their military training and experience with explosives. The pilot demobilization program has allocated funds to train and employ 650 deminers for a minimum of one year under the MAPA framework.

The pilot project will be subjected to ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Both qualitative and quantitative measures will be used to assess the program's activities; mid-course adjustments will be made in the event that certain aspects of the program prove to be unproductive. The project, which will be implemented by the ADDRP and UNDP, was scheduled to begin in August 2002 but has been delayed. It has yet to receive the approval of the principal international donors involved in the Geneva process, a precondition for its implementation.

The UNAMA-designed project is well conceived, innovative, and fully funded; however, it remains unclear when it will be implemented. As long as this project remains stalled in the planning stage and no other large-scale DDR initiative emerges to replace it, a dangerous void will remain in the security sector reform agenda. In light of the reality that DDR is an important element of any effort to reconstruct, develop and establish security in Afghanistan, progress on this issue has been dangerously slow. The problems associated with weapons proliferation and the existence of a large cadre of mobilized militiamen has been universally recognized, yet programs to confront the problem remain stalled. In the case of Afghanistan, time is of the essence. DDR initiatives must be greatly accelerated to meet the challenges presented by poverty, escalating violence and rising instability.

6. Recommendations

The security situation in Afghanistan is extremely volatile. Developments between July and September 2002 demonstrate the acute need for further international intervention to avert a return to widespread violence and anarchy in the country. The following recommendations, which run the gamut from very specific to extremely general, are intended to elucidate some potential remedies to the debilitating situation that currently exists. There are no easy solutions for Afghanistan's imposing security problems; however, by offering some concrete recommendations it is hoped that a constructive dialogue on strategies to reinvigorate the reform process can be initiated.

Intensify
international
involvement

6.1 How can the international community channel aid to Afghanistan in a more efficient and effective fashion?

International donors must remove the obstacles in the aid pipeline to Afghanistan. It is crucial that the ATA and international organizations implementing reconstruction programs receive the money pledged to them on schedule. In addition to the need to fund rehabilitation and reconstruction initiatives, the ATA requires this money to pay the salaries of its bureaucracy and security forces. One of the best ways to deprive the regional warlords of their power base is to entice the soldiers under their command with offers of stable wages and benefits. Accordingly, the international community must funnel more funds directly to the ATA. The ATA should be the driving force behind reconstruction, not the myriad of NGOs and international organizations that have descended on Kabul. If the ATA lacks capacity to handle and distribute such a high volume of funds than it is the responsibility of the UN and the aid community to build that capacity, rather than assuming a greater proportion of the aid pool. The new regime will be unable to solidify its position

in the country if the people perceive it to be an impotent bystander in the reconstruction effort.

6.2 How can U.S. military strategy be adjusted to advance security and stability in Afghanistan?

Continued
U.S. engagement

The United States must cease providing unconditional support to Afghan warlords under the auspices of its continuing war on terrorism. This has prompted many of these regional warlords to openly defy the ATA. Although U.S. leaders have stated their determination to bolster the central government at the expense of the regional warlords, in actuality, their actions have produced the opposite result. The perception that these regional potentates can act with impunity must be contravened. The commander of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Dan K. McNeill, has estimated that the U.S. will require at least one more year to complete its mission in Afghanistan; it should use this time to actively aid the central government in its efforts to consolidate its power (*New York Times*, 19 June 2002).

It is in the long-term interests of the United States to see the Karzai administration succeed. The Taliban and Al Qaeda are still active – few of the leaders of each group have been killed or captured and they continue to enjoy the support of prominent Pashtun nationalists in the south and east of Afghanistan – and radical parties such as Hizb-e-Islami are gaining momentum. These forces will be in a position to challenge the government in several years if current conditions of insecurity are not ameliorated.

The U.S. must take steps to avoid civilian casualties in its continuing military operations. The series of tragic bombings that have killed scores of Afghan civilians have irrevocably harmed the image and credibility of the U.S. and its client, the ATA. The U.S. military must work in concert with the ATA and local authorities sanctioned by the central government to ensure that collateral damage is minimized. The U.S.'s continued engagement is crucial for the future of a democratic Afghanistan; however, it must ensure that the long-term interests of stability and security in Afghanistan are not sacrificed for short-term expediency in their continuing military operations.

6.3 What should be done to make the training program for the Afghan National Army more productive?

The U.S.-coordinated training program to build the ANA must be revised and expanded. Currently, it will take at least five years to establish a functioning army capable of maintaining order throughout Afghanistan. It is advisable that this period be shortened considerably. To achieve this objective, the international commitment to training and equipping the fledgling ANA must be expanded significantly. The United States will likely

be unwilling to bear the entire burden of the program's expansion. Therefore, other states, preferably those that have contributed to the ANA training effort, such as France and Britain, should expand their support. However, irrespective of the commitments made by other states, greater support from the United States is needed to facilitate enlargement. The US \$50 million contribution made by the U.S. to the process should be doubled; an amount comparable to that spent by the U.S. to train an army in post-war Bosnia. This is a small price to pay to strengthen and stabilize the Karzai regime and prevent Afghanistan from being used as a refuge for terrorists groups like Al Qaeda, considering that by mid-May the U.S. had spent approximately US \$17 billion on Operation Enduring Freedom to dislodge the Taliban regime (Manuel and Singer, July/August 2002).

The structure of the training program should also be altered. Multiple training centers should be established in key areas outside Kabul and several battalions should be trained simultaneously. The current 10-week training cycle has proved to be wholly insufficient. The training period should be expanded to 15-18 weeks. This will provide trainers more time to overcome difficulties such as language and illiteracy and instill a greater sense of discipline and professionalism in the troops. Also, more safeguards should be included into the recruitment process to ensure that the force is representative of the country's ethnic make-up. Compliance with such regulations should be monitored and encouraged by the United Nations. It is important that the training of this force be completed by the time elections are held in 2004, so the ATA possesses a force capable of maintaining order for this momentous event.

Once the training process has been completed it will take some time for the fledging units of the ATA to develop the professional ethic and discipline required of a standing army. To accelerate the emergence of such values, U.S. military advisers should be stationed for extended periods with Afghan army units. Such advisers could act as stabilizers, providing continuing training and mentoring for the Afghan troops.

The American policy of training and equipping covert "anti-Al Qaeda" military units in the restive south has had an adverse effect on the military reform process and the general security situation in Afghanistan. Such programs should be discontinued immediately and current units brought under the command of the central government. This policy has worked at cross-purposes with the overall goal of establishing a strong central government in Kabul. By training militia forces loyal to regional warlords, the U.S. has effectively created and reinforced counterweights to the authority of the ATA. The United States must seek to inject more coherence into its overall policy in Afghanistan, particularly in the sphere of military training. It must enhance its commitment to the

Adjustments to
training program

training process and work assiduously to ensure that it is firmly controlled by the central government.

6.4 Will an expansion of ISAF contribute to Afghan security and, if so, how should such a force be structured and deployed?

Expand ISAF

The security environment in Afghanistan would most likely be greatly improved if ISAF were expanded outside Kabul, particularly into major population centers. Also, the expansion of ISAF could help accelerate the training of the Afghan army. International peacekeeping units could serve as a military model for nascent Afghan units to emulate.

Policy makers and observers have offered numerous plans for ISAF's expansion. One scenario would see it deployed to Jalalabad, Kandahar, Gardez, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz, and Baiman. Forces in these vital urban centers could maintain law and order, safeguard aid workers and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. There are varying estimates, ranging from 5,000 to 30,000, as to how many additional troops would be required for this expanded mission. In light of the instability prevalent in many of these cities, higher-end figures of 25,000 - 30,000 are probably most accurate. While this would entail a considerable cost for international donors – one they have shown an unwillingness to incur – it increasingly appears that such an investment is essential. Another option that has been raised is the establishment of a mobile group of peacekeepers that could be rapidly deployed to trouble spots around the country (*New York Times*, 30 August 2002). This option would be less costly, but would fall short of meeting the requirements of the situation.

Afghanistan's history of foreign invasion and intervention has understandably ingrained a sense of aversion to the presence of foreign forces. Accordingly, it is likely that there will be a significant amount of opposition to the stationing of foreign troops in Afghanistan, in spite of the declarations of regional powerbrokers that such forces would be welcome. To minimize the adverse effects of such a potentiality, it is preferable to rely heavily on peacekeeping forces from Islamic countries. The installation of Turkey as the head of ISAF in Kabul was undertaken on the basis of this logic. The Afghan populace will be much more amenable to the presence of foreign troops if they can identify with them in terms of religion and shared values. Of course, as in the case of Turkey, enlisting the support of most Islamic states will require the provision of financial assistance to offset the economic burden entailed in the acceptance of such a mission. While the increased willingness of the Bush administration to entertain notions of expanding ISAF is an encouraging sign, the longer that such a commitment is delayed, the greater the chance that the Karzai regime will succumb to the intense internal pressure that is currently mounting.

6.5 *What steps can be taken to invigorate the DDR process?*

As explained earlier, an excellent proposal for a DDR pilot program has been devised by UNAMA in consultation with the ATA; however it remains stalled in the planning phase. With the exception of a few successful small-scale projects, little has been implemented on the DDR front. In terms of disarmament, efforts have been ad-hoc and marginally successful. ATA initiatives have been marred by a lack of resources and transparency. While disarmament campaigns in different regions must reflect local conditions, a certain level of national coordination of these projects is desirable. The UN or an alternative international organization should assume a greater role in monitoring and coordinating such programs, to ensure that they are effective and accountable. In terms of demobilization and reintegration, it is crucial that the Afghan Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Program (ADDRP) be implemented as soon as possible. The UN must impress upon donor governments the importance of such a program for Afghanistan's stability in the near- and long-term.

The process requires an infusion of capital and momentum that the UN should take a lead in providing. As long as the principal factors motivating Afghans to take up arms – poverty and a lack of viable employment opportunities – remain, violence, insecurity, and lawlessness will remain the norm in Afghanistan.

On a matter of substance, any prospective DDR program must address the needs of vulnerable groups, including dependents of ex-combatants, war-widows, child soldiers and disabled war veterans. DDR planning appears to neglect these groups to a certain degree. Women, children and the disabled have distinct concerns, problems and needs that must be addressed independently. The horrific traumas endured by these groups, who account for a significant proportion of Afghanistan's population, should not be overlooked by DDR initiatives.

6.6 *Could the reform of Afghanistan's intelligence agency buttress the Karzai regime and reduce the excessive power and influence exercised by the Panjshiri Tajik faction?*

A major point of contention and controversy within the ATA revolves around the control exerted by Defense Minister Fahim and the Panjshiri Tajik faction over Afghanistan's intelligence service, the *Amaniyat* or National Security Directorate (NSD). The head of the NSD, Mohammad Arif (Tajik), is supposed to answer only to Hamid Karzai; however, in practice he reports to Fahim. According to a former *Amaniyat* agent, there are 23 directorates in the agency, all of which are controlled by Fahim loyalists from the Panjshir Valley. Responsible for both civil and military intelligence, the NSD is a mammoth agency employing over 30,000 people (*Washington Post*, 24 July 2002). Karzai's allies refer

Prioritize DDR

Subordinate the
NSD

to it as “a corrupt and highly politicized apparatus that operates outside the president’s authority” (*Washington Post*, 24 July 2002). In its present form, the organization, notorious for its brutal methods, represents a distinct threat to Karzai. It is for this reason that Karzai has pledged to take on the agency. In July 2002, he named a high level commission to recommend broad reforms and to investigate allegations that NSD agents tortured and killed an Afghan refugee who had returned from Pakistan (*Washington Post*, 24 July 2002). The campaign to remake the intelligence service will be arduous, but is absolutely necessary. It is untenable that one faction can control such a powerful and potentially subversive organ of government; left unchecked it will eventually undermine the regime. The new commission formed by Karzai to reform and subordinate the agency to the ATA should be given the active and unconditional support of the international community.

6.7 How should the persistent problem of human rights be confronted?

Halt human rights
abuses

Efforts must be taken to halt human rights abuses. The ATA must be persuaded to punish blatant offenders and strengthen monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Such abuses have fueled a cycle of violence and retribution, exacerbating the inter-ethnic tension that has become a common feature of Afghan society. The establishment of an Afghan Human Rights Commission by the Bonn Agreement was a step in the right direction, but even more must be done. More than lip service must be paid to the human rights abuses that continue to occur across Afghanistan. What is needed is a human rights policy with teeth that will deter potential abusers. Karzai’s decision to investigate the deaths of up to 1,000 Taliban prisoners who died of suffocation in truck containers after surrendering to General Abdul Rashid Dostum in the fall of 2001 was constructive (*Reuters*, 25 August 2002). Only by delving into the past crimes of the various warlords and factions can a national catharsis take place and reconciliation begin.

6.8 Can a consensus be established among the disparate warlords of Afghanistan?

Consensus -
building

In the short-term, the ATA must expand its efforts to integrate the warlords in the central government decision-making process. The establishment of centralized advisory bodies and institutions incorporating key warlords and political figures is a means to achieve this goal. Short of achieving their full relocation to Kabul, anathema to many after the murder of Vice President Qadir, the creation of consultative bodies, such as a National Security Council or a commission to advise the government on internal and external security issues, will advance efforts to secure a broad national consensus among Afghanistan’s powerbrokers.

6.9 Have regional powers exacerbated the security dilemma in Afghanistan, and, if so, how can this problem be confronted?

Curtail outside
interference

Regional actors, such as Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan should agree to cease all support for sub-state actors – individual parties, tribes, and warlords – within Afghanistan. Reports have emerged that Iran and Pakistan continue to interfere in Afghan internal affairs (*Human Rights Watch*, 6 June 2002). Iran has traditionally provided support to Ismail Khan in the West, and Pakistan has a history of aiding Pashtun factions in the East. Pakistani economic and military support of the Taliban regime, a crucial factor in their ascent to power, is well documented. Scant evidence exposing the continuation of external interference by regional powers has been uncovered. However, in light of Afghanistan's geopolitical importance and its recent history as a pawn in regional power struggles, it is reasonable to assume that such intervention persists. The UN and global powers such as the United States must pressure regional states to accept a strict policy of non-interference in Afghanistan. Until such a policy is adhered to, the central government will not be able to overcome the centrifugal forces that have engulfed the country in a state of civil war for the past three decades.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ADDRP	Afghan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program
AFP	Agence France Presse
AIMS	Afghanistan Information Management System
AIP	Afghan Islamic Press
ANA	Afghan National Army
AP	Associated Press
ATA	Afghanistan Transitional Administration
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
ITAP	Immediate and Transitional Assistance Program for the Afghan People
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
MAPA	Mine Action Program for Afghanistan
MoD	Ministry of Defense
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NDC	National Disarmament Commission
NDF	National Development Framework
NSD	National Security Directorate (<i>Amaniyat</i>)
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
REAP	Rapid Employment in Afghanistan Program
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCHS	United Nations Commission on Human Settlements (Habitat)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
U.S.	United States
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization