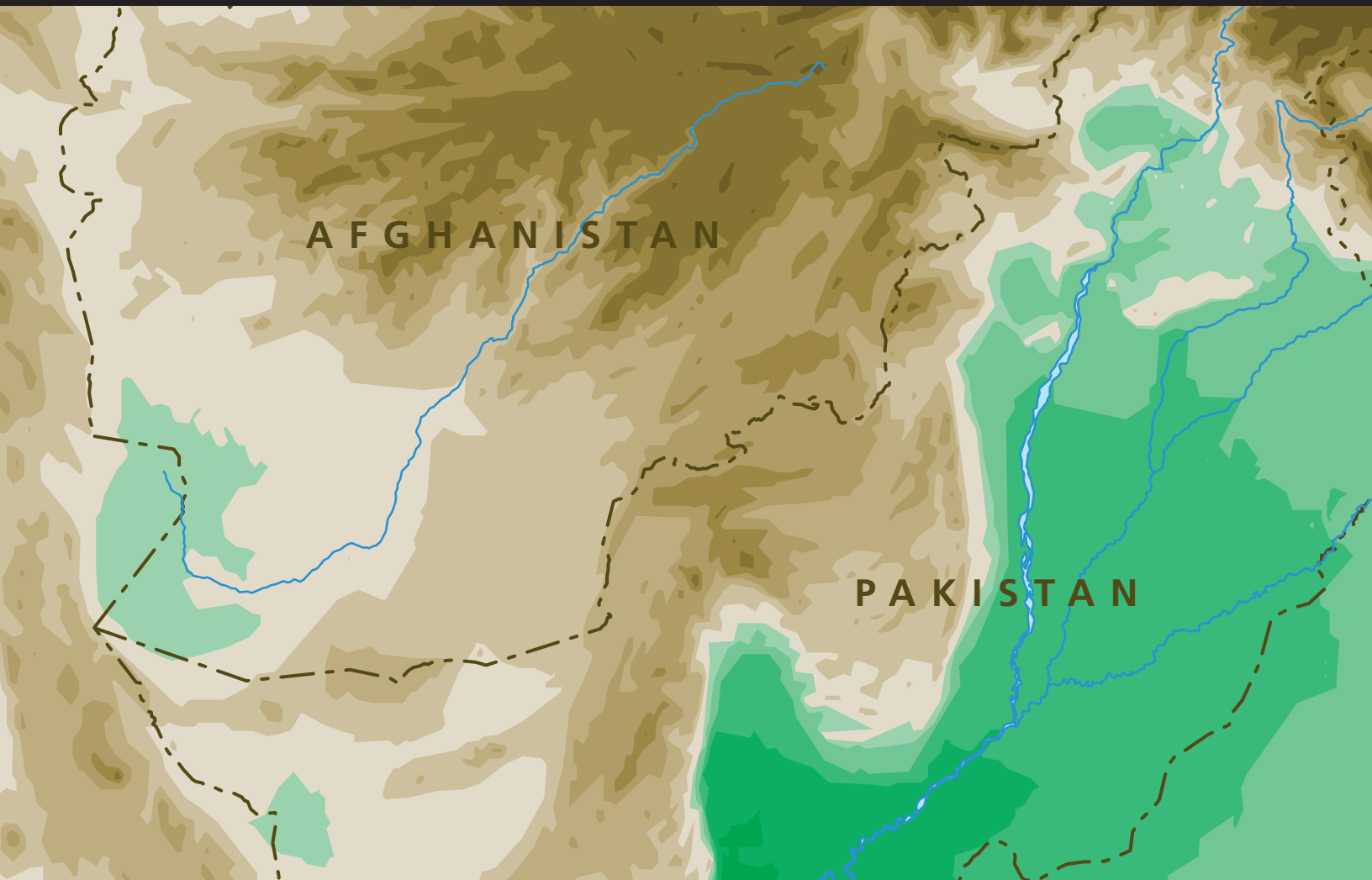


Center for American Progress



The Forgotten Front

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Progressive Ideas for a Strong, Just, and Free America

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The Forgotten Front

By Caroline P. Wadhams
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Six years after the United States led an invasion of Afghanistan to remove the Taliban from power and destroy Al Qaeda's safe haven, Afghanistan faces a growing insurgency that directly threatens its stability and the national security interests of the United States and its allies.

The United States and the international community initially made great strides to oust the Taliban and Al Qaeda and stand up the Afghan government following the invasion in October 2001, but the situation has dramatically deteriorated since 2005. The Taliban and Al Qaeda have regrouped in the borderlands of Pakistan and Afghanistan and are supporting the Afghan insurgency while strengthening their own capabilities. Although the current administration has portrayed Iraq as the central front of the "global war on terror," Afghanistan and the borderlands of Pakistan remain the central battlefield.

The United States must accomplish two central objectives in Afghanistan:

- Deny sanctuary to Al Qaeda and its affiliates.
- Build a stable, secure state that is not threatened by internal conflict and does not threaten its neighbors.

In order to meet these two objectives, the United States must change its current approach. It must fully implement a counterinsurgency framework for all of Afghanistan. All elements of U.S. policy in Afghanistan, including development and reconstruction assistance, support for rule of law, counternarcotics strategy, and military operations should be coordinated within this framework.

Counterinsurgency, as defined by the U.S. Military's Counterinsurgency Manual, is "military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency."¹ It is a battle over political power, as each side attempts to win over the population. All instruments of national power, not just the military, are used to support and strengthen the host government. Success in a counterinsurgency means that the people consent to the government's rule, and that the government provides security, rule of law, and social services, and enables the growth of economic activity.

The United States and its international partners have a window of opportunity to reverse the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. But it is closing rapidly. A failure to turn the situation around in the near future will allow Afghanistan to revert to a failed state that is a terrorist haven for Al Qaeda and affiliated terrorist networks. The process of stabilizing Afghanistan and effectively denying sanctuary to terrorist groups is not a quick process; it will take at least a decade. But success in Afghanistan is achievable, and would make the United States and its allies safer from terrorism. The United States, the Afghan government and the international community must therefore undertake the following as part of an effective counterinsurgency strategy:

1. Build Afghan Government Capacity

The Afghan government is unable to provide rule of law and services or meet its greatest threats because it is plagued with widespread corruption, an ineffective Ministry of Interior and police force, little to no control over the international community's actions within its borders, and declining legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan population.

In a counterinsurgency strategy, strengthening the government is one of the most crucial elements for success—to defeat the insurgency, the population must see that it is in their best interest to support a government. This will only occur if the government provides rule of law, public services, and security.

The United States should support the creation and implementation of a judicial sector strategy to address the absence of rule of law, support efforts to curtail corruption, reform the Afghan police force and Ministry of Interior, and make the Afghan government a true partner in this approach.

2. Increase Security

Security has deteriorated since 2005, and the insurgency is strengthening due to an insufficient number of international and Afghan troop levels, a lack of equipment, a misguided military strategy, a disjointed coalition, a growing recruiting pool for the insurgency, and a safe haven in Pakistan.

The United States should increase troop levels by approximately 20,000 by redeploying troops from Iraq to Afghanistan, shifting the military strategy fully to a counterinsurgency framework, reducing civilian casualties, strengthening the Afghan National Army, and unifying NATO's International Security Assistance Force and the United

States' separate Operation Enduring Freedom under one NATO command. All of these actions must be coordinated with civilian actors and integrated with other aspects of a counterinsurgency strategy.

3. Jumpstart Reconstruction

Reconstruction goals have not been met since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan due to inadequate coordination and implementation of a nationwide reconstruction strategy, insufficient funding, mismanagement of reconstruction monies, corruption, sidelining of the Afghan government, and growing insecurity.

The United States, the Afghan government, and the international community must utilize more effectively existing development frameworks, increase U.S. assistance for reconstruction and development projects by \$1 billion contingent on increased accountability and transparency of U.S. funds, allocate more funding through Afghan government trust funds, place the Afghan government in the lead of reconstruction, reform Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and provide more assistance on the local level and to other areas of the country besides the south.

4. Reduce Opium Production

Opium production has hit all time highs in Afghanistan; Afghanistan now supplies 93 percent of the world's opium. The current counternarcotics strategy, as pushed by the United States, is working at cross-purposes with counterinsurgency and counterterrorism objectives by focusing too heavily on the farmers and not the traffickers or leaders of the drug trade. The overall drug strategy must be reevaluated, higher-end actors in the drug trade must be targeted,

aerial eradication must be taken off the table, and alternative livelihood programs should be increased.

5. Remove the Terrorist Safe Haven in Pakistan

The Afghan insurgency and Al Qaeda have reconstituted themselves in the borderlands of Pakistan. The historical isolation and weakness of the Pakistani government in these areas are the central reasons that the haven has emerged. However, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's accommodation of extremist elements and miscalculated approach in the tribal areas, and an outdated U.S. policy toward Pakistan, have further contributed to the sanctuary's growth.

The United States must put much greater pressure on the government of Pakistan to disrupt the Taliban's and Al Qaeda's command and control, change the scope of U.S. assistance toward Pakistan, increase efforts to facilitate a political dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan, focus on economic development and strengthening governance in the borderlands of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and promote democracy in Pakistan.

The United States must work with the Afghan government and its international allies to implement a fundamental strategy shift in Afghanistan and Pakistan. By utilizing a counterinsurgency framework to focus on the five challenges addressed above, the United States and the international community can turn the situation around in Afghanistan.

This report will describe the challenges we face in Afghanistan in greater detail and make comprehensive recommendations for addressing each one. All of the challenges are linked, and recommendations

Afghanistan Is Not Iraq

U.S. ground troops are increasingly strained through extended operations in Iraq, and the American public is becoming disillusioned with military intervention throughout the world. The sinking ship of Iraq threatens to bring Afghanistan down with it. But Afghanistan is not Iraq.

Afghanistan and Iraq pose different challenges; the United States can accomplish its mission in Afghanistan because

- Afghanistan has a legitimate government led by President Hamid Karzai that is representative of its people, despite problems with corruption, lack of capacity, and an insufficient presence outside of Kabul. While Karzai's popularity has decreased since 2005, the majority of Afghan citizens are still supportive of his leadership.²
- A functioning parliament exists that is an effective counterweight to executive power in Afghanistan.
- A general consensus exists among Afghanistan's different ethnicities and communities over the government of Afghanistan.
- The United States is not alone in Afghanistan; 37 countries make up the NATO-International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, and the United Nations is also playing a strong role. The Afghan government and the international community have a shared agenda and set of goals, embodied by the Afghanistan Compact, which was negotiated by 53 countries in January 2006 and is supported by the Asian Development Bank, the G8 countries, the European Union, and the World Bank.³
- The Afghan National Army is loyal to the Afghan government and not to a specific sectarian group, and sectarian strife is not dividing the country.
- Polling of the Afghan people shows that majorities support an international troop presence and few support the Taliban.⁴ While these numbers vary regionally, and are lower in the south, the overall support is positive.
- While more should be done, progress has been made in reconstruction efforts, including the expansion of independent media and communications, and building roads.

in one section will apply to other sections. Creating an effective strategy will require simultaneous action on all elements presented here—the insurgency can only be defeated if governance and rule of law are strengthened, the Taliban-led insurgency is weakened on the battlefield, reconstruction progresses, the opium trade declines, and the Pakistani safe haven is dismantled.

AFGHANISTAN: WHAT IS AT STAKE

A defeat of the Taliban-led insurgency and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan is necessary for Afghanistan to become a stable, secure member of the international community. This mission also has wide

ramifications for the United States and its allies for the following reasons:

Al Qaeda Central is based in the borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan and threatens the United States, its allies, and its interests. From their sanctuary in Afghanistan in 2001, Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda trained for and organized the attacks of September 11. During the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, they were mostly driven from this base.

But Al Qaeda has reconstituted itself, and the borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan now serve as a territorial hub for Al Qaeda Central, the core leadership of Al Qaeda.⁵ While Al Qaeda has become a more dispersed, decentralized enemy since 2001, it now uses its sanctuary in the tribal areas of Pakistan to plan and launch attacks against Afghan, NATO-International Security Assistance Force, and U.S. forces in Afghanistan.⁶ This haven provides Al Qaeda with the space to train, recruit, and rebuild in order to achieve its objective of attacking the United States, its allies and interests.

The Afghan insurgency includes elements with purely local objectives—groups who hope to topple the Karzai government and establish control—but it also includes members that are directly linked to the international jihadist network of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda supports the Taliban and other insurgents by providing training, technical skills, manpower, and financing. A failed mission in Afghanistan could allow the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and its affiliates to gain control of a significant amount of territory in Afghanistan, or even to seize control of the entire state apparatus and operate with impunity.

Failure in Afghanistan would be a near-mortal strategic and psychological blow to U.S. efforts in the fight against international

terrorist networks and a tremendous boost to the global jihadist movement. Defeat for the United States and the international community would allow Al Qaeda to claim that it has defeated two superpowers in Afghanistan—the United States and the former Soviet Union—and that history is on its side.

Opium revenues in Afghanistan fund U.S. enemies, including Taliban and Al Qaeda. Afghanistan is the number one producer of opium in the world, providing approximately 93 percent of the world's opium.⁷ Opium revenues account for an estimated \$3.1 billion—approximately one-third to one-half of Afghanistan's total GDP. Despite increased U.S. engagement in counternarcotics operations, opium production has increased 34 percent in the last year.⁸

The drug traffickers and insurgents work hand-in-hand, benefiting from the insecurity and the absence of a governmental presence. Areas with high levels of poppy cultivation are also areas with high levels of conflict.⁹ The insurgents profit from the drug trade through taxing the drugs, preventing eradication, and protecting drug convoys.¹⁰ They may make anywhere from tens of millions of dollars to \$140 million from the drug trade, which then provides salaries and money for weapons and training, including the training of suicide bombers.¹¹

A weak or failed state in Afghanistan creates opportunities for illicit activity that undermines international security. The Afghan government is incredibly weak and plagued with corruption. Power vacuums present security challenges to the United States and the international community. Afghanistan's weakness allows terrorists to strengthen, criminal networks to grow and thrive, and infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, to spread unchecked.

Another failure of the Afghan state would lead to an escalation of these activities, and an increased threat to the region and to the world. September 11 taught the United States that its security is tied to events even in the remotest areas of the world, and that the forces embroiling Afghanistan have a direct effect on the security of the American people.

Instability is spreading into Pakistan.

While extremism and a safe haven in Pakistan feed the insurgency in Afghanistan, it is clear that Afghanistan's insurgency also threatens Pakistan's security. Al Qaeda and the Taliban have regrouped in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, or FATA of Pakistan, along the border with Afghanistan. As the Taliban has strengthened in FATA, its influence has begun to seep into the bordering Northwest Frontier Province and elsewhere in Pakistan. This is referred to as "Talibanization" and creates greater instability in Pakistan.

The Red Mosque, or Lal Masjid, incident of July 2007, in which Pakistani forces faced off in Islamabad with radical clerics and their followers who had seized the mosque, highlights the danger of growing extremism in Pakistan and its links to the border region. Some of the radical clerics occupying the mosque had connections with Al Qaeda and Taliban along the borderlands.¹² Immediately following the crackdown on the mosque, violence erupted in the borderlands and throughout the country, with more than 300 people killed in upheavals.¹³

A failure in Afghanistan would throw NATO's relevance into doubt. The credibility of NATO is at stake in Afghanistan. This is the first out-of-area mission for NATO, and it has committed to help "establish the conditions in which Afghanistan can enjoy...a representative government and self-sustaining peace and security."¹⁴

Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) declared, "If NATO does not prevail in Afghanistan, it is difficult to imagine the alliance undertaking another 'hard security' operation—in or out of area—and its credibility would suffer a grievous blow."¹⁵ NATO and other foreign officials have echoed these views, believing that if they fail to meet their stated commitments, they will be seen as unreliable and ineffective.

Afghanistan is most likely a precursor to the types of challenges that will confront the international community in the future: conflicts outside of Europe that require both the establishment of security and state-building efforts. NATO's failure to accomplish this in Afghanistan, where the political will was so strong initially, would not bode well for future NATO missions.

The United States has an opportunity to assist the Afghan people. During the 1980s, the United States spent billions of dollars funding and supplying sophisticated weapons to anti-communist forces, the mujahideen, in Afghanistan. When the USSR withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the administration of George H.W. Bush believed the United States had accomplished its mission and turned its back on Afghanistan, leaving Afghans to deal with a brutal civil war among various Afghan factions.

The Afghan people have suffered as a result of these proxy wars and the ensuing civil war. And their institutions and infrastructure were utterly destroyed during the fighting. Afghanistan is a desperately poor country, with the lowest development indicators of anywhere in the world. The Afghan population needs and seeks our help, and our intervention can make a difference if it is coordinated and large enough.

FAILURES IN THE U.S. APPROACH TO AFGHANISTAN

Since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, the Bush administration has fundamentally misread the situation in Afghanistan and failed to adapt quickly enough to the growing insurgency and shifting dynamics on the ground. Despite Afghanistan's direct link to the Sept. 11 at-

tacks, the Bush administration has not given sufficient priority to operations in Afghanistan as part of the larger fight against international terrorist networks. Instead, the administration has engaged in an exercise of "state-building on the cheap." Enemies intent on our destruction are in the meantime strengthening and rearming.¹⁶

The Bush administration committed too few troops and resources to Afghanistan

BUDGET AUTHORITY FOR IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, AND OTHER GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR (GWOT) OPERATIONS

FY2001–FY2007 Enacted Supplemental (CRS estimates in billions of budget authority)

BY OPERATION AND FUNDING SOURCE	FY01 & FY02 ^a	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	CUM. TOTAL ENACTED THRU FY07 SUPP.
Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)^b								
Department of Defense	0	0	50.0	56.4	82.5	98.2	130.6	417.7
Foreign Aid and Diplomatic Ops ^c	0	0	3.0	19.5	2.0	3.2	3.7	31.3
VA Medical ^d	0	0	0	0	0.2	0.4	0.9	1.6
Total: Iraq	0.0	0.0	53.0	75.9	84.7	101.7	135.2	450.4
Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)/Afghanistan and GWOT								
Department of Defense	9.0	11.0	14.0	12.4	18.0	17.9	34.7	116.9
Foreign Aid and Diplomatic Ops ^c	0.3	0.5	0.7	2.2	2.8	1.1	2.1	9.7
VA Medical ^d	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Total: OEF	9.3	11.5	14.7	14.5	20.8	18.9	36.7	126.7
Enhanced Security (Operation Noble Eagle)								
Department of Defense	7.0	6.0	8.0	3.7	2.1	0.8	0.5	28.1
Total: Enhanced Security^e	7.0	6.0	8.0	3.7	2.1	0.8	0.5	28.1
DOD Unallocated	0.0	0.0	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.5
All Missions								
Department of Defense	16.0	17.0	77.4	72.4	102.6	116.8	165.8	568.0
Foreign Aid and Diplomatic Ops ^d	0.3	0.5	3.7	21.7	4.8	4.3	6.3	41.0
VA Medical ^d	0	0	0	0	0.2	0.4	1.0	1.6
Total: All Missions	16.3	17.5	81.1	94.1	107.6	121.5	173.0	610.5

Notes and Sources: Numbers may not add due to rounding. Because DOD has not provided a breakdown by operation for all appropriations received, CRS estimates unobligated budget authority using past trends as shown in DOD's Defense Finance Accounting Service (DFAS) reports, *Supplemental & Cost of War Execution Reports*, through March 2007 and other information. Revisions in this update also reflect new DOD information in DOD, *FY2007 Emergency Supplemental Request for the Global War on Terror*, February 2007, p. 93; [http://www.dod.mil/comptroller/defbudget/fy2008/fy2007_supplemental/FY2007_Emergency_Supplemental_Request_for_the_GWOT.pdf]. CRS budget authority (BA) totals are higher than shown by DOD in Figure 1 in its FY2007 Supplemental Request because CRS includes all funding provided in supplementals, bridge funds or baseline appropriations for Iraq and the Global War on Terror as well as transfers from DOD's baseline funds for GWOT requirements, and enhanced security. CRS also splits the \$25 billion provided in the FY2005 Title IX bridge between the \$1.8 billion obligated in FY2004 and the remainder available for FY2005; all those funds are scored as FY2004 because they were available upon enactment in August 2005. Figures include funds provided in P.L. 107-38, the first emergency supplemental after 9/11, and funds allocated in P.L. 107-117. Foreign operations figures were prepared with the help of CRS analysts Larry Nowels, Connie Veillette, and Curt Tarnoff.

a. CRS combined funds for FY2001 and FY2002 because most were obligated in FY2002 after the 9/11 attacks at the end of FY2001.

b. DOD's new estimate for Iraq shows BA from FY2003 as \$48 billion, \$2 billion higher than reported by DFAS without identifying a source for these funds.

c. Foreign operations figures include monies for reconstruction, development and humanitarian aid, embassy operations, counter narcotics, initial training of the Afghan and Iraqi army, foreign military sales credits, and Economic Support Funds. For FY2007, CRS estimates reflect request; the State Department can set country levels under the FY2007 Continuing Resolution, HJ Res 20/P.L. 110-5.

d. Medical estimates reflect figures in VA's FY2008 budget justifications.

e. Known as Operation Noble Eagle, these funds provide higher security at DOD bases, support combat air patrol, and rebuilt the Pentagon.

The Bush administration has fundamentally misread the situation in Afghanistan and failed to adapt quickly enough to the growing insurgency and shifting dynamics on the ground.

from the beginning. With an aversion to nation-building and multilateralism, and overconfidence in a light footprint approach dictated by its fixation on military transformation, the Bush administration attempted to contract out U.S. national security policy to the cheapest bidder—making a bargain with Afghan warlords and initially refusing NATO's help. This approach helped empower human rights offenders and criminals in Afghanistan who had already lost their legitimacy with the Afghan people during the 1990s.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq further undermined the United States' ability to stabilize Afghanistan by diverting and consuming so much of our country's resources, manpower, and attention. Iraq has received five times the assistance of Afghanistan despite Afghanistan's equivalent population and larger landmass—24 million Afghans compared with 27 million Iraqis and 647,000 square kilometers of land in Afghanistan versus 437,000 in Iraq—plus the presence of a functioning government and a more permissive aid environment.^{17, 18}

About 170,000 U.S. troops are deployed to Iraq, compared to only 25,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. Beginning in 2003, the United States began transferring intelligence assets, Special Forces, and equipment to Iraq; and the insurgency in Afghanistan began to rebuild, steadily increasing in strength every year.

The United States has compounded the problem by overemphasizing military solutions in its approach to Afghanistan. It has spent as much as \$127 billion on Operation Enduring Freedom since October 2001, but the vast majority of this assistance has gone toward military operations in Afghanistan, not reconstruction or development.¹⁹

The United States intends to provide \$9 billion in aid to Afghanistan in 2007, but again, most of this money will go to security assistance, not development or reconstruction. Ultimately security would be enhanced if the United States, NATO, and the Afghan government focused more resources on non-military efforts, including bolstering the capacity of the Afghan government, strengthening rule of law, accelerating development and reconstruction assistance, and focusing on regional diplomacy.

PRINCIPLES FOR A CHANGE IN STRATEGY

Combating terrorism and building a stable, secure Afghanistan requires the implementation of a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy. The United States should take the lead in developing this strategy in consultation with the Afghan government and the international community and provide resources, expertise, and a commit-

ment to assist Afghanistan. All elements of U.S. policy, including development and reconstruction assistance, support for rule of law, counternarcotics strategy, and military operations must be incorporated into this framework.

Counterinsurgency, as defined by the U.S. Military's most recent Counterinsurgency Manual, uses all instruments of national power to support and strengthen the government and defeat the insurgency, including political, economic, social, information, and military components.²⁰ Counterinsurgency is a battle over political power, as each side attempts to win over the population. Success in a counterinsurgency means that the people consent to the government's rule, that the government provides security, rule of law, and social services, and that the government enables the growth of economic activity. The military component is *not* the primary instrument.²¹

If the mission is to succeed, the United States must refocus its efforts and dramatically increase its commitment to Afghanistan. This means exercising real leadership, increasing resources and troop levels, and changing our approach.

The United States and the international community need to confront five major challenges:

- Weaknesses in the Afghan government
- Deteriorating security
- Stalled reconstruction
- Increasing opium production
- The terrorist safe haven in Pakistan

The principles of counterinsurgency strategy should guide the United States and the

international community in confronting these challenges and developing a new strategy for Afghanistan.²² These principles are:

Military strategies must be coordinated with civilian objectives within a counterinsurgency framework. The fundamental threat to Afghanistan is from a strengthening insurgency, not Al Qaeda; Al Qaeda serves only a supporting role in the insurgency. Counterterrorism operations, while essential, must be placed within a counterinsurgency framework.

Military and civilian strategies must be more effectively harmonized, so that the military strategy supports long-term civilian goals. Pursuing counterterrorism strategies that alienate the population, such as conducting airstrikes that result in large numbers of civilian casualties, undermines security in the long term and strengthens the insurgency. As the U.S. Military's Counterinsurgency Manual states, "Sometimes, the more force used, the less effective it is."²³

Building rule of law and strong, accountable governance must be top priorities. State-building was initially an afterthought for the United States and the international mission. However, the international community has learned that for the long-term stability of Afghanistan, building a strong, accountable state is essential.

A secure, functioning state will assist in defeating terrorist groups in Afghanistan in the long term and weaken the insurgency. Afghans long for justice and will only view their government as legitimate if it provides rule of law. The lawlessness and corruption of the Afghan government are often cited by Afghans as reasons for their disillusionment with the Afghan government and their growing sympathy for the Taliban. Security will only be possible if there is a functioning court system where criminal

elements can be prosecuted and punished and where grievances can be resolved.

Unfortunately, the international community, and especially the United States, does not have the systems and organizations in place to undertake state building effectively. It requires deep cultural understanding, a long-term perspective, and political knowledge of the Afghan context.²⁴ That is why it is vital that the United States work closely with the international community, who have many of the state-building skills the United States lacks, as well as with the Afghan people to give them the support they need to lead the effort.

The Afghan population must be at the center of the mission. A long-term strategy for security depends on increasing the capacity of the Afghan government and the support of the Afghan people for the government. The Afghan government and its people are ultimately responsible for their country. The United States cannot be in the driver's seat forever in Afghanistan, nor should it be.

All approaches must be coordinated with the Afghan government, and policies should place the Afghans' well-being above the political concerns of contributing countries, as demonstrated by the different visions of how to implement an effective counternarcotics strategy. Furthermore, public information campaigns should occur on a regular basis at all levels of society to keep all Afghans informed and involved.

Improving coordination among the numerous actors is essential. More than 37 countries, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations are working with the Afghan government and the United States to help stabilize and rebuild Afghan institutions and infrastructure. This participation of the international community has been both a blessing and a challenge for Afghanistan, as countries and international organizations have too often worked in their bureaucratic stovepipes without sufficient coordination.

The United States must assist in creating “strategic coherence,” where there is a shared overall strategic plan, “which is not an aggregate of every single country which has an interest in this...”²⁵ As the U.S. Military's Counterinsurgency Manual states, “Unity of effort must be present at every echelon of a COIN operation. Otherwise, well-intentioned but uncoordinated actions can cancel each other or provide vulnerabilities for insurgents to exploit.”²⁶ One way to provide increased coordination is to create a high-profile special envoy to represent the international community—both military and civilian—with the Afghan government.

The United States must have a regional approach. Afghanistan cannot be dealt with in isolation from Pakistan, Iran, and India. For too long, the current administration has attempted to approach Afghanistan in a vacuum, not recognizing the roles—often simultaneously positive and negative—played by Afghanistan's neighbors.

If the mission is to succeed, the United States must refocus its efforts and dramatically increase its commitment to Afghanistan.

The United States must change its policy toward Pakistan. For example, it will be important to address perceptions within Pakistan's security forces that India is using Afghanistan as a proxy on its western flank in order to increase Pakistani cooperation in Afghanistan. Furthermore, U.S. policy toward Iran must better coordinate its conflicting interests—to stop the further development of Iran's nuclear program while simultaneously seeking Iran's help in stabilizing and rebuilding Afghanistan and Iraq.

CHALLENGE ONE: WEAKNESSES IN THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT

Afghanistan has never had a strong central government; its institutions have not provided sufficient services for its people, nor has it ever had a monopoly on the use of force. Throughout its history, other countries such as Great Britain, the Soviet Union, Iran, and Pakistan have meddled in its politics and territory to pursue their own national interests.

During the 1980s, the United States also followed this tradition of foreign intervention, as it supplied funding and weaponry to the mujahideen—Afghan anti-Soviet forces—during their battle against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The extremist regime of the Taliban emerged in the mid-1990s in Afghanistan as a response to the anarchy, poverty, and corruption of Afghanistan's previous governments. The Taliban instituted a severe form of sharia law in Afghanistan, imposing harsh restrictions on Afghan society and women in particular. Beginning in 1996, the Taliban began to harbor Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, who organized and conducted the attacks of Sept. 11 from within Afghanistan.

In the immediate aftermath of the U.S. invasion, when most of the Taliban and Al Qaeda were chased from Afghanistan, great progress was made in establishing a representative Afghan government. A constitution was created, and both the parliament and President Karzai were elected in democratic elections.

But since these first steps, the Afghan government has not developed sufficient capacity to lead or create change. The Karzai government continues to have little control or presence outside of Kabul and therefore cannot maintain security or provide services and the rule of law in areas outside the capital. Subnational government structures are weak, and warlords and local mafia have stepped into the power vacuum, exploiting the populations under their control.

One of the greatest failures in Afghanistan's governance is the absence of rule of law, a crucial issue for the Afghan government's legitimacy. Basic lawlessness pervades the country, and Afghanistan lacks judges, lawyers, and a competent police force. Since the invasion, the Afghan government and the international community have not established a comprehensive strategy for the rule of law, thereby leaving its development stunted and poorly coordinated.²⁷ The judicial sector received about 3 percent of security sector expenditures—excluding counternarcotics efforts—from 2003 to 2005.²⁸ At the July 2007 Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan, the Afghan government committed itself to developing a national justice sector strategy, but has made little progress to date.

In the meantime, informal and traditional judicial structures continue to partially fill the gap in Afghanistan. Jirgas and shuras—traditional decision-making assemblies—are estimated to account for more



Afghan women, clad in burqas, walk along a street in Kabul. Despite advances in women's rights since the fall of the Taliban regime, most Afghan women still opt to don the all-enveloping cloak. (AP Photo/Farzana Wahidy)

than 80 percent of cases settled in Afghanistan.²⁹ These informal mechanisms can and do play a positive role since they are more accessible, efficient, and trusted than formal mechanisms. But they also have serious problems; women have no decision-making role in them and male elders dominate, and some settlements violate Afghan state laws, sharia, and human rights.³⁰

Where informal and formal mechanisms do not exist, lawlessness reigns, especially outside of the capital. In these areas, insurgents

have made inroads, especially in southern and eastern Afghanistan.³¹ The Taliban also runs courts in the areas it controls.³²

Women continue to suffer under the general lawlessness. While the Afghan government is publicly committed to promoting the advancement of women, women still experience domestic violence, forced marriages, and roadblocks to education and economic opportunities. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs registered close to 2,000 incidents of sexual and gender-based violence in 2006.³³ Fifty-seven percent of girls are married before the legal age of 16.³⁴

Attacks on girls' schools and athletic facilities have also increased, and the chief of the Women's Affairs Ministry branch in Qandahar was assassinated in September 2006.³⁵

The Afghan security forces have very few women in their ranks. Only 118 women, or less than 1 percent, were trained out of 71,147 police who received training by July 2007.³⁶ In a society where many women are not allowed to speak to men outside of their family, especially in rural areas, this dearth of females in the police mean that women have few channels to voice their concerns or seek help.

Some small steps have been taken since 2001 to strengthen the judicial system. Judges and attorneys have been trained, prisons have been built and rehabilitated, and President Karzai recently appointed a new Chief Justice for Afghanistan's Supreme Court and a new Attorney General. The U.S. State Department believes that this Attorney General is "pursuing corruption investigations against politically sensitive targets."³⁷ But many believe he has not done nearly enough.

The Afghan government is unable to lead or enforce the rule of law because of endemic corruption at all levels of government, an ineffective police force, little or no control over the international community's actions, and a declining legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people.

These difficulties are both causes and results of the government's weakness and must be addressed in order to strengthen governance and rule of law. Former Commander of the Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan, General Karl Eikenberry summarized the situation well, stating in June 2006, "The enemy we face is not particularly strong, but the institutions of the Afghan State remain relatively weak."³⁸

The International Community's Marginalization of the Afghan Government

The international community has consistently worked outside of the Afghan government, even supporting warlords and other individuals with funding and arms instead of the government itself.³⁹ This has undermined the Afghan government's ability to build its capacity to provide services and rule of law.

Only a small percentage of aid has gone through the Afghan government's budget and Afghanistan's trust funds (financial accounts through which donors can channel their assistance for specific Afghan priorities); the majority is funneled directly by individual donor countries into their pet projects. The United Nations and other partners have also created organizations that parallel the Afghan government. This has led to redundant efforts, conflicting approaches to problems, loss of credibility in the government in the opinion of the Afghan people, and minimal transparency

and monitoring. The result is that little progress has been made in building the Afghan state or in defeating the insurgency.

What's worse, the international community has pursued policies that often conflict with Afghan priorities. One example is the U.S. pressure to conduct aerial eradication to combat drugs despite the opposition of Afghan leaders and NATO member countries. Karzai's desperate pleading with U.S. and NATO forces to stop killing Afghan civilians as they attempt to combat the insurgency is another chilling example of the Afghan government's marginalization by the international community and the Afghan government's inability to coordinate or check the actions of outsiders in Afghanistan.

To a certain extent, it is understandable that the international community has channeled money outside of the Afghan government because of the Afghan government's lack of capacity and problems with corruption. Yet mechanisms such as trust funds are in place. These accounts fund Afghan priorities in coordination with the Afghan government and are overseen by international actors.

Trust funds provide clear goals and timelines.⁴⁰ For example, the Law and Order Trust Fund, which is managed by the United Nations Development Programme, primarily supports police salaries, but also provides funding for non-lethal equipment; construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of police facilities; gender orientation, or the selection, recruitment, and training of police; and institutional development and reform of the Ministry of Interior.⁴¹

The National Solidarity Program is another important and productive model for international donor assistance. Created by the Government of Afghanistan to "develop the ability of Afghan communities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their own devel-

opment projects,” it is monitored by NGOs and the international community and has shown real results at the local level.⁴² Based in 34 provinces, it disburses aid through local governing councils.

The Afghan government and the international community have already committed to implementing a plan for Afghanistan, entitled the Afghanistan Compact, in which the Afghan government and the international community coordinate their efforts in the areas of security, governance, rule of law, human rights, economic and social development, and counternarcotics.

Approximately 60 countries, including the United States and several international organizations, agreed to the compact in 2006. The donor community agreed to increase the proportion of donor assistance directly through the Afghan core budget and the trust funds. When they moved outside of these funding streams, the international community committed to align funding with the priorities of the Afghan government, use Afghan partners in its implementation, and consult with the Afghan government.

Yet the United States has put only a very small amount of its funding through the trust funds or the core budget of the government of Afghanistan. Out of approximately \$21 billion that the United States has spent on reconstruction and security assistance in Afghanistan since 2001, less than 2 percent, or \$283 million, was given to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. The British have paid nearly \$440 million to that fund.⁴³

Widespread Corruption

While levels of corruption vary by location, sector, and ministry in the Afghan government, corruption is endemic and

undermines the government’s effectiveness. The combination of drug money and international aid with historically weak institutions has created massive opportunities for corruption.

Afghanistan now ranks in the 2nd or 3rd lowest percentile of distribution on the index used by the World Bank to calculate corruption. Integrity Watch released a survey in March 2007, which found that half of the 1,250 people polled across the country had paid bribes in the previous year and almost all perceive that one in every two people employed in government or public service is corrupt.⁴⁴ This subversion of state authority has undermined the provision of security and services and weakened popular faith in the government.

Corruption is particularly pervasive in law enforcement and counternarcotics work. Drug interests have compromised some agencies at the local and provincial level, and drug money permeates every level of the government.⁴⁵ The Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for law enforcement, is “notoriously corrupt, factionalized, and a major player in the illegal drug economy.”⁴⁶ It is believed that a small group of individuals controls the drug trade, but that they are connected to the politically powerful in Afghanistan or hold politically important positions themselves.⁴⁷ Furthermore, police and militias in Afghanistan are known to be extremely corrupt, meting out arbitrary justice to vulnerable communities.⁴⁸

President Karzai himself has contributed to the corruption problem with some of the appointments he has made. He has appointed corrupt individuals to key positions throughout his government, especially at the senior level in the provinces, thereby undermining the state-building effort. In response to riots against U.S. troops in May 2006, he appointed a strong local

commander, Amanullah Guzar, to be police chief of Kabul despite his links to organized crime. He also gave senior police posts to former warlords and human rights abusers, including Baseer Salangi and Ghulam Mustafa.⁴⁹ While this may have been necessary initially to co-opt the enemies of the state, it has now proven to be counter-productive for governance.

Ineffective Ministry of Interior and Afghan National Police

While many Afghan Ministries are in need of reform, the Ministry of Interior is the highest priority. The Afghan National Police, run by the Ministry of Interior, has been marred by corruption and incompetence despite the central role it must play to ensure stability and justice for Afghanistan.

According to one report, “Afghanistan’s citizens often view the police more as a source of fear than security.”⁵⁰ No one knows the exact number of police on duty in Afghanistan, but 71,147 police received training by July 2007.⁵¹ They are projected to increase to 82,000 by 2008.⁵² The ANP still has an insufficient presence in rural districts, and where it does exist, it is often perceived to be corrupt, abusive, and lacking discipline.⁵³

The international community’s “competing and conflicting visions of reform”⁵⁴ have undermined the strength and reformation of the police force. The U.S. government tends to view the police as an auxiliary military force and has placed its training under the Department of Defense.⁵⁵ The U.S. government has also been trying to stand up the ANP as quickly as possible and envisions a paramilitary-type force that conducts counterterrorism operations. The Germans and Europeans seek a longer-term approach of growing a police force that is more along the

lines of a civil force. These differing philosophies lead to significant dissonance in efforts and activities on the ground.

The Karzai government also created a minimally trained Afghanistan National Auxiliary Police in 2006 to supplement the existing police force, especially in the south, as an inelegant quick fix for the six southern provinces most endangered by the insurgency.⁵⁶ However, problems also exist with these forces. It appears that the Afghan government and international community are in fact arming local militias, who receive little training or oversight.⁵⁷



Afghan President Hamid Karzai speaks during a meeting with Afghan governors at the Presidential palace in Kabul. (AP Photo/Shah Marai, Pool)

The Government's Declining Legitimacy

Afghans have become increasingly disillusioned with President Karzai since his election in October 2004 because there has been little progress in rule of law, economic development, or reconstruction.⁵⁸ They have seen former warlords and commanders, who were largely discredited prior to the U.S. invasion, return to power and dominate the new governmental institutions.

A 2006 CIA estimate stated that the Afghan population increasingly believed that the Afghan government was weak and corrupt, and a December 2006 poll found that more than three-quarters of Afghans considered corruption a problem in their area.^{59, 60} A 2007 report by Integrity Watch Afghanistan found that 60 percent of its Afghan respondents thought that the Karzai government was more corrupt than the Taliban, mujahideen, or Communist periods of rule, and that corruption contributed to a sense of disaffection towards the state.⁶¹

Future support for the Karzai government will depend on its ability to provide justice, services, infrastructure, and security. The declining legitimacy of the Afghan government is driving some Afghans into the arms of the insurgents.

Weak Governance at the Local Level

Governance is especially weak at the local level and is plagued by former warlords, corrupt officials, and even drug traffickers. Because of failures in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs, many regional warlords continue to possess local militias, which has allowed them to maintain their political power and force their way into the new democratic institutions.

The Karzai government still lacks the political will and capacity to increase accountability and service provision at the local level. Thus, the Afghan people suffer from the predatory practices of their officials and are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the current mission. The Taliban have successfully exploited these grievances to their own advantage.

Recommendations for Strengthening Governance and the Rule of Law

Combating the narcotics trade, increasing security, and improving the lives of Afghans will not be possible without a strong, accountable, responsive government that has a monopoly on the use of force and the ability to provide services and enforce the rule of law.

The Bush administration and the international community have for too long seen strong governance and rule of law as afterthoughts. It is increasingly clear that these two areas are fundamental for long-term security in Afghanistan. The police cannot function if they do not have jails or an ability to prosecute; the opium trade cannot be curtailed if there are no legal economic opportunities; and the insurgency will strengthen if Afghans feel there is no security under the current government and turn to insurgents for protection.

The following steps are required to strengthen the Afghan government and rule of law:

Make the Afghan government a true partner in the effort to stabilize and rebuild while increasing accountability.

- **Place the Afghan government at the center of the international community's efforts.** Whether the United

States, NATO, or the U.N. are working on counternarcotics policy, counterterrorism efforts, or reconstruction, policymakers must always consult with the Afghan government. This will empower them in the long-term.

- **Channel more funding through Afghan government trust funds.** The United States and other donors should attempt to channel more assistance through the trust funds, which are overseen and coordinated by international actors in coordination with the Afghan government, such as The Law and Order Trust Fund, the Counternarcotics Trust Fund, and the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. These funds are overseen by the international community, increase coordination between the international community and Afghan government, and provide benchmarks and timelines.⁶²

- **Create auditing mechanisms within the trust funds.** The international community should strengthen accountability mechanisms within trust funds by creating auditing functions to ensure that abuse does not occur with international donor funds and that offenders are prosecuted.

- **Allocate more resources to government at the local level.** The international community should support strengthening and improving subnational governance, which is where most of the governing has occurred throughout Afghan history. Programs like the National Solidarity Program should be supported.

- **Expand pockets of competence within the Afghan government.** The United States should implement a major interagency effort in coordination with the international community to undertake the wide-scale training of individuals within the Afghan government. Creating

an environment where people learn how to do their jobs effectively will assist in developing sustainable institutions. In the short term, this may mean loaning more civilians from the international community to work alongside Afghans as they perform their jobs in the bureaucracy.⁶³

- **Support institutions of the Afghan government, rather than specific leaders.** The United States and the international community have over-emphasized support for President Karzai the individual rather than the democratic institutions that he leads. The United States and the international community need to invest in emerging political leadership and place more pressure on President Karzai to remove corrupt officials and implement needed governance reforms.⁶⁴

Address corruption at all levels of the government.

- **Assist in the development of a national anti-corruption strategy.** The international community should support the Afghan government in developing a national anti-corruption strategy. The Afghanistan National Development Strategy, which is scheduled for release in March 2008, is expected to include this strategy. This must include concrete anti-corruption steps for the Afghan government to take, such as requiring that government officials declare their assets publicly. The Afghan government should establish a high-level committee to implement this strategy and coordinate efforts across the Afghan government.
- **Encourage the Afghan government to ratify the U.N. Convention Against Corruption.** Afghanistan has signed the U.N. Convention Against Corruption, but it has not yet ratified it, despite the fact that it is an Afghanistan

Compact benchmark and President Karzai has pledged to do so. Once ratified, some of Afghanistan's laws will need to be changed to be consistent with the convention.⁶⁵

- **Strengthen the General Independent Administration for Anti-Corruption.** Afghanistan established a specialized anti-corruption agency, the GIAAC, in 2004. This agency has been hampered by a lack of political will, insufficient resources and autonomy, and an unclear mandate. The agency's responsibilities need to be clarified, and more support should be provided to build its capacity and independence. The United States and the international community should pressure President Karzai and other Afghan leaders to increase their support for the agency and appoint strong leadership.⁶⁶
- **Establish and strengthen mechanisms for the public to file complaints against the Afghan government.** The General Independent Administration of Anti-Corruption needs stronger complaint mechanisms to channel complaints and feedback from the public, and other government agencies need to implement such mechanisms. Afghans should have opportunities to comment on public service provisions, such as electric power, water, and health care.⁶⁷
- **Pressure President Karzai to utilize the Afghanistan Advisory Board on Senior Appointments and remove the most corrupt leaders.** The Karzai government should make better use of the commission overseeing senior appointments—the Advisory Board for Political Appointments. The United States and international community must increase their pressure on Karzai to begin removing the most corrupt govern-

ment officials in the police, parliament, and government ministries immediately.

Reform the Ministry of Interior and the Afghan National Police.

- **Reform the Ministry of Interior.** The Afghan national police force is run by the Ministry of Interior, which is corrupt and ineffective. The Ministry of Interior's Internal Affairs department, which includes an anti-corruption unit, must be strengthened. Greater monetary and intellectual resources should be provided to this unit at all levels of government with accountability measures in place.
- **Reconcile competing visions among the international community for the Afghan police.** The various international actors involved in police reform have approached training the police with divergent philosophies. A coherent strategy needs to be created—one that recognizes that in certain regional areas, such as the south, the police may need more paramilitary training and better equipment.⁶⁸
- **Enhance oversight of the Afghan National Police.** The international community and the Afghan government should create national-level and provincial community police liaison boards to advise and inform the police on community needs, as well as create an independent police ombudsman to investigate police abuse.⁶⁹
- **Increase civilian mentors.** The international community must provide more civilian mentors for the police force and the Ministry of Interior.
- **Increase the number of females in the Afghan National Police.** Only 118 women were trained for the Afghan police by July 2007, out of 71,147 people.⁷⁰ The United States and international

community should make recruiting more women into the police force a higher priority. This will allow the ANP to better address family and domestic disputes and assist female Afghans in general. This includes supporting initiatives to encourage female students to join the Kabul Police Academy, as well as the efforts by the Women's Police Corps to recruit and train more female officers and to provide culturally appropriate police facilities."⁷¹

Strengthen the rule of law.

- **Create and support a judicial sector strategy for addressing the absence of the rule of law in Afghanistan.**

The Afghan government committed to develop a national judicial sector strategy at the conclusion of the July 2007 Rome Conference on the Rule of Law in Afghanistan. This included an international donor commitment of approximately \$360 million to support the effort.⁷² The United States and other countries should meet their commitments.

- **Utilize the informal sector more effectively to bolster the rule of law.** Land and property disputes can be resolved through a combination of informal and formal mechanisms: the informal system—jirgas and shuras—can provide local knowledge and mediation,

and the formal system can record and enforce agreements. The Afghan government should define the areas in which the non-state system can play a positive role in administering justice and work to strengthen it.⁷³ Institutionalizing a “hybrid model of Afghan justice” should be explored, as proposed by the UN Development Programme. People would have the choice to take civil cases and minor criminal cases to these informal institutions; a human rights unit would then review decisions made outside of the formal justice system to ensure they comply with Afghan and international laws.⁷⁴

Support efforts to increase legal protections for women and their participation in government.

- **Strengthen Afghan laws related to violence against women and increase legal access for women.**

Afghan women desperately need greater access to legal channels. The United States should support the efforts of the United Nations and others to document sexual and gender-based violence, provide legal advice to Afghan women, and create referral centers for reporting abuses and prosecuting perpetrators.⁷⁵ The international community should also support the creation of tougher laws to punish sexual abuse crimes, including domestic abuse.⁷⁶

Future support for the Karzai government will depend on its ability to provide justice, services, infrastructure, and security. The declining legitimacy of the Afghan government is driving some Afghans into the arms of the insurgents.

- **Support public education on the rights of women.** The United States and the international community should support the Afghan government's efforts to conduct campaigns that increase understanding about women's rights, forced marriages, and the illegality of violence against women.⁷⁷ One mechanism for education is women's centers, which the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs has begun to establish. These efforts should be supported.⁷⁸
- **Increase the participation of Afghan women in government.** Women make up 27 percent of the National Assembly—91 out of 351 seats—but there are no female cabinet members, and fewer than 10 percent of employees in 17 out of 36 government ministries are female.⁷⁹ The United States should support efforts to increase the involvement of Afghan women in the political process.

CHALLENGE TWO: DETERIORATING SECURITY

Security in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate, and the insurgency has become stronger during the past two years. Last year was the deadliest year on record since the invasion in 2001, with more than 4,000 people killed.

Afghans feel less safe today than they did in 2005.⁸⁰ So far in 2007, more than 5,200 people have died in insurgency-related violence, including 750 civilians.⁸¹ And suicide and roadside bombings were up 25 percent in spring 2007.⁸² Although the United States and NATO-International Security Assistance Force have captured and killed some key Taliban leaders such as Mullah Dadullah Lang, who was killed on

May 14, 2007, the insurgency has not lost its capacity to commit violent acts.

The insurgency is made up of numerous factions who coordinate their combat operations despite holding different objectives.⁸³ The Taliban is the strongest element of the insurgency, although U.S. military commanders are unsure of its exact size.⁸⁴ The Taliban are the de facto authority in much of the Pashtun south and east, where violence has been largely focused. However, it has recently begun to spread to formerly peaceful areas in the north.⁸⁵

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the Taliban has evolved from a fundamentalist religious group with narrow objectives in Afghanistan to a more sophisticated and diverse force with international goals, increased networks, and more sophisticated weaponry and tactics. In 2003 the Taliban operated in squad-sized units, but it now operates in battalion-sized units of more than 400 men—evidence of its growing strength.⁸⁶

The Jalaluddin Haqqani network, or HQN; the Hizb-i-Islami network, led by Afghan Islamist Gulbuddin Hekmatyar; foreign jihadists; and Pakistani militants are also all part of the insurgency.⁸⁷

Al Qaeda supports the insurgency by teaching tactics such as suicide bombings and the use of improvised explosive devices.⁸⁸ Suicide bombings, an Al Qaeda tactic, were never seen before 2001 in Afghanistan. Yet they jumped five-fold from 21 in 2005 to 139 in 2006, and they have increased by an additional 69 percent so far in 2007.⁸⁹ Al Qaeda has also used video images to recruit, train, and galvanize supporters and insurgents.⁹⁰

The strengthening of the insurgency and the international and Afghan security forces' inability to establish effective control

in most of Afghanistan is due to a number of factors, including: a flawed military approach by the United States, an insufficient number of international and local troops, weak Afghan security forces, a disjointed coalition, a growing recruiting pool, and the safe haven in Pakistan.

The Wrong Military Strategy

The fundamental security challenge in Afghanistan is an insurgent challenge, not a terrorist challenge. In 2003 the commander of U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan, Lt. General David Barno, rightly began to shift the strategy from counterterrorism, which focuses on military combat, to a counterinsurgency framework, which focuses on winning over the population. Provincial Reconstruction Teams became the linchpin for this strategy. Yet the United States has not gone far enough in embracing key elements of counterinsurgency doctrine, including strengthening the Afghan government, securing the population, and winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan population.

U.S. counterterrorism operations have often occurred outside of a larger strategic framework of counterinsurgency and have been inadequately coordinated with long-term strategic goals. For example, NATO and U.S. forces have faced fierce criticism for the deaths and injuries of civilians as a result of their military operations in Afghanistan. According to the Associated Press, 750 Afghan civilians have died thus far in 2007 compared with 1,000 in all of 2006.⁹¹ NGO reports and data indicate that since the beginning of 2007, international and Afghan government forces have been responsible for the deaths of at least 230 civilians, and the AP raises this estimate to 314 civilians.⁹² These civilian casualties are beginning to cause the Af-

ghan people to resent not only the central government, but also the U.S. military and NATO-ISAF.⁹³

Retired Army General Barry McCaffrey has called for a goal of “zero innocent civilian casualties—even where this means Taliban units escape destruction by hiding among the people.”⁹⁴ The reasons for these civilian casualties are numerous, and must be dramatically reduced on all fronts. Two major factors contributing to the high casualty rates are that insurgents appear to be using civilians as human shields, and U.S. and NATO troops are using large-scale conventional military operations and airstrikes.

Part of the problem is that NATO-ISAF and the U.S. military do not have a sufficient number of troops, nor do they have an adequate number who are trained to conduct counterinsurgency missions, such as Special Forces, rather than units trained for conventional combat. Populations in NATO-ISAF countries also have low tolerance for their own casualties, and therefore commanders on the ground are often forced to call in less precise airstrikes rather than allow their troops to engage in close combat in which ISAF troops would be more vulnerable.

The continued support of the Afghan people is critical to success in Afghanistan. Approval of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, while still high, has declined significantly in the past year. In October 2005, 68 percent of Afghans rated the work of the United States as “good” or “excellent;” by October 2006, this number had dropped to 57 percent.⁹⁵

President Karzai has repeatedly called for an end to these killings without effect. In May, the upper house of the Afghan parliament was so disturbed by the casualties that it “called for an end to offensive military operations by foreign troops and for dialogue

with the Taliban.”⁹⁶ Recognizing that further civilian death undermines Afghan support for the international presence, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer urged NATO countries in June 2007 to lower civilian casualties in Afghanistan.⁹⁷

Inadequate International Troop Levels and Equipment

Afghanistan was provided with insufficient U.S. and international forces from the very beginning, which has made it impossible to provide security for the whole country. The United States has approximately 25,000 troops in Afghanistan under two commands: the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom force and NATO’s International Security Assistance Force. 15,000 U.S. troops fall under NATO-ISAF, which has about 35,000 troops in Afghanistan. This compares with about 170,000 U.S. troops in Iraq—a country one-third smaller than Afghanistan.⁹⁸ Other countries contribute an additional 18,000 troops to NATO-ISAF, making the total international troop level approximately 43,000.

These troop numbers are inadequate to conduct counterinsurgency operations and secure territory, particularly in the south and east of Afghanistan. Even including Afghan security forces, they are one-tenth the number prescribed by U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, which is usually a minimum of 20 counterinsurgents per 1000 residents, or about 480,000 troops for Afghanistan.⁹⁹

General Ray Henault, the head of NATO’s military committee, stated in September 2007 that a shortage of NATO and Afghan forces is “hampering efforts to win and hold ground from insurgents” and that some NATO countries are not providing

enough troops and equipment, which negatively affects those NATO countries that do.^{100, 101} In June 2007, U.S. Army General Dan McNeill, the head of NATO operations in Afghanistan, stated that NATO was short of approximately 5,000 troops, including Operational Mentor Liaison Teams.¹⁰² These OMLTs provide training and mentoring to the Afghanistan National Army, as well as serve as liaisons between the Afghan National Army and NATO-ISAF in combat operations.¹⁰³

There are approximately 20 Operational Mentor Liaison Teams in Afghanistan currently, and NATO-ISAF hopes to have 40 in operation by early 2008. However, it would take more than 100 OMLTs to train the entire Afghan army.¹⁰⁴

The international effort is also missing a sufficient number of the right kinds of troops. Classic military units trained for standard conventional warfighting operations are not what Afghanistan needs. The effort needs more Special Forces, civilian affairs officers, and trainers, as well as numerous civilians, in order to undertake counterinsurgency operations more effectively.

Equipment shortages are also a problem. General McNeill complained that the alliance is short on maneuver forces and medium, heavy lift, and attack helicopters. Shortfalls in equipment to deal with improvised explosive devices, such as roadside bombs, are also a problem.¹⁰⁵ NATO-ISAF has asked for more armor protection such as light armored vehicles to deal with IEDs and landmines.¹⁰⁶

Senior NATO commanders have also complained about a lack of interoperable command-and-control equipment and intelligence-sharing networks among member countries, especially in the south.¹⁰⁷

Weak Afghan Security Forces and Inadequate Equipment

The head of the Afghan National Army has argued that to defeat the insurgency, the Afghan National Army must be able to conduct operations on its own.¹⁰⁸ Afghan National Security Forces cannot operate independently because they are undermanned and under-resourced.¹⁰⁹ And while the ANA has shown some promise, it remains undermanned, with only 37,000 soldiers. The ANA also lacks essential equipment, including helmets, armored vehicles, and body armor, and helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.^{110, 111}

The Afghanistan Compact—the strategic framework for Afghanistan created by the Afghan government, the United Nations, and the international community—states that ANA forces need to increase to 70,000 by 2008.¹¹² The Afghan National Police has

shown even less progress than the ANA due to corruption and incompetence. The United States, the lead nation training the ANA, is now primarily responsible for strengthening Afghan security forces, and the Bush administration has stated that this will now be a high priority in its approach to Afghanistan.

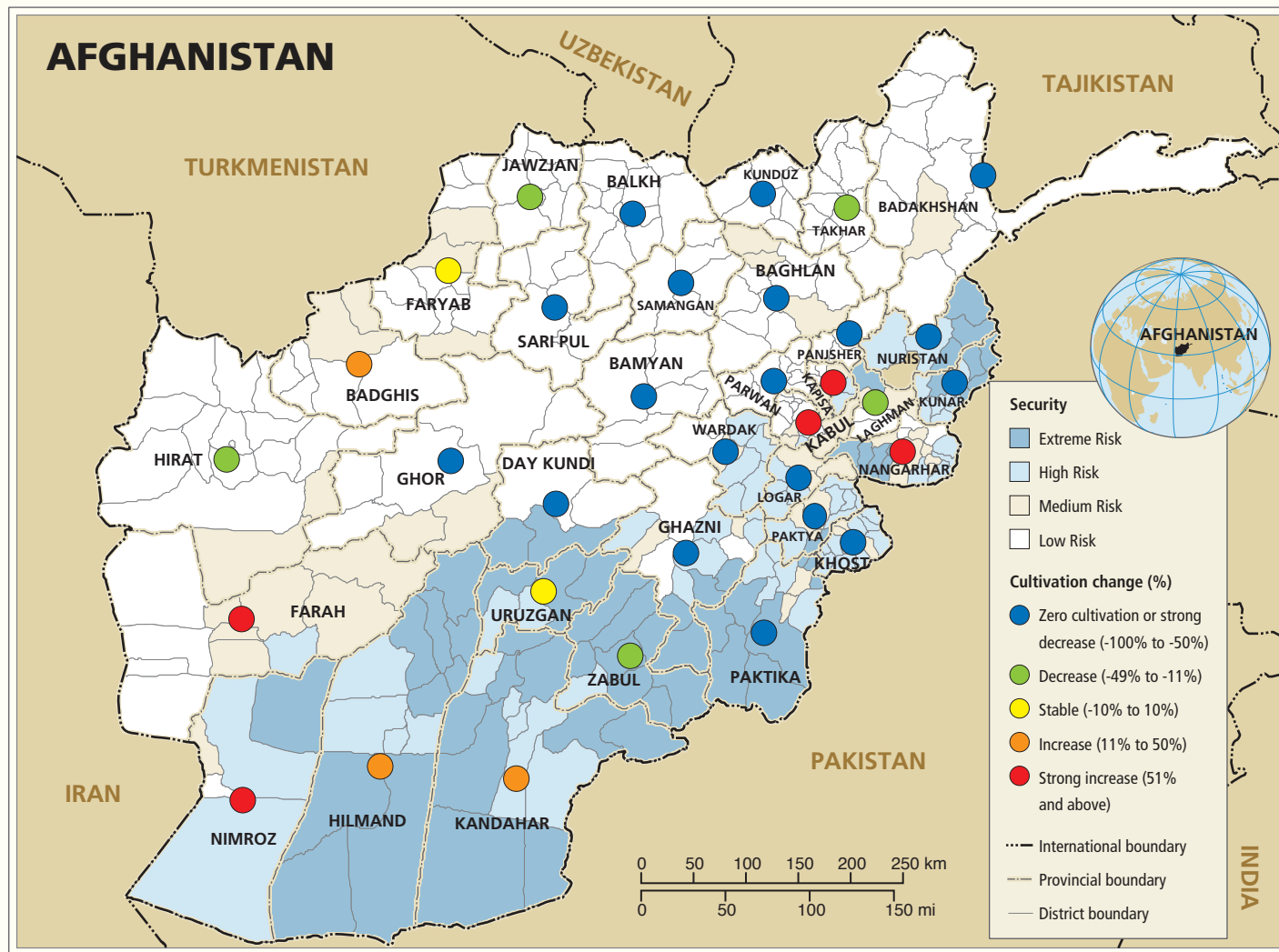
A Disjointed Coalition

In July 2006, 12,000 U.S. troops were folded into NATO, and NATO became the lead organization for security in Afghanistan; there are now 15,000 U.S. troops under NATO-ISAF. Two missions currently exist—the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom and NATO-ISAF. Operation Enduring Freedom is largely engaged in kinetic, counterterrorism operations, while NATO-ISAF forces—which include some U.S. troops—largely focus on stability and security operations in coordination with Afghan national secu-



Afghan National Army commandos fire to arrest a mock opponent during training in Rishkhur district on the outskirts of Kabul. Afghanistan's national army has been built up from scratch since the fall of the Taliban regime as a step toward being able to secure the country on its own and let foreign troops leave. (AP Photo/Musadeq Sadeq)

Security Map (as of May 15, 2007) and Opium Poppy Cultivation Change in Afghanistan, 2006–2007 (by Province)



Source: Government of Afghanistan—national monitoring system implemented by UNODC. Map adapted from UNHCR, Global Insight digital mapping.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

rity forces. This includes mentoring and supporting the Afghan national army and supporting Afghan government programs to disarm illegally armed groups.

Not only is coordination between Operation Enduring Freedom and NATO-ISAF challenging, but strains have increased within NATO-ISAF due to differing country objectives, and the existence of country caveats, which place combat restrictions on some countries' troops.

France, Germany, Spain, and Italy all have placed caveats on their forces. The United States, Canada, the Netherlands, and the UK have often faced the most intense fighting in Afghanistan because they are the only countries deployed in the south of the country, the most violent area. NATO leadership has asked for a reduction of caveats in order to make NATO a more effective fighting force and stop the unfair burden placed on specific country's troops.

The Canadian government may be forced by political pressures to withdraw troops in 2009. The Canadian people believe that they are bearing a disproportionate share of the costs; they have lost approximately 70 troops since 2001, approximately 27 percent of non-U.S. deaths.¹¹³ Only the UK and the United States have had more combat deaths.

Other NATO member countries, such as the Netherlands and Italy, are also feeling pressure from their publics to withdraw. Many European nations originally sold the mission as a peacekeeping and stabilization mission, and their publics now resent the fact that their militaries are expected to participate in combat operations.¹¹⁴

A Growing Recruiting and Funding Pool

The insurgency has filled its ranks through recruiting poor, unemployed, and disaffected youth in Afghanistan and Pakistan.¹¹⁵ Many of these foot soldiers do not believe in the ideology of the Taliban or Al Qaeda, but are drawn to the insurgency for financial reasons and/or disillusionment with corrupt local officials and basic lawlessness.¹¹⁶

The slow progress in building Afghanistan and providing more economic opportunities, as well as the return of many discredited warlords to positions of power at the local level, has turned many Afghans toward the Taliban. And the Taliban has been effective at providing rule of law and government services to the population in certain areas.

The Afghan insurgency has drawn support from a variety of sources, including opium revenues, donations from mosques in Pakistan, and wealthy Muslims abroad, especially nationals of United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.¹¹⁷ The growing opium trade has been a boon for insurgents.

The Safe Haven in Pakistan

The Taliban has become increasingly strong in the past year with its sanctuaries in Pakistan and in the south and east of Afghanistan. It receives recruits and financial and military support through a Pakistani network.¹¹⁸ It also plans and trains for combat in Afghanistan just across the border in Pakistan.¹¹⁹ Al Qaeda's reconstituted safe haven in Pakistan also gives it free reign to provide support to the Afghan insurgents. A U.N. report released in September found that more than 80 percent of suicide bombers planning attacks in Afghanistan are "trained, recruited or sheltered" in Pakistan.¹²⁰

The Shift in Iran's Strategy

Reports indicate that the insurgency is receiving weapons imports from Pakistan, and more recently, Iran. Elements of the Iranian government are now believed to be supplying high-grade military equipment to the Taliban.¹²¹

Iran was helpful during the initial aftermath of the invasion in 2001 and 2002, and the Afghan government continues to believe it plays a productive role. However, some within the Iranian government have apparently made a strategic decision to create "managed chaos" in Afghanistan by providing arms to all comers—both the Taliban and local warlords that plagued Afghanistan during its civil war—in order to keep the violence simmering. They apparently believe that Iran's security interests are best served by tying down American ground troops in inconclusive wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in order to protect against a potential U.S. strike against its regime or nuclear facilities.

The Bush administration's aggressive rhetoric on Iran's nuclear program and its

arms shipments to Iraq and Afghanistan serves to strengthen Iranian supporters of this new strategy.

Recommendations for Increasing Security

The insurgency will only be defeated by using all available instruments, including political, economic, diplomatic, and military power. There is no strictly military solution in Afghanistan.

The following recommendations, related to the military, must be coordinated with civilian efforts and recommendations elsewhere in the paper. International troops should be bolstered with additions of the right kinds of troops; civilian casualties must decrease; U.S. and NATO-ISAF forces need more equipment; and NATO-ISAF must be strengthened.

Fold counterterrorism efforts into a counterinsurgency strategy.

The United States must fully utilize a counterinsurgency strategy and fold its counterterrorism operations within this framework. Unfortunately, until Afghanistan's security forces strengthen in numbers and quality, Afghanistan will not have the troop levels prescribed in counterinsurgency doctrine. The international community therefore needs to work to prioritize enlarging these forces while pursuing other elements of a counterinsurgency strategy.

- **Unify NATO and Operation Enduring Freedom efforts under NATO command.** The U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine states that “unity of effort” is the essential prerequisite for success.”¹²² NATO should subsume the U.S. mission, and the OEF and the NATO-ISAF missions should be placed

under one unified NATO command with no national caveats.

- **Reduce civilian casualties and improve response to civilian casualties.** International military forces need to make the protection of the Afghan population a much higher priority in military planning. The United States and NATO should also organize a system of responders to address civilian casualties in the aftermath of military operations. These people should provide compensation to families, as well as food and medical care to injured individuals.¹²³
- **Incorporate Afghans to a greater extent in military missions.** Military operations must have more of an Afghan face. Afghan forces must begin taking the lead, and Afghan troops must be included in U.S. and NATO operations, as demanded by President Karzai.¹²⁴ International troops should also be working more closely with local authorities.
- **Reduce airstrikes and large army sweeps.** Low-precision tactics have alienated a significant portion of the population due to their high number of civilian casualties. Big army sweeps by NATO and U.S. troops should be replaced by smaller operations that include more Afghans, and airstrikes should be used sporadically, not as a standard practice.

Increase international troop levels.

The United States should increase its troop levels by about 20,000 troops to approximately 45,000 troops and pressure NATO countries to commit more forces.¹²⁵ They must be the right kinds of forces, including Special Forces, translators, trainers, engineers, and civilian affairs forces. These forces will be available to be redeployed

from Iraq to Afghanistan if the United States begins a strategic withdrawal from Iraq. These new troops should fall under a unified NATO-ISAF command, not Operation Enduring Freedom.

Strengthen the Afghan National Army.

- **Increase oversight of the ANA.** Oversight of the ANA should be improved through better vetting of potential recruits by the Afghan government and more joint patrols. More Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams can assist in monitoring these troops.
- **Provide more equipment.** The United States and NATO should provide more helicopters, weapons, armored vehicles, body armor, and helmets for the ANA.
- **Increase funding for ANA salaries.** Salaries for the ANA and ANP remain inadequate to meet basic needs. For a three-year commitment, a new recruit to the ANA now receives \$100 a month compared to the \$300 a month that the Taliban pays its footsoldiers.¹²⁶

Improve NATO's effectiveness in Afghanistan.

NATO has been sharply criticized for inadequate coordination among member countries; the existence of national caveats, which place combat restrictions on some countries' forces; and chronic equipment shortages. NATO's credibility and future

are on the line in Afghanistan, and the alliance must summon the political will to continue the fight.

- **Remove troop caveats.** In October 2006, General Jones estimated that there were about 102 national restrictions on troop actions by NATO partners, 50 of which significantly hampered operations. NATO countries must adopt more robust rules of engagement in Afghanistan. At the very least, NATO members can waive caveats for those serving in OMLT training teams with Afghan security forces. The Bush administration has begun pressuring them, but more needs to be done. The administration also needs to recognize that many of the restrictions are driven by national public opinion that has grown weary of the fight in Afghanistan. The United States needs to rebuild political support in Europe for involvement in Afghanistan just as much as it needs to pressure European governments.
- **Improve coordination among member countries.** NATO and U.S. forces need to improve their coordination and create a single chain of command. Coordination between 37 contributing nations is difficult enough without a dual U.S. authority. Unifying Operation Enduring Freedom and the International Security Assistance Force under one NATO command will increase coherence.

The insurgency will only be defeated by using all available instruments, including political, economic, diplomatic, and military power.

- **Provide more equipment.** Member countries should provide more equipment, especially helicopters (including medium- and heavy-lift and attack helicopters), to their forces that are part of the NATO contingent. NATO nations' failure to provide additional helicopters to forces fighting in southern Afghanistan has forced them to put out an expensive private contract for transport helicopters.¹²⁷ Turning to private military contractors for vital services weakens ISAF control over forces and hurts the counterinsurgency effort. Members must contribute more equipment to ensure success, including armor protection, such as light armored vehicles to deal with IEDs and landmines; and interoperable command-and-control equipment and intelligence-sharing networks.
- **Increase NATO's contribution to training Afghan forces.** According to Maj. Gen. Robert Cone, the commander of coalition training in Afghanistan, NATO countries have promised 20 training teams.¹²⁸ This commitment needs to be fulfilled, and all NATO and U.S. teams should meet a common standard and work toward a common program. OMLT teams can provide a way for nations wary of becoming directly involved in combat to contribute positively to the security situation.
- **Boost contributions from Muslim countries.** More Muslim countries should contribute to ISAF. Currently, the only Muslim majority countries are Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Albania. NATO should encourage its partners in the Mediterranean Dialogue, especially Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia to contribute to the stabilization of Afghanistan through troops, civilian support, economic assistance, and more trainers.¹²⁹

CHALLENGE THREE: STALLED RECONSTRUCTION

More than five years after President Bush proudly proclaimed a "Marshall Plan for Afghanistan" and promised to help build a democratic state, reconstruction efforts are not meeting expectations. There have been real improvements in access to health care and education, road building, and the growth of independent media. But the majority of Afghans have not seen significant improvements in their daily lives, and Afghan officials state that reconstruction and development assistance has had only a limited effect on the country's economic growth.¹³⁰

Afghanistan is still one of the poorest countries in the world. It has been plagued by decades of civil war, and Afghans have suffered greatly. Development indicators for Afghanistan are some of the worst in the world. Life expectancy at birth for Afghans is only 43 years, and more than 20 percent of all Afghan children die before the age of five.¹³¹ Unemployment is estimated to be around 40 percent, and the adult literacy rate is only 28 percent.¹³²

Women in particular have borne the brunt of Afghanistan's desperate poverty and violent past. While women have made great strides in Afghanistan since the removal of the Taliban, many continue to have few educational or employment opportunities. More girls have enrolled in school since the ousting of the Taliban, but girls still do not have the same access to education as their male counterparts. Literacy rates for females are estimated at approximately 16 percent; one-third fewer girls attend primary school than boys; and Afghanistan has the second-worst maternal mortality rate in the world.^{133, 134} Maternal mortality rates are approximately 1,600 deaths per 100,000 live births—the

highest rate of any nation outside sub-Saharan Africa.¹³⁵

Failure to jumpstart reconstruction has not only had tragic consequences for individual Afghans, but dangerous political repercussions. It has undermined the legitimacy of the Afghan government, decreased support for the international presence, and provided an opportunity for the insurgency to gain support from the population.

Afghans will only support the government and the international community presence if they see that it is in their interest to do so. The news is not encouraging: according to polls, the Afghan people are growing increasingly disillusioned with the work of the international community. Concerns about unemployment, corruption, the economy, lack of infrastructure, and the security situation are eroding overall optimism about the state of Afghanistan. In October 2005, 77 percent of Afghans agreed that the country was going in the right direction; a year later, that number had fallen to 55 percent.¹³⁶

Slow progress in Afghanistan's reconstruction can be partially understood as an inevitable result of decades of civil war, during which Afghanistan's infrastructure and economy were utterly destroyed. But it is also a result of failures by the U.S. government, the Afghan government, and the international community, specifically the low priority given to reconstruction efforts within an overall strategy, inadequate coordination and implementation of a reconstruction strategy, mismanagement and corruption in reconstruction monies, the

marginalization of the Afghan government, and a deteriorating security situation.

Neglecting Reconstruction

Since the original ouster of the Taliban, the Bush administration has not prioritized reconstruction in its approach to Afghanistan. It has poured the vast majority of funding into military operations and security assistance and has not provided sufficient funding for meeting reconstruction objectives. This overwhelming focus on military solutions has undermined reaching political and economic goals.

Afghanistan has received far less aid per capita since the U.S. invasion than any other post-conflict operation, such as those in Bosnia, Kosovo, or even Haiti.¹³⁷ According to one Afghan expert, "Aid per capita to Afghans in the first two years after the fall of the Taliban was around a tenth of that given to Bosnians following the end of the Balkan civil war in the mid-1990s."¹³⁸ The United States provides approximately half of the total international reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan—approximately \$21 billion for aid and reconstruction since 2001.¹³⁹ And most of this reconstruction assistance has gone to security assistance, such as training for Afghanistan's police and army.

Inadequate Coordination and Implementation of a Reconstruction Strategy

In February 2006, the international community and the government of Afghani-

Women in particular have borne the brunt of Afghanistan's desperate poverty and violent past.

U.S. ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN, FY2007 (\$ IN MILLIONS)

REGULAR APPROPRIATION (H.R. 5522 LEVELS, UNDER CONTINUING APPROPRIATION P.L. 110-5)

Economic Support Fund	510.77 (USAID plans \$42 million for PRTs)
Counter-narcotics (INCLE)	235
Child Survival and Health (CSH)	42.8
Development Assistance (DA)	150
International Military Education and Training	1.2

DOD APPROPRIATION (P.L. 109-289)

Security Forces train and equip	1,500
DOD counter-narcotics support	100
Total appropriated for FY2007 to date	2,539.77

FY2007 SUPPLEMENTAL (H.R. 2206/P.L. 110-28)

Economic Support Fund	\$653 million request/\$737 in final law (of which in law: 174 for PRTs; 314 for roads; 40 for power; 155 for rural development; 19 for agriculture (latter two are alternative livelihoods to poppy cultivation); 25 for governance; and 10 for the "civilian assistance program")
P.L. 480 Title II Food Aid	30 million also provides \$16 million in Migration and Refugee aid for displaced persons near Kabul, and \$16 million International Disaster and Famine Assistance
U.S. Embassy security	47.2 million requested/79 in final version
Security Forces train and equip	5.900 billion requested/5.9064 in final version (includes 3.2 billion for equipment and transportation; 624 million for ANP training; 415 for ANA training; 106 for commanders emergency response, CERP; plus other funds)
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement	No request/47 million in agreement; plus 60 million in DOD aid to counter-narcotics forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan, plus 12 million DEA
FY2007 Supp.	6.87 billion in final version
FY 2007 Total	10.35 billion (all programs)

Source: Kenneth Katzman, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, "Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," Updated September 10, 2007.

stan committed to the Afghanistan Compact—an agreement to implement the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. The compact established reconstruction priorities for 60 nations and international institutions based on ANDS; and the international community agreed to provide resources to support three critical areas over five years: security; governance, rule of law, and human rights; and social and economic development.¹⁴⁰

Some progress has occurred in building roads and increasing the access to education, but other priorities of the Afghanistan Compact have not been met. Part of the problem is the fact that the monetary costs of the benchmarks in the compact were

not estimated at the time the compact was launched. Therefore, it was never clear how much international assistance would be required to meet each benchmark.

Aid to Afghanistan is dismally coordinated between approximately 60 donors. Donors continue to implement their programs in stovepipes without coordinating with each other or the Afghan government. The Afghan government has repeatedly asked international donors to coordinate their funding with each other and with the Afghan government but with little effect.

The United States has not sufficiently consulted other countries and multilateral groups to utilize their different areas of

expertise. Despite the fact that many of these countries and multilateral groups do not bring significant amounts of funding to the mission, they can provide knowledge in areas where the United States lacks it.

Coordination does not often occur effectively even within governments. For example, different U.S. government agencies, such as the Department of Defense and USAID, are conducting their own strategies with insufficient consultation. Military and civilian components in the international effort remain segregated and insufficiently harmonized.

The Provincial Reconstruction Teams have been one of the central mechanisms for providing security and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan. Currently, 25 PRTs are in existence, 12 of which are U.S. run. Individual countries are assigned to each PRT, creating a mosaic of approaches across the country. For example, an average American-led PRT has just over 90 members, while the Canadian-led PRT in Kandahar province has over 260 members.¹⁴¹ In the crucial southern region, four different countries—the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands operate four separate PRTs in four separate provinces.

While the overall effectiveness of the PRTs in reconstruction is in question, they do appear to provide an important symbolic message about the commitment of the international community to the Afghan people. This does not discount the numerous problems with the PRTs, including a lack of follow through with the strategy goals set out in the Afghanistan Compact.¹⁴² The Afghan government has little or no control over the work of PRTs, although they were intended to extend its reach beyond the capital, and only five Afghans are assigned on average to each U.S.-led PRT.

PRTs also have little civilian support; there are only three American civilians on an

average American-led PRT.¹⁴³ This hampers the overall efforts because civilians often have specialized knowledge that the military lacks. According to one former PRT member, a military PRT unit dug wells as a reward for one village's cooperation. Because the unit lacked the capability to conduct water table analysis—more likely to be found in a civilian engineer or development expert—the new wells caused a neighboring village's wells to run dry. This was interpreted as intentional by the other village, leading it to withdraw support from the Afghan government and coalition forces.¹⁴⁴

Without adequate civilian involvement, the military components of PRTs will likely continue to make well-intentioned, but ultimately harmful, mistakes of this kind.

Corruption and the Mismanagement of Reconstruction Monies

The benefits of reconstruction assistance have been further diminished through mismanagement and corruption, problems that have undermined trust in the Karzai government.¹⁴⁵ Jean Mazurelle, the former World Bank director in Kabul, has estimated that international aid wastage rates are between 35 and 40 percent, and has observed numerous instances of fraud and looting, often by private companies.¹⁴⁶

Contractors of aid projects have produced decidedly mixed results: A 2005 audit of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' reconstruction work found that projects had not been properly executed and were awarded to expensive contractors where more competitive offers existed.¹⁴⁷ In addition, a *Washington Post* report found that a \$73 million USAID project with the Louis Berger Group to build schools and medical clinics suffered from inadequate

oversight and produced a mere fraction of the projected results with a highly variable degree of quality.¹⁴⁸

Between problems with contractors, and the endemic corruption and graft in Afghanistan's government, U.S. and UK officials have estimated that up to half of international aid is siphoned off by corrupt police and tribal officials.¹⁴⁹ As a result, much of the money directed at reconstruction is not having its desired effect.

Marginalization of Afghan Government

The United States has consistently channeled money to Afghanistan outside of the Afghan government and trust funds, which were established to create more oversight and coordination with the Afghan government.

For example, the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund was established in May 2002 to provide greater oversight for the international community's assistance. The fund is administered by the World Bank and supervised by a Management Committee consisting of the Asian Development Bank, the Islamic Development

Bank, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Program; it provides support for the Afghan government (including salaries, operations, and essential goods; and it funds national investment programs and projects).¹⁵⁰ The United States has acknowledged the role of the Trust Fund, but has not given a significant portion of its money to it.

According to Afghanistan's Finance Ministry, only 12 percent of the money from the international donor community for reconstruction and development projects was actually channeled through the Afghan government.¹⁵¹ While it is understandable that the international community may be reluctant to channel some funding through the Afghan government because of concerns regarding corruption and insufficient capacity, this is an overreaction.

The current distribution of resources undermines comprehensive, long-term, effective planning and the ability of the Afghan government to provide services or establish its legitimacy. The European Union, understanding this situation, funnels 50 percent of its overall funding to Afghanistan through government-managed trust funds and pro-

Since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, reconstruction goals have not been met due to insufficient funding, the mismanagement of reconstruction monies, corruption, the sidelining of the Afghan government, and growing insecurity.

grams.¹⁵² Great Britain spends 80 percent of its aid through the Afghan government, but it is the exception.¹⁵³

Growing Insecurity

International organizations' ability to provide humanitarian aid and reconstruction assistance is becoming more challenging due to a deteriorating security situation. The International Committee for the Red Cross has stated that because of increasing insecurity, humanitarian organizations have diminishing access to provide aid and to monitor the well-being of civilians for many areas in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁴

Humanitarian organizations are increasingly seen as viable targets by the insurgency. For example, insurgents have attacked dozens of trucks carrying World Food Program food aid during the past several months, driving up security costs for humanitarian aid.¹⁵⁵

Recommendations for Jumpstarting Reconstruction and Economic Development

Since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, reconstruction goals have not been met due to inadequate coordination and implementation of a reconstruction strategy, insufficient funding, the mismanagement of reconstruction monies and corruption, the sidelining of the Afghan government, and growing insecurity.

The United States, the Afghan government, and the international community must work together to utilize existing development frameworks, place the Afghan government in the lead of reconstruction, reform Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and provide more assistance to other areas of the country apart from the south. The United States should

also increase assistance for reconstruction and development projects by \$1 billion contingent on the implementation of greater accountability and transparency measures.

Implement a coherent reconstruction strategy.

- **Utilize existing development frameworks.** The United States needs to link into the existing strategic frameworks of the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy to lead a coherent reconstruction strategy. While these strategies are bareboned, they serve as important starting points and can be developed into an overarching development strategy with more attention.
- **Improve coordination between the international community and the Afghan government.** The United States needs to utilize better the capacities and expertise of other countries and multilateral institutions. Other countries may not bring as much funding, but they bring other skills that are helpful to the overall mission. One way to accomplish this would be to have the United Nations create a high-profile envoy that would coordinate the different elements of the strategy and the different countries and organizations from the international community.
- **Raise the importance of reconstruction efforts.** The international community must recognize that success in reconstruction also assists in battling the insurgency, and it must make reconstruction a higher priority in its approach to Afghanistan.

Place the Afghan government in the lead on reconstruction.

- **Channel more money through trust funds.** More foreign assistance

should go through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. This will enable better-crafted and coordinated national programs to provide services to the Afghan people and further economic development.¹⁵⁶ An auditing function must be created in the trust fund so that individuals can be held accountable if fraud is uncovered.

- **Coordinate with the Afghan government.** All projects should be coordinated with the Afghan government. Donors must align programs with the Afghanistan Compact's priorities, and the Afghan government needs a much stronger role in implementation. Furthermore, Afghans need to be consulted much more in the creation of programs and strategies for the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

Increase U.S. assistance for reconstruction and development projects subject to greater accountability and transparency.

The vast majority of U.S. funding in Afghanistan has gone to security. An additional \$1 billion should be provided in non-military aid, contingent on greater transparency and accountability in U.S. assistance. (See recommendations related to corruption in the Governance section and the creation of a Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.)

Improve the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

- **Increase the number of civilians in PRTs.** PRTs currently have too few civilians, which hinders their ability to conduct development projects effectively. Furthermore, Foreign Services Officers at State and USAID should back up their "statement of worldwide availability" and participate in these teams

to a greater extent. Civilians should also be recruited by organizations such as non-governmental organizations that are outside of the State Department and the U.S. government.

- **Streamline PRT funds.** International funds provided to PRTs are currently stovepiped to civilian and military efforts. Civilian agencies are short on funds, while the military, which generally has adequate resources through the Commander's Emergency Response Program, is legally barred from using them in certain areas like security assistance. Funding for PRTs must be streamlined so that both civil and military components can access funds necessary to perform the PRT's tasks. A new funding mechanism for PRTs should be created that places a block grant of money at the disposal of PRTs and waives legal restrictions preventing specific PRT components from performing the appropriate jobs.
- **Improve coordination between PRTs and military battle groups.** Coordination between PRTs and combat forces operating in the same area has been a chronic problem since the start of the program. The British, Canadian, and Dutch battle groups in southern Afghanistan have been deployed in conjunction with nationally led PRTs. This model of integration should be spread to all other areas where PRTs and combat forces cooperate, and the overall PRT-combat force relationship should be deepened as part of an overall counter-insurgency strategy.
- **Improve coordination between PRTs.** In order to be more effective, the relationship between PRTs operating in a given sector must be outlined more clearly. For example, the four PRTs operating in the southern region

should have their efforts coordinated by a regional development advisor, similar to the corps-level position instituted by former ISAF commander British Gen. David Richards. This advisor would be responsible for coordinating the actions of the PRTs across the region, advising the regional commander, and coordinating regional development with the overall national strategy.

- **Improve coordination between PRTs and the Afghan government.** PRTs need to do more to link their efforts to building up the Afghan government's capacity. Increasing the Afghan government's representation on PRTs would be a good first step; it can also assist in training Afghan officials working on PRTs.
- **Create a baseline PRT standard.** NATO and the United States need to standardize the composition of PRTs. In order to ensure that all PRTs have the same basic functions, NATO should establish a baseline standard table of organization for PRTs in Afghanistan. Individual PRTs should add functions based upon their area of deployment or additional tasks they take on.
- **Increase consultations with Afghan women.** The PRTs are working closely with communities on the ground. A greater effort should be made to discuss priorities and concerns with Afghan women, who are often marginalized.¹⁵⁷ Female members of the PRTs will need to make these contacts.

Focus more aid to the provincial level.

Reconstruction efforts need to focus more outside of Kabul on a more local level. The international community, in consultation with the Afghan government, should pro-

vide more aid to the provincial level with accountability mechanisms in place.

- **Provide more aid to opium-free provinces.** More than half of all U.S. assistance goes to four provinces in the south based on the assumption that reconstruction aid will decrease violence there. Not only does this appear to reward violence, but the aid is often ineffectively used because of the difficulties in monitoring and distributing it. More reconstruction assistance needs to be programmed to the other two-thirds of the country where it can accomplish more of its objectives.¹⁵⁸ As one example, this assistance can be provided through the Good Performers Initiative within the Counter Narcotics Trust Fund, which provides funds to projects in provinces that are poppy-free or are making progress in curtailing opium production.
- **Expand the National Solidarity Program.** The National Solidarity Program should be supported and expanded, even into urban neighborhoods.¹⁵⁹ This mechanism for disbursing aid "seeks to create and empower local governing councils to prioritize local reconstruction projects."¹⁶⁰

Support efforts to involve the Afghan population in reconstruction.

Afghans need to be consulted to a greater extent in the reconstruction process—both in choosing Afghan priorities and in utilizing Afghan manpower and expertise in the implementation of projects. Projects should also be chosen to create more employment opportunities for Afghans; high unemployment feeds the insurgency and the growing drug trade.

- **Seek more input from the Afghan population.** The international com-

munity should support jirgas and shura and other forums, as well as Afghan civil society in general to increase Afghan participation in reconstruction projects and educate the population about efforts.

- **Support labor-intensive projects.** Projects that are labor-intensive and require Afghan skills should be given a higher priority in a development strategy—as long as they are sustainable. The World Bank has recommended creating small construction projects that are labor intensive and require Afghan skills.¹⁶¹ Large-scale development projects or recurrent cost projects like teacher salaries will also help reduce unemployment.
- **Invest in technical and higher education.** Along with supporting education at all levels, the international community should specifically support and invest in technical and higher education to provide youth with skills to compete in the market.

Provide support for women in reconstruction programs.

Targeting assistance toward improving the well-being of women must be an integral part of any reconstruction program. These programs should be based on extensive consultations and research with Afghan women, including looking at “income-earning opportunities, women’s mobility in the target areas, and accessibility of services.”¹⁶²

Improve the U.S. government’s oversight and response.

- **Create a Special Inspector General for Afghanistan.** The United States must create an office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction to monitor U.S. assistance for reconstruction. The SIGAR office should oversee funding for all of the U.S.

agencies currently working in Afghanistan, including Defense, State, USAID, and Agriculture. The official should be able to perform audits and conduct investigations. Corruption and waste have siphoned off a large amount of U.S. aid to Afghanistan and must be stopped.

- **Create an expeditionary non-military force in the U.S. government.** The State Department has begun to create an expeditionary non-military force for the U.S. government. Members of this team should be deployed to Afghanistan to work on priorities of the Afghanistan government. This could include working on PRTs, serving as advisors and mentors in the Afghan government, assisting in alternative development projects, and more.
- **Publicize a blacklist of bad performers.** The U.S. Agency for International Development should share its list of poorly performing contractors and non-governmental organizations with other agencies and countries. Organizations that waste taxpayer dollars should not be given contracts repeatedly.

CHALLENGE FOUR: INCREASING OPIUM PRODUCTION

Opium production has risen to unprecedented levels. Afghanistan now produces 93 percent of the world’s opium, and opium revenues make up approximately one-third to one-half of Afghanistan’s GDP.¹⁶³

The United States spent approximately \$600 million on counternarcotics activities in 2006 and \$1.6 billion since 2001, but production still hit a new high in 2006. From 2005 to 2006, there was a 50 percent increase in the number of hectares of opium

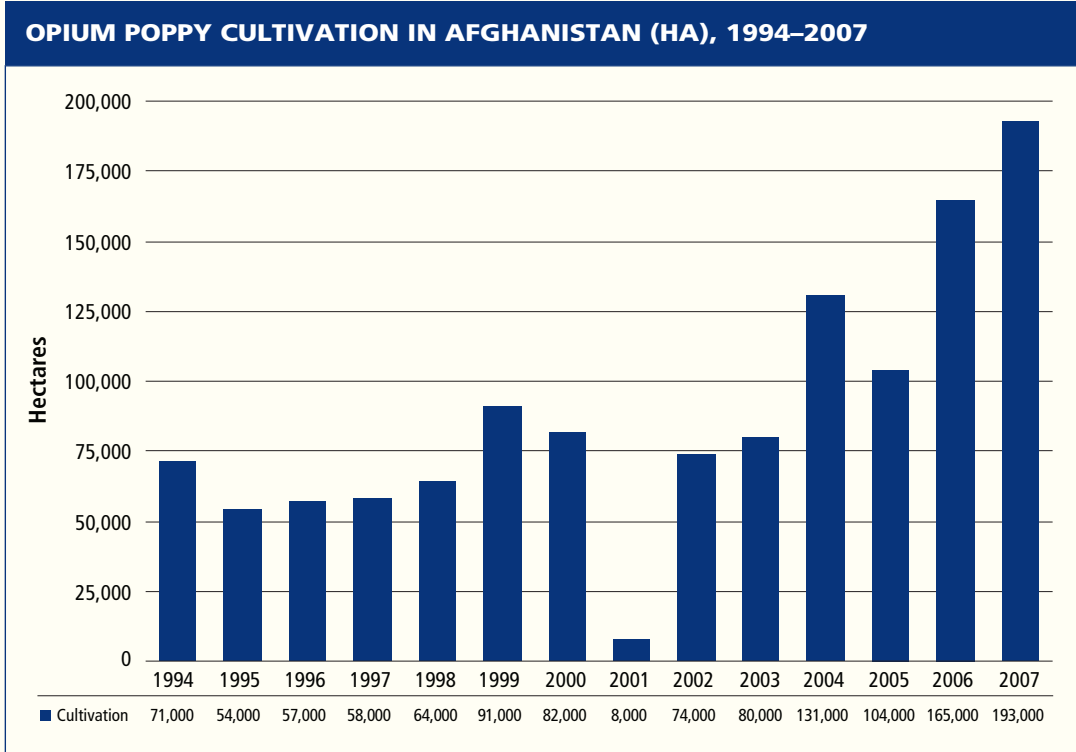
poppy under cultivation, and a record 6,100 metric tons of opium were produced in 2006.¹⁶⁴ In 2007, opium cultivation grew by another 17 percent, and opium production has increased 34 percent over last year.¹⁶⁵ More Afghan land is used for growing opium than the combined total for coca cultivation in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia.¹⁶⁶

The Afghan government has created a counternarcotics strategy based on eight pillars: demand reduction, alternative livelihoods, eradication, law enforcement, criminal justice, international and regional cooperation, public awareness, and institutional capacity-building. But Afghanistan and the international community's counternarcotics efforts since 2001 have been uneven, uncoordinated, and misdirected. They have failed to stem the growth of the opium industry.¹⁶⁷

The United Kingdom serves as the lead coalition nation for international counternarcotics policy and assistance in Afghani-

stan. Yet the international community has often proceeded at cross purposes in their attempts to curtail opium production, with the United States taking a more aggressive, though misguided, stance than its local or international partners by emphasizing crop eradication over other pillars.

The United States did not make counternarcotics efforts a priority in its approach toward Afghanistan immediately following the invasion, believing that it was a distraction from fighting terrorism. The explosion in opium production and evidence that drug revenues were funding the insurgency finally persuaded the U.S. government four years later to tackle the issue more actively.¹⁶⁸ In 2005, the U.S. military began to expand its involvement in counternarcotics activities through limited interdiction mission support and police training. But U.S. military forces are not allowed to target drug production facilities or pursue drug traffickers. NATO-ISAF is not allowed to



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2007*, August 2007.

participate in crop eradication or interdiction efforts, but may share intelligence and support Afghan forces.

In August 2007, the United States released its newest strategy for counternarcotics in Afghanistan. Reflecting the Afghanistan government's counternarcotics strategy, the U.S. plan is based on five pillars: public information, alternative development, eradication, interdiction, and justice reform. This new plan attempts to escalate counternarcotics efforts and to implement a more comprehensive, ambitious plan.

Opium production cannot be effectively curtailed without stable governance and real economic alternatives. Countries that are large exporters of illegal drugs, such as Colombia, Burma, and Afghanistan, generally have very weak central states. Countries that successfully reduce their drug production, such as Thailand, have done so by building on the presence of accountable government and development alternatives.¹⁶⁹ The Afghan government's failure to provide security, infrastructure, and access to services such as credit or education is at the root of the opium explosion. An effective strategy for countering the drug trade must attack these root causes.

A flawed U.S. counternarcotics strategy, an unstable security situation, high levels of corruption within the Afghan government, absence of the rule of law, and a devastated economy have combined to create a set of conditions that are ideal for poppy production. As a result, opium is now deeply entrenched in the Afghan economy.

A Flawed U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy

In its newest strategy for counternarcotics in Afghanistan, the United States rightly calls for an increase in development as-

sistance and interdiction, as well as greater coordination between counternarcotics and counterinsurgency strategies. However, it also advocates for an escalation of eradication activities, what it calls "non-negotiated eradication."¹⁷⁰ It also suggests introducing manual herbicide and aerial spraying to improve the efficiency of eradication efforts. President Karzai has delayed any use of herbicide-based eradication efforts until at least 2008 and has expressed outright opposition to aerial eradication.

This U.S. emphasis on eradication, the destruction of crops, is based on a fundamentally flawed analysis of the dynamics of opium production in Afghanistan and demonstrates a broad indifference to the political implications of its implementation. An eradication-focused approach may succeed in eliminating some portion of the current year's crop, but it does so at the cost of creating widespread and popular hostility against the Afghan government and the international community and increasing opportunities for the insurgency. In areas where Taliban or other forces are active, government eradication efforts allow insurgents to portray themselves as protectors of ordinary Afghans by defending local fields.

Eradication also targets the wrong actors. It primarily focuses on the farmers rather than the traffickers or key leaders of the drug trade who make the most from the opium and do the most harm to the stability of Afghanistan. The vast majority of drug revenues comes from trafficking—80 percent of drug revenues—not cultivation, and thus efforts must be made to go after the drug money, not the drug itself. A recent U.N./World Bank report found that the drug industry in Afghanistan has become increasingly organized and hierarchical, with approximately 25 to 30 key traffickers running the trade in Afghanistan.¹⁷¹



Afghan police destroying opium poppies during a poppy eradication operation in Tarin Kowt in Urugzan Southern province. Taliban fired rockets and small arms when U.S. State Department officials, along with Afghan authorities, were eradicating poppies in southern Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

Yet these people have remained untouched by counternarcotics efforts.

Targeting the supply of opium during cultivation rather than focusing on the drug trade further down the line—in the refining, trafficking, protection, smuggling, and/or financing of the drug—does little to curtail the drug trade; it only raises the prices for the traffickers and processors. As International Crisis Group analysts argue, “Indeed, it [eradication] will probably benefit the drug traffickers who have a stockpile to sell at inflated prices, while farmers whose livelihoods are destroyed could be driven into the arms of insurgent groups.”¹⁷²

The U.S. emphasis on eradication also ignores a simple reality: as long as trafficking structures are in place and opium provides the best guarantee of income, farmers will attempt to cultivate poppy. And these trafficking structures are in place, even in “opium-free” provinces in the north of the country.¹⁷³

The use of eradication as a long-term tool assumes that farmers have viable alternatives to opium production, which they will choose to pursue once the risk of eradication becomes higher. However, as an Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit report notes, the lack of infrastructure, demand, or markets in many areas

invalidates this assumption: “In order for the risk of eradication to act as an effective deterrent to planting, a household will need to incur a financial loss not only in terms of the destruction of the crop (which prior to harvesting is rather low) but also in terms of potential income and assets gained had they pursued other crops and non-farm income options.”¹⁷⁴

Growing Insecurity

The insurgency is now closely linked to opium cultivation. The Taliban controls large areas of land in Hilmand, Kandahar, and along the Pakistani border and protects the opium fields while keeping national authorities at bay. Farmers pay a tax to the insurgents, and drug traffickers pay the Taliban for security.¹⁷⁵ In 2007, opium cultivation increased in insecure provinces, where lawlessness, weak governance, and corruption are rampant.¹⁷⁶ As one United Nations Office of Drug Control survey found, approximately 20 percent of farmers in areas with good security grow opium, while 80 percent of those in areas with poor security do so.¹⁷⁷

It is clear that curtailing the drug trade will depend on progress against the insurgency. As Vanda Felbab-Brown, an expert on illicit economies and the drug trade, put it, “No counternarcotics policy is likely to substantially and durably reduce poppy cultivation in Afghanistan unless security is greatly improved and stability achieved throughout the country. Effective government control over the entire territory and the absence of armed conflict are crucial preconditions for the suppression of illicit crops.”¹⁷⁸ However, weak Afghan security forces and an inadequate number of international troops make it difficult to combat drug trafficking groups, regional militia, and insurgents.

High Levels of Corruption and the Weakness of the Rule of Law

Corruption in the Afghan government and a weak rule of law undermine the Afghan government and international community’s ability to significantly curtail the drug trade. Drug traffickers in Afghanistan have close relationships with Afghan government officials or serve in government themselves. According to the U.S. State Department’s 2007 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report on Afghanistan, “drug-related corruption remains a problem, being particularly pervasive at provincial and district government levels.”

Police chiefs, governors, political leaders, and other officials are known to be involved in the drug trade, whether through direct involvement or through protection services to the poppy growers and/or the traffickers. Furthermore, some of the Afghan officials who have been credited with combating opium cultivation in the north are still enriching themselves through trafficking, which continues.¹⁷⁹

The Ministry of Interior, which controls the police force, is widely perceived as the Afghan central government’s most corrupt ministry, and there is evidence that the Ministry’s powers, positions, and appointments are being abused to provide protection to criminal enterprises.¹⁸⁰ Under the Ministry’s direction, the eradication process has been politicized and corrupted; the fields of the rich and powerful have gone untouched while those without money or political connections have had their fields destroyed.¹⁸¹ This undermines faith in the Afghan government and international forces and locks tens of thousands of the poorest farmers into a cycle of debt, which forces them to continue growing opium in order to pay off prior losses.¹⁸²

Opium Poppy Cultivation Change in Afghanistan, 2006–2007 (by Province)



Source: Government of Afghanistan—national monitoring system implemented by UNODC. Map adapted from United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Cartographic Section, Map No. 3958 Rev. 5. Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

The absence of courts, the weakness of the police force, and a culture of impunity further hinder efforts to enforce counternarcotics laws and prosecute the key leaders of the drug trade. Efforts are being made to address this lawlessness, especially as it relates to counternarcotics efforts. The government of Afghanistan issued a new counternarcotics law in December 2005 with the support of the international community that “clarifies administrative authorities for counternarcotics policy and establishes

clear procedures for investigating and prosecuting major drug offenses.”¹⁸³

The U.S. government has also begun to create mechanisms to enable the Afghan government to enforce counternarcotics laws and prosecute key traffickers. It created a Criminal Justice Task Force, a team of prosecutors and investigators that was granted jurisdiction over high-profile narcotics cases. This Task Force prepares cases for the Central Narcotics Tribunal,

In Afghanistan, to a very significant extent, drugs are the economy... You cannot eliminate half of the economy through law enforcement.

which is “under the jurisdiction of fourteen specially trained judges.”¹⁸⁴

Few Alternative Economic Opportunities

Afghanistan’s economy has been devastated by more than 30 years of civil war, and few economic opportunities exist for ordinary Afghans. The unemployment rate is estimated to be at 40 percent. Opium production cannot be effectively curtailed without economic alternatives.

Opium exports make up one-third to one-half of Afghanistan’s GDP, and opium production is entrenched in every level of Afghanistan’s social and political structure. As Barnett Rubin, a preeminent expert on Afghanistan, says, “In Afghanistan, to a very significant extent, drugs are the economy... You cannot eliminate half of the economy through law enforcement.”¹⁸⁵ While only 14 percent of the population is directly involved in the poppy cultivation, the Afghan population is largely dependent on the drug economy.¹⁸⁶

Farmers are pulled into opium cultivation for different reasons, depending on their geographic location and their individual circumstances. For some, household debt drives them into poppy cultivation. Many Afghan farmers who do not own land are forced into poppy cultivation by landowners who decide that poppy is the most lucrative crop and control the farmers’ access to land, water, and fertilizers.¹⁸⁷

According to the UNODC, 98 percent of Afghan poppy cultivators “reported that they would be ready to stop opium poppy cultivation should access to alternative livelihoods be provided.” When asked what alternatives they would prefer, they chose off-farm employment (28 percent), other crops with the same income (23 percent) or with at least half the income from opium (8 percent), a provision of credits (12 percent), market facilities (10 percent), and agricultural subsidies (9 percent).¹⁸⁸

No single crop will be able to replace opium—Afghanistan’s comparative advantage in the opium trade is the low price of illegality in the country. Farmers need all of the services that surround opium and more in order to switch crops, including credit access, irrigation, infrastructure, transport, storage, electricity, and marketing.

The United States and other countries have supported and established alternative livelihood programs, spending between \$120 and \$150 million per year. These include supporting activities such as building agricultural market infrastructure, microcredit lending systems, cash-for-work, and agricultural and business development projects. Unfortunately, these efforts have not only been inadequate, but they have not been provided quickly enough and have not been sustained for the long-term. The international community and the Afghan government have also raised expectations about alternative livelihood projects and delivered far less than farmers expected.¹⁸⁹ Thus, Afghans do

not believe that foreigners have offered credible alternatives to opium.¹⁹⁰

Recommendations for Curtailing Opium Production

The current counternarcotics strategy, as put forward by the United States, is working at cross-purposes with counterinsurgency objectives; it is focused too heavily on the farmers rather than the traffickers or leaders of the drug trade. The overall drug strategy must be reevaluated, higher-end actors in the drug-trade must be targeted, and alternative livelihood programs should be strengthened.

Re-evaluate the overall drug strategy.

A revamped strategy should put more emphasis on persuasion and alternatives for those at the bottom of the production pyramid, and on investigation and prosecution for those at the top.

- **Embed the counternarcotics strategy within the larger plan to bolster governance and combat the insurgency.** Providing better security and heightened government presence are essential elements of drug control.¹⁹¹ Enhanced eradication on the other hand will strengthen the insurgency by driving farmers to the insurgents' side. A counternarcotics strategy must consider the long-term objective of winning the support of the Afghan population.
- **Emphasize the importance of coherent sequencing in counternarcotics efforts.** The United States lost past gains made by persuading farmers to abandon opium production when it failed to follow through on development assistance or alternative livelihood funding.¹⁹² Eradication and interdiction work only when there are alternatives available and when

there is visible progress being made on infrastructure, development, and security. Alternative development programs should be in place before eradication begins.

- **Make clear that traffickers, not farmers, are the problem.** The counternarcotics effort must aim to win over farmers involved in cultivation, and isolate and target traffickers and those who run labs.¹⁹³ Counternarcotics efforts that continue to focus on farmers will alienate the population and fail to effectively combat the drug trade. The vast majority of drug revenues come from trafficking, not cultivation, and thus efforts must be made to go after the drug money, not the drug itself.
- **Commit to a multi-year counternarcotics strategy.** The international community must recognize that reducing Afghanistan's economic dependence on the drug trade will take years; it must implement a multi-year commitment to combat the drug trade.

Take aerial eradication off the table for now.

Aerial eradication will ultimately strengthen the insurgency by driving those whose crops have been destroyed into their hands.¹⁹⁴ It will have little effect on the most powerful traffickers—since there are indications that major traffickers are already stockpiling opium to protect against future price shocks—but will fall hardest on the farmers.¹⁹⁵ Aerial eradication also has negative associations for a population that experienced aerial spraying by the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

Target higher-end actors in the drug trade.

Counternarcotics efforts should focus on those people who run the trade and process drugs rather than the farmers.¹⁹⁶

- **Prosecute key drug leaders.** Approximately 35 individuals have been labeled as key leaders in the drug trade in Afghanistan. Even though many of these key figures are government officials or have substantial power bases of their own, they must be captured and prosecuted. Their assets should be seized, and they should be put on trial or extradited to the United States or Europe.¹⁹⁷ Targeting high-level drug traffickers will be essential both to curtailing opium exports and to improving the negative public perception of counternarcotics efforts. While it is not realistic to expect that all of the major figures can be targeted, the prosecution of some number of high-level traffickers is possible and would have a positive effect on overall counternarcotics efforts.¹⁹⁸
- **Increase interdiction.** The international community should support Afghan counternarcotics forces in their efforts to stop drug shipments and destroy labs and warehouses used to produce opium.¹⁹⁹ Military support, including U.S. military and NATO-ISAF, should be provided for these purposes. Drug traffickers should have their assets seized and be forbidden to travel; and high-level officials who are benefiting from the trade should be removed from positions of power, even if they are not prosecuted.
- **Explore co-opting drug traffickers into a licit economy.** The international community and the Afghan government should explore ways to enable traffickers to transition to the legal economy. This might include amnesty for past trafficking “while allowing traffickers to invest their money in legal enterprises plus forfeiting some assets to public purposes.”²⁰⁰

Address corruption in counternarcotics.

- **Reform the Ministry of Interior.** The international community should tie international donations to fundamental reform of the Ministry of Interior and encourage the Ministry of Interior to root out corruption in its counternarcotics work. If the Ministry of Interior and Afghan Eradication Forces continue to protect drug networks while pursuing eradication in a corrupt and politicized manner, they will severely undermine the credibility of the government and the international forces.
- **Increase intelligence collection on drug traffickers.** More intelligence should be gathered on the links between political leaders and drug traffickers. This can be used to demand the removal of key corrupt officials.²⁰¹

Increase alternative livelihood programs.

- **Increase development in all provinces, especially in those areas where opium is not being cultivated.**²⁰² Development assistance must be expanded beyond opium-producing provinces so that perverse incentives do not occur. Greater rewards must be granted to non-opium farmers. Assistance should be “focused on a hand-full of priority programs (hospitals, schools, water and power) and disbursed quickly in amounts proportional to the progress made towards achieving an opium-free status.”²⁰³
- **Create the services and support for alternative crops that exist for opium.** Drug traffickers provide financing, technical assistance, fertilizers, and more for opium production. The international community needs to provide similar services for alternative crops, including

microfinancing, training in marketing and distribution of other crops, irrigation support, and cold storage.²⁰⁴ The United States should also assist farmers in linking to licit markets through building infrastructure and roads.

- **Increase cash payments for work projects.** Increasing financial support for work projects provides an immediate short-term alternative source of income for households that are dependent on poppy production. It employs farmers to do short term jobs such as cleaning irrigation canals or repairing roads.²⁰⁵

Conduct a national campaign against the drug trade in Afghanistan.

The United States and Afghan authorities have begun public information campaigns about the dangers of narcotics. These efforts should be supported and expanded. They need to make the case that the purpose of their counternarcotics efforts is to enhance livelihoods of the Afghan people and not to attack them. The message should be that “Afghans cannot build a stable future on the basis of a criminal enterprise that is against Islam.”²⁰⁶

CHALLENGE FIVE: THE TERRORIST SAFE HAVEN IN PAKISTAN

Addressing the insurgency’s safe haven in Pakistan is critical to creating a stable state in Afghanistan.²⁰⁷ As the U.S. military’s Counterinsurgency Manual notes, havens and logistical and support networks are critical to insurgencies’ survival.

Following the U.S.-led invasion in October 2001, the Taliban and Al Qaeda fled to the Pashtun-dominated border regions of

Afghanistan and Pakistan. The establishment of sanctuaries on the Pakistani side of the border came as no surprise—the Taliban and Al Qaeda had deep roots in Pakistan. The Taliban is comprised mostly of Afghan Pashtuns educated in Pakistan’s madrassas and was closely connected to Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Agency for decades.²⁰⁸

Al Qaeda largely evolved from an organization—the Services Office—based in Peshawar, Pakistan, which was founded by Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam to fund and recruit for the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Near the end of the Soviet occupation, Osama bin Laden formed Al Qaeda in 1988 using the organization’s volunteer network, organizational structure, and funds to continue the holy war beyond Afghanistan.

Al Qaeda and the Taliban-led Afghan insurgency are now using Pakistan as a staging ground for operations in Afghanistan and around the world. They are believed to be concentrated in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, where they have created a band of training camps and re-established their chains of command.²⁰⁹

Al Qaeda and the Taliban’s influence is growing throughout Pakistan, in what Pakistani and U.S. officials call the process of “Talibanization.” The Taliban has assumed leadership roles within the tribal areas and now operate in major urban areas beyond, such as Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. They have increased their use of suicide bombings and improvised explosive devices in Pakistan. Threats against English-language schools and warnings to girls to veil themselves in North-West Frontier Province are examples of this spreading Talibanization.²¹⁰

Pakistan's Tribal Belt



Since 9/11, the border areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan have become a terrorist safe haven for Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The border between these two countries, called the Durand Line, has never been recognized by Afghanistan.

TRIBAL AREAS Made up of seven semi-autonomous agencies along Pakistan's northwestern border, called the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the government of Pakistan has had limited power over these areas. FATA has been a chronically ungoverned space, and extremism has flourished there. The Taliban and Al Qaeda are concentrated in this area.

NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE As the Taliban has strengthened in FATA, its influence has begun to seep into the bordering North West Frontier Province in a process called "Talibanization." Al Qaeda and the Taliban are also believed to have a presence there.

BALUCHISTAN This is the largest province in Pakistan and is home to the Baloch tribes. Tensions have increased between these tribes and the Pakistani government over the government's heavy-handed approach to militancy in the area and the economic and political marginalization of the area.

Source: Council on Foreign Relations, "Pakistan's Tribal Belt" interactive map, available at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/13518/>. Map adapted from United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Cartographic Section, Map No. 4181 Rev. 1.

Note: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Many of the Al Qaeda attackers involved in the Madrid and London bombings, as well as those who recently attempted attacks in the UK, Germany, and Denmark, were trained in Pakistan. Furthermore, compared with 2006, cross-border insurgent attacks from Pakistan into Afghanistan have dramatically increased in 2007, including a doubling in the number of attacks in June 2007 compared with June 2006.²¹¹ A U.N. report released in September found that the vast majority of suicide bombers in Afghanistan were recruited and trained in Pakistan.²¹²

Al Qaeda and the Taliban were able to establish a safe haven in Pakistan because the Pakistani government has never had real control or presence in the tribal areas where the safe haven exists. It is economically isolated, home to extremism, and sympathetic to the Taliban and Al Qaeda. President Musharraf's options are surely limited, but his approach to the border region and to Islamic extremism during his presidency has exacerbated the situation. Agreements between the Pakistani government and leaders in South and

North Waziristan in 2004 and 2006 gave extremists breathing room to grow by stopping Pakistani military incursions into the area. Furthermore, Musharraf's policy of accommodating religious extremists for his own political gain has weakened the more secular, moderate forces in Pakistan.

U.S. policy has also not helped foster democratic growth in Pakistan. Since Sept. 11, the United States has given billions of dollars to the Pakistani military with little or no oversight. These facts are explored in greater depth below.

Isolation and Weakness of Governance in Federally Administered Tribal Areas

The insurgents' and Al Qaeda's safe havens are believed to be concentrated in an area called the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, which is made up of seven semi-autonomous agencies along Pakistan's northwestern border with Afghanistan. This border, not recognized by Afghanistan, is the Durand Line, which was established in 1893 by the British. The British attempted to control this region, historically outside of governmental control, by granting a form of autonomy on the condition that the region accept the colonial order. Tribal elders known as *maliks* received largesse they could distribute as they saw fit in exchange for keeping strategic border passes open.

After independence in 1947, the new government of Pakistan chose not to assert its authority over the area, refraining from deploying troops and maintaining the British colonial arrangements. This situation, in which the Pakistani government delegates its authority to tribal proxies, has persisted for 60 years.²¹³ This arrangement with tribal leaders has enabled the Pakistani government for decades to use the Islamist Pashtun tribes along both

sides of the border as a bulwark against Afghanistan and as a force for intervention in Afghanistan.²¹⁴ In short, FATA has been a chronically ungoverned space due to conscious decisions made by both the British colonial administration and the Pakistani government.

The FATA include a population of approximately 3.2 million, most of whom are Pashtun. The people are religiously conservative and do not perceive Al Qaeda or the Taliban as enemies. They consider themselves first Pashtun, and second Pakistani.²¹⁵ The Pashtun youth have mostly been educated in Pakistan's madrassas and are largely radicalized.

Thanks to the persisting governing arrangement, FATA residents do not have a political voice in Pakistan's government and are forbidden to form political parties. They also do not receive the government services, or enjoy the civil rights or rule of law that other Pakistani citizens are granted.²¹⁶ Local militants have established Taliban-controlled police and courts that mete out harsh punishments.

Few economic opportunities exist in this region, there is no banking system, and approximately 60 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line.²¹⁷ The female literacy is 3 percent in this area, among the lowest in the world. People's livelihoods depend on subsistence agriculture and smuggling items such as opium and weapons.²¹⁸

The region's economic and political isolation has contributed to the extremism and militancy of this area. The Taliban, other Afghan insurgents, Al Qaeda, and other foreign extremists—mainly Chechens and Uzbeks—have found a friendly territory to establish and maintain a safe haven following their flight from Afghanistan in 2001.



Pakistani tribesmen hold a tribal meeting in Miran Shah, the capital of the Pakistani tribal region of North Waziristan near the Afghanistan border. Tales of Taliban-style justice in Pakistani border regions are proliferating, a sign that an area already serving as a base for militants fighting in neighboring Afghanistan is slipping further out of government control. (AP Photo/Abdullah Noor)

The Pakistani Government's Ineffective Approach Toward FATA

Agreements between the Pakistani government and tribal leaders in FATA have further exacerbated growing extremism in the border region. From 2004 to 2006, the Pakistani government, under pressure from the United States, launched military operations into South and North Waziristan areas against the Taliban and Al Qaeda and attempted to stop cross-border attacks into Afghanistan. More than 600 Pakistani troops, paramilitary personnel, and government officials were killed in the fighting, and the operations were not popular with the military or the country.

Under pressure to stop the fighting, the Pakistani government signed peace accords with tribal elders in South Waziristan in April 2004. Pakistani President Musharraf also made a deal with leaders in North Waziristan in September 2006, agreeing to keep Pakistani troops out of North Waziristan in exchange for a promise to curtail insurgents' cross-border attacks into Afghanistan and against Pakistani troops.²¹⁹

However, cross-border attacks into Afghanistan actually increased following the 2006 agreement, giving the Taliban and Al Qaeda space to strengthen and grow. As a recent *Newsweek* article states, "While the Army halted offensive operations and dis-

mantled checkpoints, the militants helped the Taliban and Al Qaeda regroup and reinfiltrate back into Afghanistan.”²²⁰

The South Waziristan and North Waziristan agreements have both broken down, and approximately 90,000 Pakistani troops are currently deployed in the border regions of Afghanistan.²²¹ Fierce combat has occurred—more than 250 members of Pakistani security forces have been killed since the breakdown of the peace agreements in July, and the Taliban is holding hundreds of Pakistani soldiers captive.²²²

The war against these extremists in FATA remains unpopular with the Pakistani military. Many view it as a U.S. war against their countrymen. In September 2007, U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan learned that 300 Pakistani soldiers had surrendered to the Taliban in Waziristan without firing a shot.²²³ According to Ahmed Rashid, the well-known Pakistani journalist, “Soldiers in the badlands controlled by the Taliban and Al-Qaeda are deserting or refusing to open fire.”²²⁴ And, the population in the tribal areas perceives Musharraf and the Pakistani military as foreign occupiers.

Elements of the Pakistani security establishment, mainly the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency and the Pakistani Army, are believed to be continuing to provide support to the Taliban.²²⁵ While the extent of the linkages is unclear, Pakistani security forces supported senior Taliban leaders throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and the Taliban is seen as an ISI creation.²²⁶ According to Seth Jones at RAND, the ISI is providing weapons and training to the Taliban and other Afghan insurgents and even giving intelligence to insurgents at the “tactical, operational and strategic levels.”²²⁷

The security services of Pakistan may be playing both sides in the battle between the

Afghan government and the insurgents in order to hedge its bets. Many question the staying power of the United States and the international community and worry about the power vacuum that would occur in the wake of a withdrawal. Furthermore, a fear of India is believed to drive this support, as it has in the past. Pakistan’s security forces, believing that India is using Afghanistan as a proxy to extend its influence and security, may support the Taliban as a buffer.

Musharraf’s Policy of Accommodating Extremists

President Musharraf’s accommodation of religious extremists during his time in power has also contributed to growing radicalization in Pakistan. Rather than cracking down on extremist groups in Pakistan, President Musharraf has supported them in order to maintain his political power and advance Pakistan’s national interests in Kashmir and Afghanistan.

Musharraf also fears that a crackdown on these groups will lead to violent uprisings in the border region and cause them to disperse throughout Pakistan.²²⁸ The *Economist* described it this way: “General Musharraf has been careful not to alienate the Islamists entirely, and has at times acted as their sponsor. The army and intelligence services try to root out the sort of jihadists who have tried three times to assassinate the general, but by most accounts continue to hedge their bets against an American failure in Afghanistan by maintaining links to the Taliban.”²²⁹

In 2002, Musharraf manipulated parliamentary elections to give Islamists control of the two Pakistani provinces that border Afghanistan. He has also exiled the leading political opposition, although he recently allowed Benazir Bhutto, head of the Pakistan

People's Party and former prime minister, to return to the country, and a power-sharing agreement is being negotiated. (Another former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, was not allowed to remain in the country after returning from exile.)

Musharraf's approach has led to growing Islamist extremism during his rule and a radicalization of Pakistani youth, especially Pashtun youth. "By undermining Pakistan's large, relatively secular parties, he has left mosques and madrassas as the most potent vehicles for political expression."²³⁰

After nearly a decade in office, President Musharraf's hold on power is becoming increasingly tenuous, and he faces growing opposition from the Pakistani public.

The Musharraf government laid siege to the Lal Masjid, or Red Mosque, in early July 2007 after months of provocative actions by the radicals, including kidnappings of suspected prostitutes and even Pakistani police, burning of books and DVDs that they perceived as un-Islamic, and threats of holy war. Following failed negotiations, commandos from the Army's Special Services Group and Pakistani troops stormed the complex. There were an estimated 280 killed in the assault on the Mosque.²³¹ Since the episode, suicide bombings have wracked the country, and more radicals have been mobilized. Furthermore, Musharraf overplayed his hand by firing the chief justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court and was forced to back down after protests by virtually all the lawyers in Pakistan.

On October 6, 2007, General Musharraf won a third presidential term by a unanimous Electoral Assembly vote, which the opposition largely boycotted. Shortly after his "re-election," the Pakistani military engaged in three days of fighting in tribal

border regions that left 45 Pakistani soldiers and nearly 200 militants dead.²³² The latest fighting was so severe that government forces called in air strikes to deal with militants. Furthermore, on October 18, 2007, suicide bombers attacked the parade welcoming Benazir Bhutto home after eight years in exile, killing at least 134 people.²³³

These recent incidents underscore the failure of Musharraf's policy of accommodation with militant extremists, which serves neither the Pakistani president's desire to remain in power, nor advances American interests in the region.

Flawed U.S. Policy Toward Pakistan

Following the attacks of Sept. 11 and President Musharraf's public declaration that he would ally with the United States in fighting terrorism, the U.S. government has given at least \$10 billion to the Pakistani government, primarily in military assistance.²³⁴ In return, the United States has expected Pakistan to cooperate on counterterrorism and the war in Afghanistan, but little else.

The United States has funneled its support almost exclusively to the Pakistani army, with little attention paid to Pakistan's civil society or moderate political forces.²³⁵ The U.S. government has done little to nothing to support existing democratic forces in Pakistan despite the Pakistani population's outpouring for democracy, as seen by the protests at the Chief Justice's suspension, and the Bush administration's democracy promotion agenda.

The U.S. government's silence on democracy promotion in Pakistan further undermines U.S. credibility among the Pakistani people and support for U.S. objectives in the region. Moreover, many believe that some of this military aid is finding its way back to the Tal-

iban because of linkages between the group and Pakistan's security forces.²³⁶

The United States has a policy dilemma in Pakistan. The Pakistani military is essential in combating extremist elements within Pakistan, and President Musharraf and the military have captured and killed key members of Al Qaeda and the Taliban. U.S. policymakers fear that further pressure on a weakened President Musharraf might precipitate his fall, which might leave Pakistan with an uncertain and potentially unfriendly leadership, or a power vacuum. The potential for Pakistan's nuclear weapons to fall under the control of an unreliable and/or antagonistic government sends shudders throughout the U.S. foreign policy community.

Yet experts agree that Islamists and extremists are not strong enough to win national elections in a truly democratic election. According to Peter Bergen, a terrorism expert, "It [Democracy] would likely damage the MMA, the coalition of religious parties, that has never succeeded in winning more than 12 percent of the vote... In fact, polling indicates that the MMA will garner around 5 percent of ballots in the upcoming election."²³⁷

Thus, the United States need not be afraid of pushing harder for democracy in Pakistan. If anything, Musharraf's dictatorship appears to have made these extremists stronger.

The U.S. government's current approach in Pakistan is no longer serving U.S. national security interests. While the Pakistani government has captured some militants, it has not seriously disrupted the underlying networks. Cross-border attacks in Afghanistan from Pakistan have doubled during the past year, and the Taliban and Al Qaeda have both reconstituted across the border. "This policy has tied America's fortunes to the Pakistani military and intelligence services' ability to deliver al Qaeda and Taliban

leadership, and to General Musharraf's strategic objectives."²³⁸

The U.S. government has recently committed \$750 million in development assistance to Pakistan's tribal areas during the next five years—and \$150 million for this year—to increase development and win hearts and minds. This is part of a U.S. effort to expand counterterrorism efforts—seeing that the current policy is not working. However, there is no a comprehensive strategy for allocating this money in a transparent, accountable way. There will be little, if any, oversight of this funding, and there is broad disagreement even within the U.S. government over how the money will be spent.

Recommendations for Destroying the Safe Haven in Pakistan for Insurgents and Al Qaeda

The Afghan insurgency and Al Qaeda have reconstituted themselves in the borderlands of Pakistan. The isolation and weakness in governance, as well as extremism in these areas, are the main reasons for the creation of the safe haven. However, President Musharraf's counterproductive policies toward the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and religious extremists within Pakistan, as well as an outdated U.S. policy toward Pakistan have enabled this haven to emerge.

While there are no great options, the United States can do more. It must put much greater pressure on Musharraf to disrupt the Taliban's and Al Qaeda's command and control, broaden U.S. assistance toward Pakistan, increase efforts to facilitate a political dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan, focus on economic development and strengthening governance in the borderlands of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and promote democracy in Pakistan.

Disrupt Taliban's and Al Qaeda's command and control in Pakistan.

The insurgency will remain robust in Afghanistan as long as the insurgents have a safe haven in Pakistan.

- **Increase pressure on Musharraf to evict insurgents.** The United States should push President Musharraf to eject foreign fighters, close down training camps, stop the flow of weapons and money to terrorist groups, and prevent the Taliban and Al Qaeda from using Pakistan as a sanctuary. The United States should not conduct unilateral military operations to meet these objectives but should rely on Pakistani troops.
- **Increase intelligence collection in Federally Administered Tribal Areas.**²³⁹ There is insufficient information regarding the safe havens in FATA. Policymakers must have a greater understanding of the command and control of Al Qaeda and Afghan insurgents in these areas, and the United States must support increased intelligence collection.

Change the way assistance is given to Pakistan.

- **Increase the transparency of U.S. assistance.** It is estimated that the U.S. government has provided more than \$10 billion to Pakistan since 9/11, but the amount and how it has been used are unclear. Much greater transparency needs to occur with respect to this assistance.
- **Shift aid from conventional military accounts to Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts.** The bulk of U.S. aid to Pakistan has gone to military expenditures. The United States should steer military aid away from conventional military expenditures such as advanced combat aircraft, which is

geared toward a possible confrontation with India, and toward counterterrorism assistance. Benefits for Pakistan must be paired with firm demands that Pakistan support the United States by cracking down on militants and Al Qaeda and making democratic reforms.

- **Move beyond military support, including allocating a greater portion of aid to education and youth in Pakistan.** Too much attention and resources have been focused on the military in Pakistan. While military assistance should be maintained, the focus of U.S. support must be expanded to the people of Pakistan by assisting in the development of democratic institutions and economic and humanitarian assistance. As the 9-11 Commission recommended, more aid should be dedicated to education. In addition to their symbolic value, better public schools will lessen the appeal of the radical madrassas, which are currently the only option available for education in many areas of Pakistan.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, Pakistan faces an enormous youth bubble in an environment with few economic opportunities and a growing radical movement that recruits youth. The United States should focus on youth in its aid programming.

Address Pakistan's regional interests.

- **Support dialogue between India and Pakistan.** Pakistan's fears about India appear to be a factor in driving the security services' support for the Taliban in Afghanistan. In order to increase Pakistan's support for the endeavor in Afghanistan, the United States and the international community should assist in building trust between Pakistan and India. This will include supporting agreements between Pakistan and India

The insurgency will remain robust in Afghanistan as long as the insurgents have a safe haven in Pakistan.

to stop supporting violent opposition movements against the other country, especially in Kashmir.

- **Create a contact group with India, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghan governments.** The United States should support the creation of a contact group among these countries to build trust and address areas of shared concerns, including nuclear weapons, trade, and terrorism. The U.S. effort might involve offering behind the scenes, rather than visible support.

Continue to facilitate a political dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The United States should increase support for political dialogue initiatives between Pakistan and Afghanistan, such as the Tripartite Dialogue—a dialogue between the vice chief of staff of the Pakistani army and the chief of defense staff of the Afghan army—and the joint Pakistan-Afghanistan jirga, which took place in August 2007.

An inter-Pashtun dialogue should also be supported on both sides of the border. In order to enhance the relationship, Afghanistan and Pakistan should pursue a recognition of an open border, most likely along the Durand Line. The dispute over the border needs to be resolved with help from the United States and the international community. Furthermore, Afghan access to Pakistani ports and transit facilities should be allowed.²⁴¹

Focus on economic development and improving governance in the borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

- **Increase economic opportunities in Pakistan's FATA.** The FATA has little trade beyond smuggling and subsistence farming. The international community, along with the governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan, should explore linking Pakistan's FATA to Afghan reconstruction and creating special opportunity zones along the Durand Line. Creating manufacturing and industrial units and supporting agricultural activities should also be assessed.²⁴² As mentioned above, more assistance should also be targeted toward education in this area.
- **Pressure the Pakistani government to better integrate FATA politically.** The international community should encourage and support efforts by the Pakistani government to consult intensively with the local stakeholders to integrate FATA into the rest of the Pakistan. One option is to integrate them with the Northwest Frontier Province as a Provincially Administered Tribal Area.²⁴³ Members of FATA should also be allowed to create political parties, and a large campaign should be undertaken to educate the public about governance reforms.²⁴⁴
- **Ensure transparency and accountability over funds committed to FATA.** The United States recently com-

mitted \$750 million of aid to Pakistan's tribal areas over the next five years. A comprehensive strategy must be created to spend this money effectively, and funding should be monitored closely.

Promote democracy in Pakistan.

The U.S. government has not sufficiently pressured the Pakistani government to embrace democratic reforms. U.S. policy must place a greater emphasis on democracy promotion in Pakistan.

- **Push harder for democratic elections.** The United States should publicly encourage Pakistan to hold free and fair parliamentary elections, followed by open presidential elections. It should contribute technical assistance and funding for Pakistan's Election Commission and the

elections themselves, and provide international observers to monitor them.

- **Pressure Musharraf to work with opposition.** The United States should continue to pressure Musharraf to come to agreements with opposition leaders rather than relying on the army and Islamic parties to maintain power.
- **Stand up for human rights and the rule of law.** The United States should increase its public and financial support for efforts to improve human rights and rule of law in Pakistan.
- **Broaden contacts with Pakistan.** The United States should reach out to elements of Pakistani society beyond the Pakistani military. This includes civil society and other political leaders.

CONCLUSION

The United States must re-energize and refocus its policies toward Afghanistan and Pakistan. The mission of the United States and the international community is in jeopardy, and we cannot afford to lose. The repercussions would be too great. A failed state, whose main exports would be drugs and terrorism, poses a huge security threat to the United States and its allies.

The United States must make a strategic shift to a counterinsurgency approach in Afghanistan. This means that the Afghan population and its government will be at the center of the U.S. approach, that military and civilian efforts across the international community will be unified and coordinated within one overarching strategy, and that non-military—economic, diplomatic and political—tools in the international community's arsenal will be brandished and utilized more frequently and effectively.

This new approach will require a dramatic increase in attention and resources directed to strengthening Afghan governance and rule of law. It will demand strong anti-cor-

ruption measures and increased accountability. The counternarcotics strategy must change from an overemphasis on crop eradication to interdiction and prosecution of high-end traffickers and more alternative development. Reconstruction assistance must be coordinated, streamlined, and made increasingly transparent, so that Afghans see improvements in their daily lives. Finally, Afghan insurgents and Al Qaeda must be rooted out of Pakistan through a combination of military and economic steps, as well as democratic reforms.

The challenges involved in creating a secure government in Afghanistan and defeating insurgents and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan are enormous and daunting, but the United States has no choice—it must face them head-on and with optimism.

This is an international mission that can succeed, and the United States should be a strong, committed leader in building a stable, secure nation and in denying sanctuary to Al Qaeda and its affiliates. We owe it to those who died on Sept. 11 and to the people of Afghanistan whom we abandoned after the Soviet withdrawal.

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