

Center for American Progress



# SECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN: THE CONTINUING CHALLENGE

Larry P. Goodson

Author of *Afghanistan's Endless War*

October 7, 2004



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Afghanistan approaches its first democratic presidential election, the security situation remains dire, threatening not only the election itself, but also Afghanistan's longer-term reconstruction and development.

There are insufficient security forces and election workers for the October 9 poll, and Afghans face Taliban attacks and intimidation by warlords and militias. Such conditions are characteristic of the instability that exists throughout the country.

While much progress has been made over the past three years, substantial negatives remain. Al Qaeda and the Taliban continue to launch attacks and their leaders, Osama bin Laden and Mullah Mohammed Omar, remain at large. Afghanistan's opium industry is booming, with the country now providing more than 75 percent of the world's opium supply, marking a dangerous nexus between narcotics and terrorism.<sup>1</sup> And Afghan warlords and militias – groups supported by the United States in its operations in Afghanistan during the past three years – hold a monopoly of power over large parts of the country, creating violence and insecurity.

While a mantra of nation-builders is “security first,” the initial American “light footprint” strategy for Afghanistan has proven flawed, as too few troops and a narrowly defined mission prevented the U.S.-led coalition from providing adequate security on the ground.

This security gap was exploited by warlords as well as remnants of the Taliban and al Qaeda. The failure of the U.S.-led coalition to destroy the Taliban and al Qaeda in early 2002 combined with inadequate national and international security forces to produce deteriorating security in 2003 and 2004.

*“As Afghanistan approaches its first democratic presidential election, the security situation remains dire, threatening not only the election itself, but also Afghanistan’s longer-term reconstruction and development.”*

By mid-2004, 25 percent of Afghanistan's administrative districts (89 of 361) were considered by the United Nations to be high-risk areas, and some 47 percent (169 of 361) were medium or high-risk.<sup>2</sup> U.S., international, and Afghan casualties, both civilian and military, increased in 2003 and then again in 2004.<sup>3</sup>

International efforts to build an Afghan army and police force and to disarm and demobilize militias have progressed too slowly to provide the robust domestic security force envisioned. As the security situation has worsened, the United States has increased its forces in Afghanistan and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has been authorized to expand. NATO member states have had difficulty providing enough troops and equipment for the mission, however, and the international community in general has not made enough of a commitment to the security of Afghanistan.



This paper reviews the security environment in the country on the eve of the October presidential election, analyzes current threats, and makes recommendations for the United States and the international community to improve security on the ground. To this end:

- The United States and other NATO member states should increase the number of international troops in Afghanistan.
- The United States should both clarify the mission of U.S. forces and provide them with better training for that mission.
- Afghan domestic security capacity must be increased.
- Afghan reconstruction and state-building must be hastened.
- The United States must continue to signal its firm commitment to remain engaged in Afghanistan for the long term (more than a decade).

## **AFGHANISTAN AFTER THE TALIBAN, 2001 – 2002**

### *American Strategy*

The initial approach to security in Operation Enduring Freedom following the fall of the Taliban in early 2002 was designed to limit American exposure on the ground in Afghanistan. U.S. forces on the ground between 2001 and 2002 numbered less than 10,000.<sup>4</sup> The aim was to minimize both U.S. casualties and the abrasive effect on local sensibilities of an occupying presence, while freeing American forces to be used elsewhere in the global war on terrorism (especially Iraq). Unfortunately, the absence of significant numbers of “boots on the ground” limited the effectiveness of counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan and delayed nation-building.

While the Pentagon recognized that a “security gap” would exist, it planned to fill that gap in the short run through a hodge-podge of means – primarily Afghan warlords and militias. Because of the initial reluctance to engage U.S. forces in peacekeeping or nation-building operations, or even to have U.S.-led coalition forces constrained in their hunt for bin Laden and his followers, the United States only reluctantly allowed any international peacekeepers into the country. These took the form of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), whose mandate was limited to Kabul until late 2003.

With limited U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan, largely based in Bagram and Kandahar, daily security in most of the country was left to local warlords and militias.

### *International Community Involvement*

ISAF was formally mandated by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 on December 20, 2001. With less than 5,000 troops, constrained rules of engagement, and being limited to Kabul by U.S. insistence, ISAF could only provide minimal security.<sup>5</sup>



The U.N. Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established in March 2002 to coordinate the U.N. and international nation-building efforts. It has had virtually no police advisors or military observers, and remained in mid-2004 the most understaffed U.N. mission in the world.<sup>6</sup>

The long-term plan to fill the Afghan security gap was to develop the security forces of the central government through a so-called Security Sector Reform (SSR) process. In January 2002, specific donor nations agreed to take primary responsibility for different aspects of the security process. The United States took on the formation and training of an Afghan National Army (ANA), intended to be 70,000 men strong, and corresponding Ministry of Defense reform. Germany took the lead on training a national police, targeted at 50,000. Japan accepted responsibility for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of warlord-led militias. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom took on counter-narcotics and Italy agreed to lead judicial reform.<sup>7</sup>

These projects began slowly – particularly the DDR effort, which did not begin in earnest until late 2003 – and suffered from poor coordination. Moreover, they lost momentum at various times over such issues as inadequate salary and equipment within the ANA, which contributed to high initial desertion rates, salary disparities between different organizations, and loyalty to local commanders rather than the state.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), construction companies, foreign embassies, and even the Afghan government turned to private, internationally-based security companies to fill their security needs. These groups added to the confusion on the ground, blurring for Afghans the distinction between foreign military and NGO personnel.

### *Internal Forces*

In the absence of significant U.S. ground forces or international peacekeepers, the initial security gap was filled almost completely by private militias under the sometimes-shaky control of various anti-Taliban commanders, primarily those affiliated with the Northern Alliance. This facilitated the reemergence and strengthening of various warlords, some of whom were quite unsavory.

Major warlords like Mohamed Fahim Khan and Abdul Rasoul Sayyaf in Kabul, Ismail Khan in Herat, Gul Agha Sherzai in Kandahar, Rashid Dostum and Atta Muhammad in Mazar-i-

Abdul Qadir in Jalalabad power by government securing them lieutenants).

*“In the absence of significant U.S. ground forces or international peacekeepers, the initial security gap was filled almost completely by private militias.”*

Sharif, and Hazrat Ali solidified their taking senior positions (or for their

Meanwhile, they continued to resist the disarmament and demobilization of their personal forces. Virtually all of these warlords utilized their power to enrich themselves and their



followers, coming to control well over half of the cash economy, not only the opium/heroin trade, but also customs monies, illegal real estate transactions, mineral wealth, timber, and road tolls.<sup>8</sup>

With so much money at stake, many engaged in acts of crime and violence that reduced security throughout the country. Ostensibly pro-regime warlords were paid by the Americans and used as an anti-Taliban bulwark, though their militias were frequently the source of instability. This instability primarily took the form of predatory behavior against local civilians and factional fighting with other militias, such as the occasional violence between Ismail Khan and Amanullah Khan in Herat and Farah provinces, or the repeated clashes in the north between the forces of Rashid Dostum and Atta Muhammad. Warlords and their militias also engaged in drug smuggling and other criminal behavior, as did Taliban and al Qaeda remnants and government ministers and their supporters.

In this complex environment of generalized insecurity, Afghanistan's longer-term security threats materialized and festered.

## **AFGHANISTAN AFTER THE TALIBAN, 2003 – 2004**

### *American Strategy*

The gradual deterioration of security, continued survival of senior al Qaeda and Taliban leaders, and strengthening role of warlords and their militias in Afghanistan prompted a change in U.S. strategy in the summer of 2003. Combat operations gave way in 2003 to stability operations, augmented in 2004 by an increased shift to counter-insurgency operations.

Perhaps recognizing the inconsistency of having American forces engaged in extensive peacekeeping operations in Iraq while forbidding them to do so in Afghanistan, the Pentagon and national security leaders accepted the reality that U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan would have to take on a greater nation-building and peacekeeping role. By mid-2004, the U.S. military had been forced to double its troop commitment from about 10,000 to more than 20,000 troops in order to offset the decreases in security that occurred throughout 2003 and 2004. Despite this increase and an expanded counter-insurgency effort in the countryside, security continued to deteriorate.

In another important strategy shift beginning in late 2003, U.S. commander Lt. Gen. David Barno announced the rapid expansion of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) pilot program, which quickly grew from four to 16 PRTs in a six-month period.<sup>9</sup> PRTs are mixed military-civilian teams of usually about 80 personnel that are based in provincial capitals, where they attempt to provide stability for the surrounding area by doing patrols and providing reconstruction assistance. Each PRT has been built around Civil Affairs teams, and they provide reconstruction and development aid directly, through funds dispensed by PRT commanders. Their presence in the countryside was



intended to increase ambient security and pave the way for reconstruction and development activity.

The performance and impact of the PRTs has been mixed, especially since they all face different local conditions. Generally, the more mature PRTs, which have established relationships with local officials, have developed aid programs that have improved local conditions and strengthened positive perceptions of coalition troops and the Afghan government. Some PRTs have faced problems such as inadequate staffing, especially from the U.S. civilian agencies, and lack of understanding of local political conditions and dynamics. Some of the new PRTs in the ISAF-controlled northeast also have constraints imposed on their rules of engagement by their national chains of command. While a positive step, the PRTs are not yet decisive.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, they are not without controversy. NGO groups have complained that PRTs blur the distinctions between military and aid operations.<sup>11</sup>

In 2003, the United States revised its position on ISAF expansion outside of Kabul and sought NATO leadership of ISAF. In addition, Washington acknowledged the importance of road-building (both materially and symbolically) with orders to complete the Kabul-to-Kandahar section of the national “Ring Road” by the end of 2003. Finally, presidential envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad was appointed American ambassador to Kabul and brought a renewed American financial commitment to the Afghans in the form of increased funding of about \$1.6 billion (most as a part of the \$87 billion November 2003 supplemental appropriation).<sup>12</sup>

#### *International Community Involvement*

The international community did not produce much progress in Afghanistan in 2003, due in part to rifts over the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and the subsequent draw on resources for nation-building there, as well as to declining security in large sections of Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup>

NATO took responsibility of ISAF in August 2003, and after the United States lifted its objections to the idea, ISAF’s mission was finally expanded by the U.N. Security Council in October 2003.<sup>14</sup> The move allowed ISAF to take over responsibility for security in the relatively quiet northeast and north-central sectors of Afghanistan. To this end, NATO nations took the lead in PRT expansion in this section of the country, most notably in the German-led PRT in Kunduz. Plans call for NATO to eventually take over all of the PRTs in the northern and western sectors of the country.

While ISAF gradually increased its troop strength from 5,000 to about 6,250 by mid-2004, NATO has struggled to find troops and equipment to meet its new Afghanistan commitments.<sup>15</sup> At the Istanbul Conference in June 2004, NATO leaders agreed to increase the number of ISAF forces available for Afghanistan by about 3,500 in time for the October elections and to take over command of five PRTs in the north. ISAF forces in Afghanistan numbered around 9,000 at the time of this writing.<sup>16</sup>



Progress on the various Security Sector Reform pillars has also been poor. The U.S.-led effort to build the Afghan National Army (ANA) and reform the Ministry of Defense suffered numerous early delays and difficulties and was unable to hit ambitious targets (30,000 troops by late 2004 was the early target, but only some 10,000 to 12,000 have been trained).<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, needed infrastructure was built and the training regimen improved as the program slowly acquired momentum. Various deployments of the forces throughout Afghanistan during 2004 demonstrated the growing capability of this tiny force.

The German-led police training was similarly slow, leading the United States to provide some police training programs starting in 2003. There are questions about the training police receive. They are deployed without embedded trainers or monitors (unlike the ANA forces) and are paid far less than their ANA counterparts, creating the conditions for endemic police corruption.<sup>18</sup>

DDR (led by Japan) has been far behind schedule, only kicking off in October 2003, due in large measure to the reluctance of senior factional commanders (including Vice President and Defense Minister Fahim Khan) to submit to the process. Only about 15,000 militia fighters have been disarmed thus far.<sup>19</sup>

The last two SSR pillars have seen the least success. Italian-led reform of the judicial sector has been virtually nonexistent, undercut by underfunding and inattention. Meanwhile, the UK-led counter-narcotics effort has failed. Opium/heroin production threatens to turn Afghanistan into a narco-terrorist state. In 2003, opium poppies were grown by more than 260,000 households, encompassing some 7 percent of the population, and the opium poppy crop is projected to top record levels in 2004.<sup>20</sup> This illicit economic sector is producing huge distortions to the Afghan economy and, as in Colombia, creating dramatic threats to security throughout the country and region.

### *Internal Forces*

Although the Taliban appeared defeated in 2002, by 2003 remnants had re-emerged and increasingly contributed to insecurity in the southern, south-central, and eastern parts of the country.<sup>21</sup> In response to their growing presence, in 2004 the United States sent 5,000-10,000

additional forces into the country to mount a “Spring Offensive.” The Americans achieved some success, but the anti-regime forces, such as those of warlord Gulbuddin

*“Although the Taliban appeared defeated in 2002, by 2003 remnants had re-emerged and increasingly contributed to insecurity.”*

Hekmatyar’s faction of Hezb-i-Islami) remain a threat in much of the Pushtun belt of the country, especially through their efforts to intimidate rural citizens from participating in the October presidential elections.<sup>22</sup> More than 40 election workers were killed or wounded in Taliban attacks over the past few months.<sup>23</sup> Al Qaeda, meanwhile, appears to



have hunkered down in the Federally Administered Tribal Agencies of Pakistan, which sit along the Afghan border.

Warlords and militias grew as security threats during 2003, empowered by cooperation with U.S. forces, illicit sources of income, their government positions, and/or refusal to participate in DDR. A series of skirmishes between rival militias throughout 2003 and 2004 finally led Afghan President Hamid Karzai to move against the warlords by the summer of 2004, calling them the most serious threat to Afghanistan's security.<sup>24</sup> He sidelined Vice President Fahim Khan by dropping him as his running mate for the fall elections in late July, removed western strongman Ismail Khan as governor of Herat in mid-September, and took similar steps against lesser warlords.

While there is a widely held perception in Kabul that the warlords are nothing but paper tigers, many have strengthened themselves since 2001 and are unlikely to simply give up power altogether.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, they continue to maintain de facto control over large portions of the country outside Kabul.

## SECURITY AND THE ELECTIONS

Creating conditions for successful elections is critical for Afghanistan's move toward good governance. While there is still time to ramp up security before parliamentary elections in spring 2005, security for the October 9 presidential election appears to have fallen short.

Although United States, ISAF, and Afghan forces will provide security on Election Day, they do not have sufficient forces to do so, nor can they protect voters from intimidation and attacks outside of the immediate area of the polling sites. Perhaps even more important, there will be severe shortages in election workers (one estimate suggests a shortfall of 100,000 workers) to oversee some 5,000 polling sites.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, in an indication of security concerns connected with the election, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe declined to send an election monitoring team. The election will proceed with about 16,000 domestic observers and only 225 international monitors.<sup>27</sup>

This is particularly unfortunate, as expected Taliban efforts to disrupt the elections may reduce turnout in some areas, while warlord intimidation of voters may be even more problematic. According to Human Rights Watch, for example, "Voters in many rural areas have already been told by warlords and regional commanders how to vote and, given the general political repression and unfamiliarity with democratic processes, are likely to obey."<sup>28</sup>



Although there is much focus on the October 9 presidential first-round election as critical, this election may well be easier to conduct than the upcoming parliamentary elections. Karzai is expected to win an easy first-round victory on October 9, but the parliamentary elections will have many more candidates contesting many more seats, more complex electoral rules, and much more influence by local warlords.

Afghan elections in general face a range of challenges:

- Security (disruption by the Taliban and warlords);
- Logistical (severe personnel and monetary shortages);
- Technical (electoral design problems and inadequate census data for the parliamentary elections); and
- Political (influence of warlords, especially on parliamentary elections; and the division into Pushtun and Northern Alliance camps over the presidential election).

While the United States and NATO have the most leverage over the first two challenges – security and logistics – outside security forces have less leverage over bad electoral design and deepening political divisions. Majoritarian systems have been proposed for the parliamentary elections, but they are not suited to Afghanistan and will not produce the kind of proportional results required by the Afghan constitution and elections law.

## THE NATURE OF THE SECURITY CHALLENGE

On the eve of Afghanistan’s presidential election and three years following the American-led intervention, the nature of the security challenge facing the country remains complex and serious.

### *Inadequate Security Forces*

Even with the eventual expansion in mid-2004 to some 20,000 Coalition and some 6,250 ISAF forces, Afghanistan has had the lightest coverage of international forces of any recent peacekeeping mission, at 1 per 1,428 citizens, about 10 times fewer than the 1 to 141 ratio in Iraq.<sup>29</sup> Such numbers are simply not adequate to bring the security situation under control, and must be augmented, especially given the concurrent lack of domestic capacity.

Developing greater internal capacity is critical for Afghanistan’s long-term security, meaning that progress on DDR and judicial reform, and increases in the ANA and the national police are essential. The warlords and narco-terrorists cannot be replaced if there is no one to take their places. The slow pace of security sector reform to date has exacerbated initial insecurity and forced the United States and NATO



into strategic adjustments that although sound, are occurring after conditions on the ground have worsened noticeably. The lead donor nation concept, though intended to promote buy-in by the international community, has experienced a host of problems with timing and coordination, sometimes deriving from differing assistance philosophies.

### *Resilient Warlords*

Afghanistan's warlords are the biggest current threat to internal security, state-building, and successful economic development, and curbing their influence is the critical task facing the international community in Afghanistan. In addition to speeding up the DDR process, which aims to separate warlords from their militia forces, the international community can reduce warlord influence by cutting these individuals off from their illicit sources of income, such as drugs.

Warlord influence may also decline in inverse proportion to the rise of government influence, thus the gradual strengthening of the ANA, the national police and other Ministry of Interior forces is crucial for allowing the central government to eventually take monopolistic control of coercive power in Afghanistan. Recent efforts by the Karzai government to take on the major warlords may weaken the warlord culture overall, but their resilience in the face of such challenges cannot be discounted.

### *Persistent Anti-Regime Forces*

While the warlords threaten the central government's monopoly on legitimate power, the Taliban, al Qaeda and other Islamist militants continue to operate in Afghanistan, and are now capable of maintaining a low-level insurgency in more than one-third of the country.<sup>30</sup> Though these anti-regime forces are being countered by coalition and ISAF troops, these international troops are still insufficient in number to achieve a decisive victory. Moreover, because of the slow progress on SSR pillars, there are not enough domestic security forces to fill the security gap left by the international community or to change the underlying conditions contributing to deteriorating security.

Questions remain about the specific nature of al Qaeda's role in the operation of anti-regime forces, though a senior U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Maj. Gen. Eric Olson, stated recently that "[t]here are senior leaders of al [Qaeda] that are working through operatives in Afghanistan" and "[t]hey are involved in planning and in some cases directing attacks inside of Afghanistan."<sup>31</sup> The Taliban, meanwhile, continue to enjoy substantial support in the provinces and tribal areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, regardless of enhanced efforts in 2004 by the Pakistani government to cooperate with the United States in the counter-terror fight.<sup>32</sup>

As long as the United States and its allies remain committed to Afghanistan, anti-regime forces can be prevented from toppling the Kabul government or taking and controlling significant population centers, but the growing strength of their insurgency suggests that they are unlikely to fade away. In the absence of increased security capacity in

Afghanistan, U.S. and international forces will continue to be engaged in a long-term, low-intensity conflict with these insurgents and terrorists.

### *Booming Narcotics Economy*

Afghanistan's rapid economic growth over the past two years has been fueled almost entirely by an illicit economy in which various actors control illegal sources of income. The opium industry generated an estimated \$2.3 billion last year, equivalent to about half of Afghanistan's product for adequate narcotics been devised for and the amount of land under opium poppy cultivation in 2004 is expected to surpass that of last year by more than 60 percent.<sup>34</sup> Afghanistan cannot have real security as long as so much of its economy is derived from illegal sources of income and controlled by criminals.

*“The opium industry generated an estimated \$2.3 billion last year, equivalent to about half of Afghanistan's gross domestic product for 2002.”*<sup>33</sup> No counter-strategy has Afghanistan,

### *Infrastructure Reconstruction and Economic Revitalization*

Security will continue to be elusive so long as Afghanistan remains one of the poorest nations in the world, with widespread destruction to its roads, electrical grids, farms, and urban buildings. Progress in infrastructure reconstruction and economic revitalization is critical. The Berlin Donor Conference of March 31-April 1, 2004, generated pledges of \$8.2 billion over the next three years for Afghanistan's reconstruction, a substantial sum but far less than the almost \$28 billion estimated as necessary by the Karzai government.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, only 10 percent of aid actually disbursed to Afghanistan during the first two post-Taliban years (less than what was pledged) went into completed aid projects, with much lost to high administrative costs and foreign salaries.<sup>36</sup>

Afghanistan needs an economic plan that will provide a basis for sustainable development. The Afghan Ministry of Finance plan focuses on Afghanistan's location as a transit trade hub, which may be the basis for its long-term development, but there are important structural problems with the Afghan economy that undercut any attempts to develop the country rapidly and successfully. Prior to the period of Soviet occupation and civil war, Afghanistan essentially had an economy divided into two sectors: a large (85 percent of labor force) traditional subsistence agrarian society and a smaller urban rentier sector (relying on foreign aid, primarily from the Soviet Union).<sup>37</sup> This economy is being reconstructed to some extent, although the rural sector is heavily centered on opium as its primary cash crop, while the foreign aid provider is now predominantly the United States (with our limited staying power). Neither provides the economic foundation for a stable and secure Afghanistan.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Five recommendations would strengthen security in Afghanistan and help bring about America's strategic goals there:

- **The United States and other NATO member states should increase the number of international troops in Afghanistan.** The United States has three primary ongoing missions in Afghanistan — a counter-insurgency operation conducted by combat forces primarily in the southern and eastern border areas, a counter-terrorism operation conducted by Special Forces primarily in the same areas, and a nation-building operation conducted primarily by Lt. Gen. Barno's command in Kabul and the PRTs in the countryside. While there are adequate forces for the counter-terrorism operations, more are needed for counter-insurgency (especially prior to the spring 2005 elections). In addition, significantly more civil affairs, military police, and military engineers are needed for nation-building. Some 55,000 more troops would be needed to raise overall troop levels to the peacekeeper-to-civilian ratios that have brought success in other recent post-conflict operations—an impossible figure, given America's military commitments in Iraq and elsewhere and NATO's reluctance thus far. More rapid development of Afghan security force capacity could mitigate the need for some of these forces, but an addition of at least 5000-10,000 U.S. and international forces for 2005 is needed to improve security in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan represents NATO's first major outside-of-Europe mission, and provides an opportunity for it to demonstrate its future relevance. The peacekeeping assignments in the quiet northern half of Afghanistan have a very low threshold for success, and if NATO can deliver on its pledges there, Coalition and ANA forces can be freed up to take on the more difficult counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in the more restive southern and eastern parts of the country.

- **The United States should both clarify the mission of U.S. forces and provide them with better training for that mission.** Nation-building operations are key, as they provide the conditions under which popular support for insurgents and terrorists can be undercut. The U.S. military today is not oriented toward these less traditional military operations, which require a much more sophisticated cultural and political strategy. In order to be successful nation-builders in a country where the development of personal relationships is critical to successful dealings with the local population, American military personnel must learn relevant facts of Afghan culture, history, and modern politics. They must also receive education on Islam and some basic phrases and words in Dari or Pushto.
- **Afghan domestic security capacity must be increased.** Progress on all pillars of security sector reform is required if lasting security is to be achieved in Afghanistan. The ANA should be stood up more rapidly, and can be if the United



States increases the number of battalions per training cycle. Police training must be enhanced, and the international community should raise the level of police salaries as well as provide embedded trainers for follow-up once police return to their districts. U.S. civilian police might be recruited for this effort. The pace of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration is picking up, but the results are somewhat artificial given the huge numbers of personal weapons in Afghanistan. More emphasis needs to be placed on the reintegration element, as alternative opportunities to the "war economy" are needed to provide long-term demobilization. Likewise, counter-narcotics will not succeed without viable economic alternatives to poppy growing for the farmers. Crop substitution, eradication, interdiction, and law enforcement approaches are all partial solutions and will not work unless they are undertaken together in a coordinated fashion. Reform of the criminal justice system, judiciary, and incarceration facilities and personnel is also extremely critical and thus far missing. The United States needs to be prepared to fill gaps left by our coalition partners in the security sector reform process.

- **Afghan reconstruction and state-building must be hastened.** Despite the recent increases, Afghanistan has far greater needs and far less funding than Iraq. The international community should commit to delivering long-term aid (five years or more) at levels similar to those pledged at the Berlin Donor Conference. Moreover, donors should direct more money to projects managed by the Afghan government to aid in the development of Afghan institutional capacity.
- **The United States must continue to signal its firm commitment to remain engaged in Afghanistan for the long term (more than a decade).** This can, and should, be accomplished in multiple ways, including: a multi-year aid package, state visits from the president and other senior officials, a long-term base leasing agreement for Bagram and Kandahar, major investment from American firms, and congressional support for these initiatives.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> UN Office on Drugs and Crime, “World Drug Report 2004,” 59.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan, and Philip Wilkinson, “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan,” Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) Briefing Paper (June 2004), 5-6. United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan data from interviews by the author in Kabul during July 2004.

<sup>3</sup> For example see Stephen Graham, “Afghanistan Death Toll in 2004 Up to 957,” *Associated Press*, 3 October 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Troop levels of some 8,000 in early 2002 stabilized at around 11,000 until early 2004, when they ballooned to over 20,000 in order to allow expanded counter-insurgency operations in the less permissive southeastern and eastern areas.

<sup>5</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, available at [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int). See also Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan, and Philip Wilkinson, “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan,” Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) Briefing Paper (June 2004), 11.

<sup>6</sup> Confidential interview, UNAMA official, Kabul, Afghanistan, July 2004.

<sup>7</sup> For these numbers, see Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan, and Philip Wilkinson, “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan,” Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) Briefing Paper (June 2004).

<sup>8</sup> This estimate derived from multiple interviews with Afghan officials, UNAMA personnel, and knowledgeable foreign observers in Kabul during research trips in April and July 2004.

<sup>9</sup> “US opens new Afghan civil-military team to boost Karzai,” *Agence France Press*, 22 November 2003; “Secretary Rumsfeld Media Availability at Istanbul Summit,” Department of Defense Transcripts, 27 June 2004.

<sup>10</sup> A senior Afghan official suggested in a confidential interview in July 2004 that the overall impact of the PRTs, while positive, was minimal, and their overnight disappearance would have no impact on security.

<sup>11</sup> John Otis, “Afghanistan: the Other War; Military says its winning Afghan hearts, minds; But some groups say that aid work isn’t troops’ turf,” *The Houston Chronicle*, 5 September 2004; see also “Provincial Reconstruction Teams and the Security Situation in Afghanistan,” ACBAR (Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief) Policy Brief, 24 July 2003, available at [http://www.careusa.org/newsroom/specialreports/afghanistan/07242003\\_ACBAR.pdf](http://www.careusa.org/newsroom/specialreports/afghanistan/07242003_ACBAR.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Kaufman, “Treasury’s Taylor says goal is to complete projects by June elections,” *News From the Washington File*, 10 November 2003.

<sup>13</sup> UNAMA did manage to aid the Afghans in convening a successful Constitutional Loya Jirga in December 2003-January 2004 that produced Afghanistan’s new constitution.

<sup>14</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1510 (13 October 2003).

<sup>15</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, available at [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int). See also Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan, and Philip Wilkinson, “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan,” Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) Briefing Paper (June 2004), 11.

<sup>16</sup> See “ISAF augmentation in support of Afghanistan’s elections is complete” on <http://www.nato.int>. Accessed on 3 October 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan, and Philip Wilkinson, “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan,” Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) Briefing Paper (June 2004), 15; Gregg Zoroya, “Heavy Security surrounds Afghans’ historic vote,” *USA Today*, October 5, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Bhatia, Kevin Lanigan, and Philip Wilkinson, “Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan,” Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) Briefing Paper (June 2004), 17; and interviews with informed international observers and Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, Kabul, in July 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Krishnadev Calamur, “Ahead of Afghan vote, warlords are threat,” *United Press International*, 28 September 2004.

<sup>20</sup> UN Office on Drugs and Crime, “World Drug Report 2004,” Vol.2, 207, accessed at [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/WDR\\_2004/volume\\_2.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/WDR_2004/volume_2.pdf); T. Christian Miller, “Post-Invasion Chaos Blamed for Drug Surge,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 October 2004.



- <sup>21</sup> Larry P. Goodson, "Afghanistan in 2003: The Taliban Resurface and a Constitution is Born," *Asian Survey* 44(1), January/February 2004, 14-22.
- <sup>22</sup> Noted in many newspaper articles, such as "Election violence escalating in south Afghanistan: UN," *Associated Press*, 3 October 2004.
- <sup>23</sup> David Rohde, "Pakistan Vows to Stop Taliban; Westerners Scoff," *New York Times*, 24 August 2004.
- <sup>24</sup> First he attempted to appease them in the run-up to his presidential elections originally scheduled for summer 2004. When that failed and with elections pushed back to October, he changed tack and took the warlords on. See Pamela Constable, "Karzai Attempts Diplomacy with Afghan Warlords," *Washington Post*, 19 May 2004, A12; Carlotta Gall, "Karzai seen moving against warlords," *International Herald Tribune*, 5 May 2004.
- <sup>25</sup> Confidential interviews with senior Afghan government officials and foreign observers in Kabul during July 2004.
- <sup>26</sup> See *The Rule of the Gun: Human Rights Abuses and Political Repression in the Run-up to Afghanistan's Presidential Election*. Human Rights Watch Report, September 2004, 36-40, accessed at <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/afghanistan0904/afghanistan0904.pdf>.
- <sup>27</sup> Carlotta Gall, "Karzai trying to regain political backing," *New York Times*, 10 August 2004; "Some facts about Afghanistan's presidential election," *Associated Press*, 5 October 2004. As one of a handful of international monitors for Afghanistan's 2002 Loya Jirga elections, I know how much impact having an outside observer can have on the fairness of the process...and also how little we could do about intimidation that occurred away from the polling sites.
- <sup>28</sup> *The Rule of the Gun: Human Rights Abuses and Political Repression in the Run-up to Afghanistan's Presidential Election*. Human Rights Watch Report, September 2004, accessed at <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/afghanistan0904/afghanistan0904.pdf>.
- <sup>29</sup> Ratio numbers from Barnett R. Rubin, "Road to Ruin: Afghanistan's Booming Opium Industry," October 2004.
- <sup>30</sup> Confidential interviews with local officials and international observers, Kabul, July 2004; see also Stephen Graham, "Afghanistan Death Toll in 2004 Up to 957," *Associated Press*, 3 October 2004.
- <sup>31</sup> "U.S. General: Bin Laden Still Issuing Orders," *Associated Press*, 11 September 2004. Available at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5968186/>.
- <sup>32</sup> The Taliban have not been targeted by Pakistan as much as al Qaeda. See Phil Zabriskie, "Undeclared," *Time Asia*, 21 July 2003.
- <sup>33</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, "Road to Ruin: Afghanistan's Booming Opium Industry," October 2004; Paul Haven, "Afghan government blames drug smugglers for attack on interim president's running mate," *Associated Press*, 7 October 2004; UN Office on Drugs and Crime, "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2003," October 2003.
- <sup>34</sup> T. Christian Miller, "Post-Invasion Chaos Blamed for Drug Surge," *Los Angeles Times*, 4 October 2004.
- <sup>35</sup> *Berlin Declaration*. 1 April 2004. Accessed on 3 October 2004 at <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/UNID/C8639074EDD48B2285256E6E004A734F?OpenDocument>
- <sup>36</sup> Barnett Rubin, Humayun Hamidzada, and Abby Stoddard, "Through the Fog of Peacebuilding: Evaluating the Reconstruction of Afghanistan," Policy Brief (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2003), 1.
- <sup>37</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, "Redistribution and the State in Afghanistan," in *The Politics of Social Transformation in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan*, eds. Myron Weiner and Ali Banuazizi (Syracuse University Press, 1994), 192.

## **ABOUT THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS**

The Center for American Progress is a nonpartisan research and educational institute dedicated to promoting a strong, just and free America that ensures opportunity for all. We believe that Americans are bound together by a common commitment to these values and we aspire to ensure that our national policies reflect these values. We work to find progressive and pragmatic solutions to significant domestic and international problems and develop policy proposals that foster a government that is "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Center for American Progress  
1333 H Street NW, 10th Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
[www.americanprogress.org](http://www.americanprogress.org)