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INTRODUCTION

On December 1, 2009, US President Barack Obama announced his decision to begin a staged withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan by July 2011. While the scope and speed of this withdrawal will depend on the results of a Department of Defense (DoD) review scheduled for December 2010, Obama's statement propelled security sector reform (SSR) in Afghanistan to a new level of importance on the international policy agenda. Efforts to increase the size and improve the performance of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in preparation for the eventual departure of foreign troops have taken on new urgency, commanding increased funding and training personnel from donor countries.

Despite this influx of resources and intense international scrutiny, Afghanistan's SSR process continues to suffer from deficits in manpower and expertise in both the Afghan government and international community; myopic training goals that discount the importance of community engagement and civilian protection in counterinsurgency strategy; and rising expectations for ANSF performance that outstrip the pace of institutional reform. This *Security Sector Reform Monitor: Afghanistan* edition examines trends in SSR in the context of an increasingly pressurized security environment and a rapidly expanding zone of operations, with an emphasis on the ANSF's relationship with the Afghan public.

ABOUT THE SSR MONITOR

The *Security Sector Reform Monitor* is a quarterly publication that tracks developments and trends in the ongoing security sector reform (SSR) processes of five countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, Southern Sudan and Timor-Leste. Every quarter, there will be separate editions for each case study country. Adopting a holistic definition of the security sector, the *Monitor* will cover a wide range of actors, topics and themes, from reforms in the rule of law institutions and armed forces to demilitarization activities and the role of non-statutory security and justice actors.

Research for the *Monitor* is field-based: a resident researcher in each case study country leads data collection and analysis, with support from desk-based analysts at The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). The same research guidelines are employed for each country. All editions of the *Monitor* are subjected to an external peer review process in addition to our internal editorial review.

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NEW FORCE GOALS AND PROJECTED TRAINING CAPACITY

Medium- and long-term force goals increased substantially in January 2010. At the 13th meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), the international community and Afghan government agreed to expand the ANA from its December 2009 level of about 100,000 personnel to 171,600 by October 2011, and to 240,000 within five years. The ANP is slated to grow from its December 2009 level of about 95,000 to 134,000 by October 2011, and to 160,000 within five years. According to the US and Afghan governments, the end-state goal of 400,000 ANSF represents the minimum level for operational self-sufficiency. The intermediate goals of 134,000 ANA and 109,000 ANP by October 2010 remain intact. The Afghan government indicated in January that training is on track to meet the October 2010 goals for ANA force levels, and US military officials close to the police recruitment process express confidence that ANP will meet its October goal as well.¹

In November, the US-led Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) — was folded into the new NATO Training Mission — Afghanistan (NTM-A) — creating a single international body in charge of military-led ANSF training. Aside from the potential for improved international coordination, consolidating ANSF training under NATO command has yielded 1,600 new trainers from European NATO members since December, with hopes of around 1,600 more to be pledged over the course of 2010 (Associated Press, 2010). Many of these trainers will be assigned to Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLT) in support of ANA field training, or Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (POMLT), which

¹ Interview with US military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, April 5, 2010. See also Government of Afghanistan (2010: 18).

play a similar role with the ANP.² NATO currently fields 64 OMLTs, with 19 additional teams scheduled to arrive shortly and 20 more required over the course of the year. Nineteen POMLTs are currently fielded, working alongside 278 US teams with a similar remit. NATO has asked for trainers to field 100 additional teams in support of the October 2010 ANP force level goals (NATO, 2010a; NATO, 2010b).

THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

While the security situation in Afghanistan remains critical, the sense of freefall that characterized the period since the insurgency's revitalization in 2006 has abated somewhat in the early months of 2010. Some analysts believe the insurgency has reached the apex of its power, with shadow governments in place in many provinces but lacking the military strength to challenge the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) or the ANSF for control over strategically important cities (Evans, 2010). Others cite broad official and public support for anticipated reconciliation and reintegration programs, which gained new institutional traction at the London Conference in January.

The principal driver behind this tempered optimism, however, is the ongoing infusion of 37,000 American and allied troops under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), many of which are training the ANSF or engaging insurgent strongholds in joint operations with their Afghan counterparts. The prospect of new opportunities to turn the “clear, hold and build” mantra of counterinsurgency into tangible progress through increased troop capacity and Afghan-led development initiatives is enticing. It is also misleading. While joint ISAF-ANSF combat operations are proving effective at killing insurgents or separating them from the population, the assets allocated

² For an in-depth description of the OMLTs and POMLTs, see *Security Sector Reform Monitor: Afghanistan*, No.2.

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to the hold and build functions are lagging far behind. The new District Development Working Group (DDWG), an inter-ministerial body with strong ISAF and international involvement, is tasked with coordinating the quick delivery of basic services to newly cleared districts through the

TABLE 1: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY (ANA)

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree Somewhat (%)	Disagree Somewhat (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
ANA is honest and fair with the Afghan people	57	34	5	2
ANA is unprofessional and poorly trained	19	33	28	17
ANA needs the support of foreign troops and cannot operate by itself	30	39	18	9
ANA helps improve security	54	33	8	3

Source: The Asia Foundation (2009: 41).

District Delivery Program (DDP) (US Department of State, 2010: 8). While the DDWG is designed to work with the international community to identify “key terrain” districts, so named because of their strategic importance or population size, an American official close to the process indicated that the new ISAF Joint Command (IJC) unit has targeted districts for military operations all but unilaterally, with little regard for the Afghan government’s inability to bring adequate resources to bear in the hold and build phases under the DDP. While the DDP is currently active in six districts, it is slated to spread to 48 by the end of 2010, and 80 within 18 months.³

The DDP’s role in the hold and build phases relies on the ANSF, and particularly the Afghan National Police (ANP), for maintaining security as it oversees development projects and the establishment of governance in newly cleared areas. Providing security in this expanded zone of operations poses a major challenge to the ANSF, which suffer from a lack of trained personnel and insufficient logistical support for even the current range of mission requirements. Provision of security aside, the Afghan government lacks the necessary numbers of competent public servants required to manage

governance and development, including the building of legal institutions, in these places.⁴

The implications for the SSR process are significant. While 37,000 additional troops will enable the ISAF and ANSF to clear increasing amounts of key terrain, expectations of the ANSF’s ability to play significant roles in the DDWG-led hold and build functions outstrip its current capacity and competence by significant margins. Unless the number of districts targeted by the ISAF and the DDWG is reduced, the Afghan government and international community will fail to turn the cautious optimism about Afghanistan’s security situation into permanent gains.

THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY (ANA)

ANA recruitment improved markedly last fall, growing from 831 in October to 4,303 in December, with 2,659 recruits in the first week of December alone (SIGAR, 2010: 61). This is attributable in large part to substantial pay raises for new recruits, which in some provinces amounted to an increase

³ Interview with American official, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 2010.

⁴ Interviews with American official, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 2010; and Canadian advisor to the Minister of Interior, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 24, 2010.

from US\$120 to US\$240 per month. Basic pay now stands at US\$165. Though this still does not match the US\$250 to US\$300 generally offered by the Taliban, ANA recruitment offers the opportunity for quick promotion to higher levels of pay (Miles, 2010). The pay schedule was also adjusted to increase salaries for those posted in unstable areas, to improve the ANA's ability to field troops where they are needed most.⁵

ANA retention rates remain problematic. The most recent figures indicate reenlistment rates of 57 percent for soldiers and 63 percent for non-commissioned officers (NCOs), with an AWOL rate of 9 percent (Brookings Institution, 2010: 12). A high-ranking US military officer close to the ANA training process indicated that while salary increases boost recruitment, they may not reduce AWOL rates as is generally assumed. He warned that many soldiers go AWOL after earning enough money to subsist for a period, and that raising salaries could exacerbate the problem.⁶

The ANA continues to garner greater respect from the Afghan population than any other public institution in Afghanistan. A recent public opinion survey commissioned by The Asia Foundation suggests that this respect reflects confidence in the ANA's intentions and potential more than trust in its current operational capacity (see Table 1). Ninety-one percent of Afghans agreed that the ANA is honest and fair with the Afghan people, while 52 percent agreed that the ANA is unprofessional and poorly trained. The latter number has decreased somewhat since 2007, when 62 percent of Afghans agreed that the ANA was unprofessional and poorly trained, indicating both a recognition of progress and lingering concerns about operational competence (The Asia Foundation, 2009: 41).

While the Afghan population's confidence in the ANA's

⁵ Interviews with American official, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 2010, and Canadian advisor to the Minister of Interior, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 24, 2010.

⁶ Interview with US military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, December 20, 2009.

SSR RESOURCE CENTRE

www.ssrresourcecentre.org

On April 28th The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) launched an exciting new initiative, the **SSR Resource Centre**. The Resource Centre is a website intended to serve as a hub and meeting place for SSR practitioners, analysts, policy makers and interested observers from across the world. It features:

- A blog highlighting recent developments in the SSR field;
- A calendar listing SSR-related events across the world;
- Country profiles for countries/regions undergoing SSR;
- Multimedia content, including video and audio interviews of SSR experts; and
- Access to CIGI's SSR research, including the quarterly *SSR Monitor*.

The site will be dynamic – updated daily – and interactive – with all blog pages comment-enabled and external contributions welcomed.

To enter the SSR Resource Centre, please visit:
www.ssrresourcecentre.org

honesty and fairness offers the opportunity to develop the institution from a strong position of public trust, the close operational partnership between the ANA and ISAF is likely masking issues in civilian protection and community engagement that could threaten this trust when coalition forces leave. As it stands, separating ANSF culpability in incidents related to civilian casualties or the destruction

of property from that of ISAF is difficult.⁷ ISAF bears the majority of public blame for these incidents, but this may change as the ANA assumes more responsibility for the night raids that have resulted in incidents of abuse and civilian casualties. While ceding leadership over night raids to the ANA has been a common subject of advocacy by the human rights community, concerns are growing that this change in leadership has resulted in a “blank check” for ANA abuse (Gaston, Horowitz and Schmeidl, 2010). Additionally, a series of tactical directives issued by ISAF Commander Stanley McChrystal prescribing the use of force by coalition troops, the most recent of which is said to address night raids, does not apply to the ANA (Tran, 2010). No corresponding directives have been released by the Afghan government.

Efforts exist to provide training to ANA and other ANSF in community engagement and civilian protection. The Afghanistan Counterinsurgency Academy, founded in 2007, trains international and Afghan civilian and military personnel in the population-centric community engagement strategies upon which counterinsurgency strategy relies. In contrast to the conventional wisdom that the ANSF’s familiarity with Afghan society and history precludes the necessity of community engagement training, an official at the academy indicated that his ANSF students generally lack the analytical capability to turn cultural instincts into good decision making. He indicated that ANSF meetings with community groups stand to gain from increased standards of preparation, better interview techniques, and a more advanced ability to connect community needs to subsequent counterinsurgency operations.⁸ While outside observers have noted positive changes in COIN Academy graduates, the number of ANSF trained is small, standing at around 30 percent of the 7,000 individuals trained thus

far in Kabul.⁹ Additionally, the standard five-week periods in which ANA companies train as a unit often preclude sending officers to the week-long COIN course.¹⁰

The ANA’s competence in community engagement is not only a principal determinant of its own legitimacy with the Afghan people, it is also a prerequisite for the ANA’s participation in a holistic counterinsurgency strategy involving civilian elements of the Afghan government. According to officials at the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), which will play a key role in the District Delivery Program as it expands, the ANA is rarely relied upon as a source of intelligence on local security conditions or for protection of government officials. Instead, the MRRD relies on “shura security,” eschewing armed ANA protection and accepting community-based protection instead.¹¹ While this may be effective in the short term, the central government’s reliance on non-state actors for security threatens the ANA’s relevance to the community development process at the heart of counterinsurgency strategy.

The development of an ANA community engagement strategy and policy has, like most aspects of ANA performance, been hampered by a lack of quality leadership. The greatest leadership deficit is in the commissioned officer corps, where non-commissioned officers (NCOs) are commonly assigned because of shortages. This removes the best “first-line leaders” from platoons, which hurts the counterinsurgency operations that rely on quick decision-making ability at the squad level. Additionally, it puts the most talented squad leaders into positions of strategic decision making to which they tend to be poorly suited.¹²

While the ANA has improved operational capacity and

⁹ The COIN Academy uses mobile training teams to bring a shortened version of COIN training to units already deployed, but statistics on how many units have been trained were unavailable at the time of writing.

¹⁰ Interview with US military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, December 20, 2009.

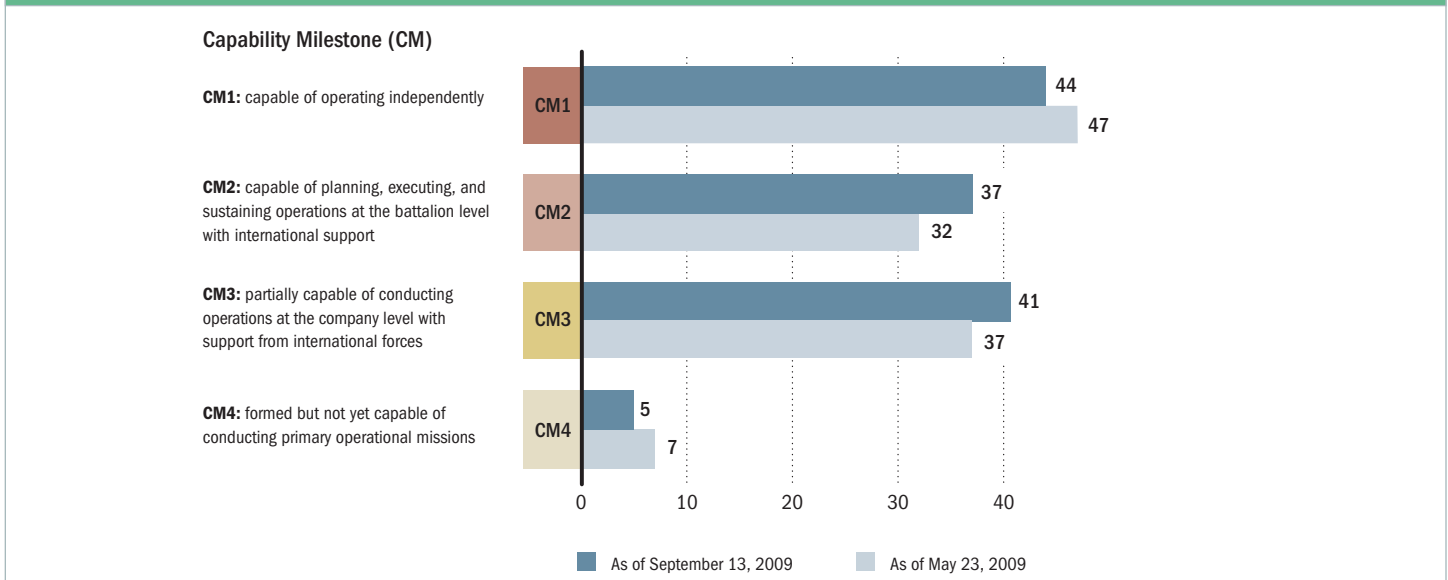
¹¹ Interview with Afghan government official, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 11, 2010.

¹² Interview with US military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, December 20, 2009.

⁷ See, for instance, UNAMA (2009: 7)

⁸ Interview with Australian military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, December 30, 2009.

FIGURE 1: ANA READINESS (IN PERCENT)



Source: SIGAR (2009: 61)

raised recruiting rates, its performance in the recent Marjah offensive has led many to question its readiness to take on a serious leadership role in counterinsurgency operations. Initially, Operation Moshtarak (meaning “joint” in Dari) in Helmand Province appeared to showcase increased collaboration between ISAF and the ANA in every aspect of counterinsurgency planning and operations.¹³ As the operation progressed, however, it exposed the ANA’s continuing operational deficiencies and extensive reliance on ISAF for strategic and tactical leadership and logistical support. Embedded reporters indicated that despite a strong willingness to fight and bravery in combat, incompetence in the ANA officer corps and general discipline problems prevented Moshtarak from living up to its billing as an equal partnership (Chivers, 2010). This corroborates previous warnings that the metrics used to measure the effectiveness of ANA training may not adequately assess the skills that determine success in combat (Cordesman, 2009: xxviii).¹⁴

Operation Moshtarak also highlighted the ethnic imbalance that has plagued the ANA in various degrees

¹³ Interview with ANA Special Forces Battalion Commander, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 13, 2010.

¹⁴ The US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) is currently reviewing metrics used to measure ANA effectiveness.

since its founding in 2002. As of late 2009, ethnic Tajiks continued to be overrepresented among ANA personnel, comprising approximately 41 percent of the officer corps, while Pashtuns make up approximately 25 percent (SIGAR, 2009: 59). Pashtuns make up 42 percent of the population, and Tajiks 27 percent (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). While there is little evidence to indicate that the ethnic balance of ANA personnel involved in the Marjah offensive differed from that of the ANA as a whole, some Pashtuns have pointed to the concentration of fighting in Pashtun areas and even the use of the Dari word “Moshtarak” as indicators of ethnic favoritism in ANA and ISAF strategic decision making.¹⁵

THE AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE (ANP)

In the fourth quarter of 2009, the ANP added 13,299 recruits, increasing the overall force size by around 16.5 percent (SIGAR, 2010: 59). The ANP officers received a pay raise of US\$45 per month plus hazard pay for duty in particularly dangerous areas, increasing ANP wages

¹⁵ Interviews with Afghan aid workers, Afghanistan, February 20, 2010.

TABLE 2: ANP PAY SCALES, ORIGINAL AND REVISED (BY YEARS EXPERIENCE, IN US\$)

ANP Rank	Pay	ANP Receives Longevity Pay Per New Scale	ANSF Rank	<1 to 3	<3	<6	<9	<12	<15	<18	<21	<24
GEN	900		GEN	945	990	1,005	1,020	1,035	1,050	1,065	1,080	1,095
LTG	800		LTG	845	890	905	920	935	950	965	980	995
MG	700		MG	745	800	815	830	845	860	875	890	905
BG	600		BG	645	700	715	730	745	760	775	790	805
COL	450		COL	495	530	545	560	575	590	605	620	635
LTC	400		LTC	445	480	495	510	525	540	555	570	585
MAJ	350		MAJ	395	430	445	460	475	490	505	520	535
CPT	300		CPT	345	360	365	380	395	410	425		
1LT	250		1LT	295	310	325	340	355	370			
2LT	230		2LT	275	290	305	320	335				
Chief NCO	230		Chief NCO/SGM	275	310	325	340	355	370	385	400	415
SNCO	210		SNCO / 1st Sgt	255	270	285	300	315	330	345	360	375
SSgt	190	SSgt / SFC	235	245	260	275	290	305	320	335	350	
Sgt	165	Sgt / SSgt	210	230	245	260	275	290	305			
1st Ptrlmn	130	1st Ptrlmn / Sgt	180	215	230	245	260	275				
2nd Ptrlmn	120	2nd Ptrlmn / Sldr	165	200	215	230	245					

Source: NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (2010).

and pay schedules to levels commensurate with those of the ANA. Additionally, both the ANA and ANP now offer the promise of literacy training, which some US military officials believe will prove a particularly effective incentive for recruitment.¹⁶

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) has embarked on many new initiatives for the police, including creating a registry for all ANP officers to improve oversight, and establishing a drug testing centre in Kabul to identify and remove addicted officers, who, according to some estimates, comprise close to 50 percent of the force.¹⁷

After eight years of police training, fundamental debates

surrounding the ANP's role in counterinsurgency operations remain unresolved. Many analysts, including a strong majority of the civil society community, have decried the military-dominated nature of police training in Afghanistan, because it discounts community policing skills in favour of combat training.¹⁸ Others see this paramilitary emphasis as necessary given the inevitability of insurgency-related incidents confronting the ANP, though most of these analysts see a place for both these skill sets in ANP training.¹⁹

As of early 2010, responsibility for ANP training is moving further toward military control. On the recommendation of a joint DoS-DoD audit of civilian police training

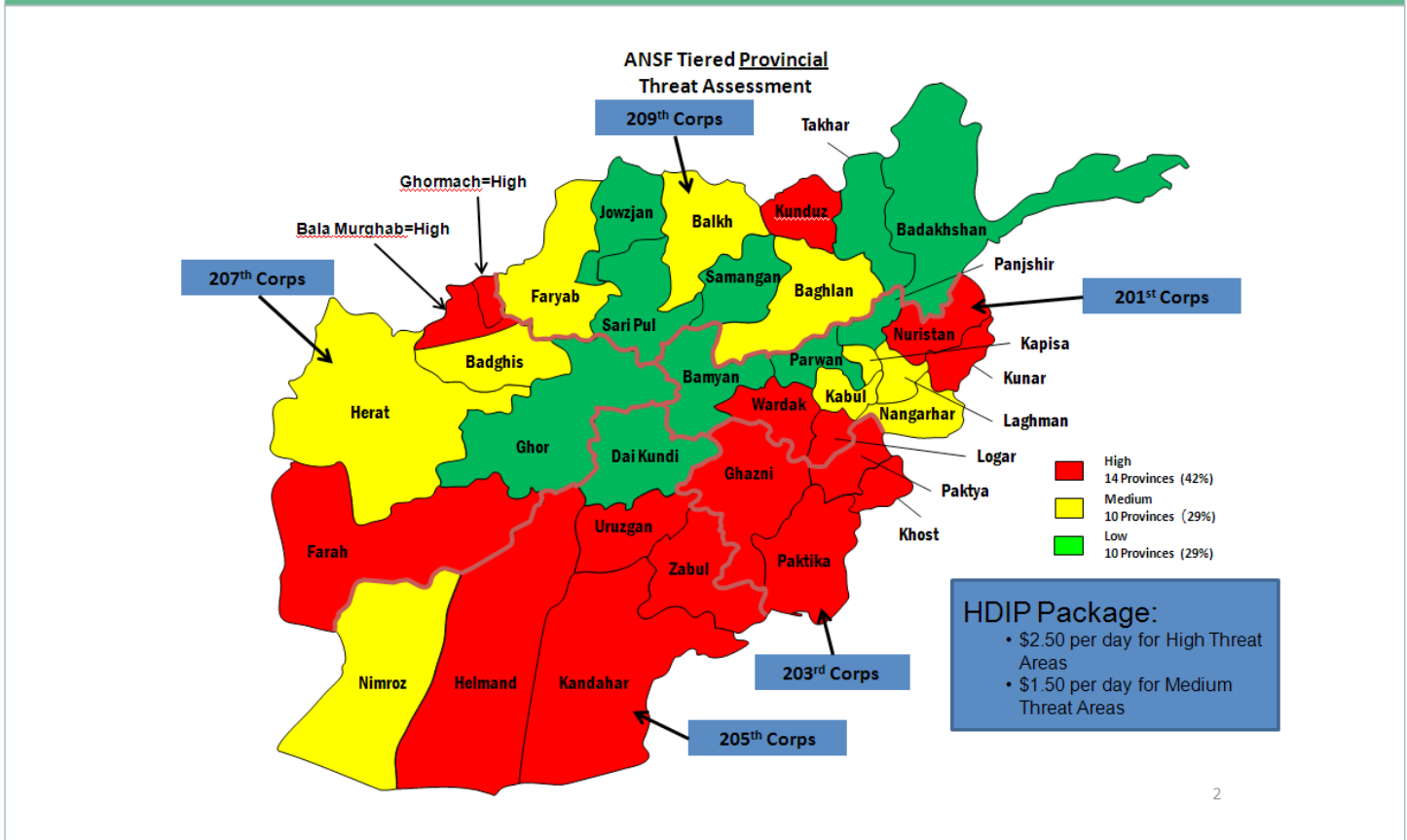
¹⁶ Interview with US military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, April 5, 2010.

¹⁷ Interview with Canadian advisor to the Minister of Interior, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 24, 2010.

¹⁸ See, for instance, Oxfam (2009).

¹⁹ See, for instance, Cordesman (2009).

FIGURE 2: ANSF PAY INCENTIVES BY PROVINCE



Source: NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (2010).

contracted through the DoS, the Obama administration has further transferred the responsibility for police training to the DoD (US Departments of State and Defense, 2010). This is due to some extent to the troubled performance of American contractor DynCorp in civilian-led police training.²⁰ Regardless, the move represents a clear decision by the Obama administration to further emphasize military training for the ANP rather than to reform civilian training efforts.

Some high-level military officers have advocated increased ANP training in community policing. NTM-A Commander Lt. General William Caldwell has stated, “you have to have a police force that people respect, believe in, and trust” (Miller, 2010). Another senior US military officer stated unequivocally that militaries have no comparative advantage

²⁰ Interviewees described DynCorp trainers as indolent, uninterested in adapting their knowledge to an Afghan context, and unable to relate to the role of a national police force (the United States has no national police force).

in police training, and that if necessity did not dictate otherwise, military contact with police would be limited primarily to training in paramilitary tactics for specialized units.²¹ The ineffectiveness of DynCorp trainers and a continuing shortage of trainers from European national police forces, which generally receive positive reviews for the quality of their instruction, have necessitated a reliance on military personnel for almost all elements of training.²²

The European Union Police Mission to Afghanistan (EUPOL) is the only institution providing training in community policing on a strategic scale. Operating with strict security restrictions for its trainers, which makes community-level engagement difficult, EUPOL trains ANP in criminal investigations and basic law enforcement techniques. NTM-A sees EUPOL as the primary holder of

²¹ Interview with US military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, April 5, 2010.

²² Interview with Canadian advisor to the Minister of Interior, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 24, 2010.

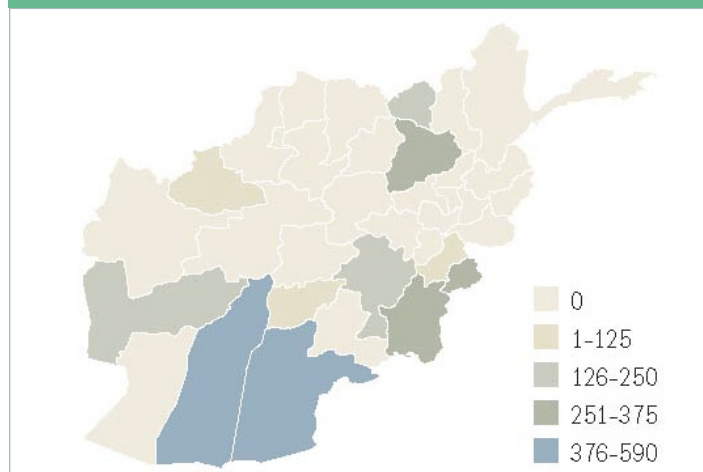
responsibility for these areas of training, while NTM-A concentrates on teaching “operational capabilities and survivability” at the sub-district level (NATO, 2010c; European Union, 2010). With a budget of only €81.4 million over 16 months, EUPOL lacks the financial resources to make a broad impact alongside NTM-A. EUPOL’s mission is set to end in June, and some analysts suggest that instead of seeking re-approval, EUPOL civilian trainers should be shifted into NTM-A (McNamara, 2010).

In a recent UNDP survey of public attitudes toward the ANP, 86 percent of Afghans indicated approval of the ANP fighting insurgents, with a range across provinces from 97 percent in Paktia to 49 percent in Zabul, both of which have experienced recent instability.²³ Despite this, respondents with positive opinions of the ANP are more likely to see law enforcement as their primary activity. Forty-five percent of Afghans who expressed “very favourable” opinions of the ANP indicated that crime prevention was the ANP’s main activity, compared with 27 percent of Afghans with unfavourable opinions toward the ANP (UNDP, 2009: 14–16).

Regardless of what roles Afghans expect police to play in their communities, a preponderance of anecdotal evidence suggests that trust in the ANP to uphold the rule of law and act in the public interest is critically low.²⁴ Many Afghans in newly cleared areas exhibit a distinct fear of new police units based on previous experiences in which local police were shown to be corrupt and abusive (Miller, 2010).

Members of the Afghan human rights community have been vocal about the need for better oversight of the police, and prioritize training in human rights, rule of law and community engagement in their advocacy.²⁵ The Afghan

FIGURE 3: DEPLOYMENT OF ANP TRAINING GRADUATES BY PROVINCE



Source: SIGAR (2009: 64).

Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) runs its own training programs for both ANP and ANA officers, but an AIHRC official expressed frustration at the level of interest and commitment exhibited by trainees. In addition, trainings focus mostly on concepts of human rights, leaving newly trained ANSF officers to determine methods for implementing and disseminating the information to those under their command.²⁶

As with the ANA, the growing number of “clear” operations by joint ISAF-ANSF forces in unstable areas will put increasing pressure on the ANP to perform security functions across more territory as the hold and build stages begin. The Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) is playing a central role as a “hold force,” using its paramilitary training to provide security in recently cleared areas.²⁷ While ANCOP’s professionalism and operational competence in the aftermath of the Marjah offensive have been praised by US Marines (Nissenbaum, 2010), the force has suffered from a logistical support structure that a US military official described as “austere and immature.”²⁸ The use of ANCOP as a “hold force” in a rapidly increasing

²³ Only 31 percent of respondents in Helmand, Kandahar and Zabul reported that the ANP is fighting insurgents “a lot” or “some,” despite the fact that these areas experience some of the country’s highest ANP casualty rates.

²⁴ This is in contrast to public perceptions of ANP competence in responding to small crimes, which were shown to be surprisingly positive (UNDP, 2009: 17).

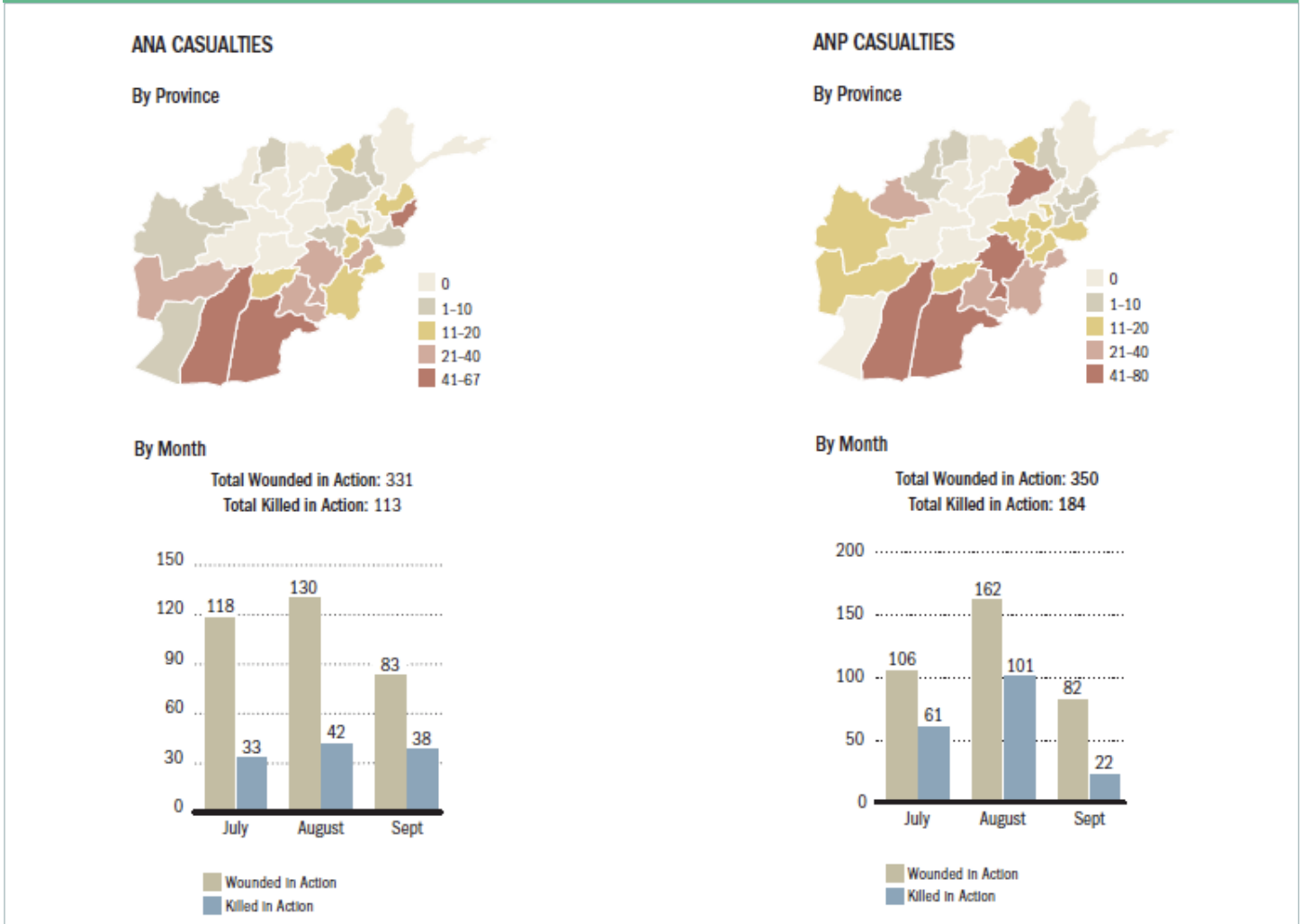
²⁵ Interview with AIHRC official, Kabul, Afghanistan, March 2, 2010.

²⁶ Interview with AIHRC official, Kabul, Afghanistan, March 2, 2010.

²⁷ For a detailed description of ANCOP, see *Security Sector Reform Monitor: Afghanistan* No. 2.

²⁸ Interview with US military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, April 5, 2010.

FIGURE 4: ANA AND ANP COMPARATIVE CASUALTIES



Source: SIGAR (2009: 62, 64).

number of areas risks further overloading its logistics capability and hindering its effectiveness.²⁹

The increase in policing requirements for newly cleared communities may also exacerbate the rate at which poorly trained ANP units suffer casualties. The Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP), supposedly a community policing force that makes up around 65 percent of the ANP, continues to be sent to Afghanistan’s most dangerous areas to provide paramilitary support when ANCOP units are unavailable. Despite the consistency of ANP deployments to these areas, training and equipment is not commensurate with

that of the ANA, and the ANP continues to take casualties at three-to-four times the rate of the ANA (Cordesman, 2009: 72). While recruitment has improved, the increasing extent to which the AUP operates as a de facto paramilitary force may slow the rate of this improvement.³⁰

Some officials express concern that increased policing requirements for newly cleared districts will necessitate shortening training programs or endanger them all together. The Focused District Development Program (FDD)³¹, which pulls police units out of a district for eight-

²⁹ Interview with Canadian advisor to the Minister of Interior, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 24, 2010.

³⁰ Interview with Canadian advisor to the Minister of Interior, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 24, 2010.

³¹ For a detailed description of the Focused District Development Program, see *Security Sector Reform Monitor: Afghanistan* No. 2.

week training programs while ANCOP takes over policing duties, is at particular risk due to ANCOP's increasing responsibilities as a "hold force."³²

This is cause for concern, particularly in light of recent statements by Lt. General Caldwell indicating that only around one-quarter of the police force has received formal instruction of any kind (Miller, 2010). Until the spring of this year, ANP recruits commonly proceeded directly from recruitment to field assignment. The eight-week basic training was commonly delayed until units could be brought back to Kabul under FDD, and most recruits received no training at all. In an effort to provide training to a greater number of new recruits while meeting requirements for force deployment, NTM-A has shortened the basic training program to six weeks and ensured that all new recruits receive this training prior to deployment. The curriculum and total number of training hours is unchanged, with longer working days and an increase from five training days per week to six.³³

LOCAL DEFENCE INITIATIVES

ANSF and international collaboration with armed non-state actors in contested areas has increased somewhat in the first months of 2010. The addition of the Community Defense Initiative (CDI) to the ongoing Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3)³⁴ now allows for engagement with armed non-state actors through a variety of implementation and control mechanisms. Collectively, the programs are referred to as Local Defensive Initiatives (LDI).

The Afghan-led AP3 empowers local elders to form militias for community protection under ANP oversight, providing arms and salaries through the MoI. By contrast, the American-led CDI provides support in the form of

logistical assistance and funding of local development projects. Whereas AP3 enables the creation of entirely new militias at the behest of local police and community elders, CDI assists armed community groups that have formed organically, consolidating opposition to insurgents and providing a development incentive for neighbouring communities to follow suit.

While CDI avoids AP3's incendiary practice of arming militias directly, the potential pitfalls remain numerous. Concerns about encouraging impunity and lawlessness in CDI areas through the empowerment of local strongmen seem to have been somewhat mitigated by a strong reliance on local shuras for vetting and oversight. The more immediate concern, including to representatives of human rights groups, pertains to the difficulty for outsiders to assess interests and loyalties locally.³⁵

ANSF and US Special Forces in targeted LDI environments work to assess whether an armed force's opposition to insurgents is based on ideology or retribution, or whether it instead stems from intra- or intercommunity conflicts. This calculation is notoriously difficult to make, and the reality is rarely simple. Aside from the potential for inciting intercommunity violence through targeted support, LDI risks encouraging non-LDI communities to rely on insurgents for security guarantees against their LDI-supported neighbours. While careful community assessment has prevented this in most AP3 areas, difficulties in making these judgements naturally limit the scope and reach of both LDI initiatives. To this point, LDI's centrality in counterinsurgency operations appears to have been artificially inflated in media reporting.³⁶

A recent agreement between American officials and elders of the Shinwari tribe of eastern Afghanistan is an exception. While it remains unclear whether the decision

³² Interview with American official, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 22, 2010.

³³ Interview with US military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, April 5, 2010.

³⁴ For a detailed description of the Afghan Public Protection Program, see *Security Sector Reform Monitor: Afghanistan* No. 2.

³⁵ Interview with AIHRC official, Kabul, Afghanistan, December 30, 2009.

³⁶ Interview with American official, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 22, 2010.

by Shinwari elders to order their 400,000 tribesmen to oppose insurgents in exchange for American aid was made under the auspices of CDI, the deal represents the first time a major tribal leadership council has agreed to such an arrangement. Media reporting describes the arrangement as tenuous, based on specific economic grievances with insurgents and impossible for elders to regulate on such a large scale (Filkins, 2010).

Yet Shinwari elders interviewed for this study indicated an ideological support for the Afghan government, emphasizing the importance of ensuring education for girls, outlining efforts to enlist eligible tribesmen in ANSF, and promising to advocate for similar actions in other major tribes. They also warned that the uneven disbursement of aid through individual elders had caused rifts across some communities, threatening the tribe's solidarity against insurgents.³⁷ Violent intra-tribal conflict has broken out among the Shinwari more recently, but it appears unrelated to either the pledge to resist the Taliban or the American disbursement of aid (Rubin, 2010). It is unclear to what extent the conflict will effect the Shinwari elders' ability to enforce opposition to the Taliban.

Despite concerns that armed non-state actors may threaten the development and legitimacy of the ANSF, there is reason to believe that militias do not universally constitute an assault on the authority of the Afghan state. Research on armed tribal policing entities in Paktia Province shows willingness in some communities to adjust traditional structures, including militias, to complement those installed by the central government (Schmeidl and Karokhail, 2009: 326).³⁸ In addition, LDI programs encourage the recruitment of militia members by the ANSF, and AP3 includes an official mechanism to convert individuals to the ANP through the Focused District Development program

³⁷ Interview with Shinwari elders, Jalalabad, Afghanistan, February 17, 2010.

³⁸ The Arbakai forces mentioned in this study are indigenous only to a few parts of southern and eastern Afghanistan, and effective working relationships between Arbakai and the Afghan government depend on a similarly complex set of factors as those that dictate the use of LDI.

(ISAF Joint Command, 2010).

Relationships between the ANSF and armed non-state actors in some parts of Afghanistan have indeed been tense. In some AP3 villages, the ANP have been under the false perception that funding from militias is siphoned from funds intended for the ANP. Some militias have also acted as barriers between the ANP and villagers, preventing both ANP corruption and positive community engagement. Either way, this has in many cases prevented real collaboration between militias and ANP, on which the AP3 program is supposed to rely.³⁹

RECONCILIATION AND REINTEGRATION

Support in the Afghan government and international community for efforts at reconciliation and reintegration of insurgents is higher than at any time since the Bonn Conference in 2001. Some of this momentum is tied to the troop surge, with analysts hoping that new offensives in the south may set the stage for reconciliation from a position of relative tactical strength. Yet for others, and likely for most Afghans, the imperative for reconciliation stems from a sense that stabilization through other means has been slow or counterproductive, and by the newly tangible reality of an international troop reduction within the next few years.

While reconciliation attempts have been made before, programs to date have been lacking in structure, limited in strategic scope, or scuttled by the international community.⁴⁰ The Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP), presented by the Afghan government at the London Conference in January, is an ambitious attempt to overcome past deficiencies and formalize the process.

While the specifics of APRP will not be fully clarified

³⁹ Interview with American official, Kabul, Afghanistan, February 22, 2010.

⁴⁰ For a comprehensive list, see Semple (2009). *Reconciliation in Afghanistan*.

until early this summer at the proposed Kabul Conference, the program will attempt to build on the few successful aspects of previous efforts, relying heavily on the influence of provincial governors and community organizations for supervision and monitoring. Plans include organizing a consultative “Peace Jirga,” which will bring a variety of Afghan stakeholders to Kabul to discuss the framework for reconciliation, and establishing a Peace and Reintegration Trust Fund, to be administered by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (Government of Afghanistan, 2010). The fund received international pledges totaling US\$140 million at the London Conference, covering the estimated cost of the program’s first year, with expectations that pledges could total up to US\$500 million in the coming years (Penfold, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Security sector reform in Afghanistan has taken on new urgency, offering opportunities for quick progress but presenting serious risks. With July 2011 looming, the ANSF development schedule is accelerating, and the international community is committing unprecedented resources to the reform effort. Despite enormous stakes for the international community and Afghan government, neither has given adequate consideration to the tradeoffs in quality that accompany the rush to meet force goals. While many high-level military leaders in the field understand the importance of training in community engagement for the ANA and civilian policing for the ANP, the intense pressure to build forces quickly demands that training in these less tangible skills be sacrificed in favour of training to survive “first contact” with insurgents.⁴¹

In building the ANA and ANP, the international community has largely abandoned its own principles of counterinsurgency warfare, which call for a security force in tune with the needs of communities and cognizant

of the imperative to protect and serve civilians. In many areas of Afghanistan, particularly those newly cleared of insurgents by combat operations, the ANSF are the most visible face of the Afghan government, if not the only face. The success or failure of the ANSF’s efforts to earn the people’s trust is a vital determinate of public confidence in the Afghan government and levels of support for the insurgency.

Unfortunately, the evolving security environment makes a commitment to this type of training even less likely than before. As the Afghan government and international community push to extend governance into new areas of the country, the ANSF is expected to play a robust support role for which it is not prepared in terms of manpower or experience. By widening the sphere of operations, the bar for the ANSF is being raised before earlier goals can be met, and those involved in recruiting, training and fielding the ANSF will find themselves under more pressure than ever before to put “boots on the ground.” If plans for securing communities and improving district-level governance on a massive scale are to be met, they will rely upon the leadership and resources of the international community for years to come.

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⁴¹ Interview with US military official, Kabul, Afghanistan, December 20, 2009.

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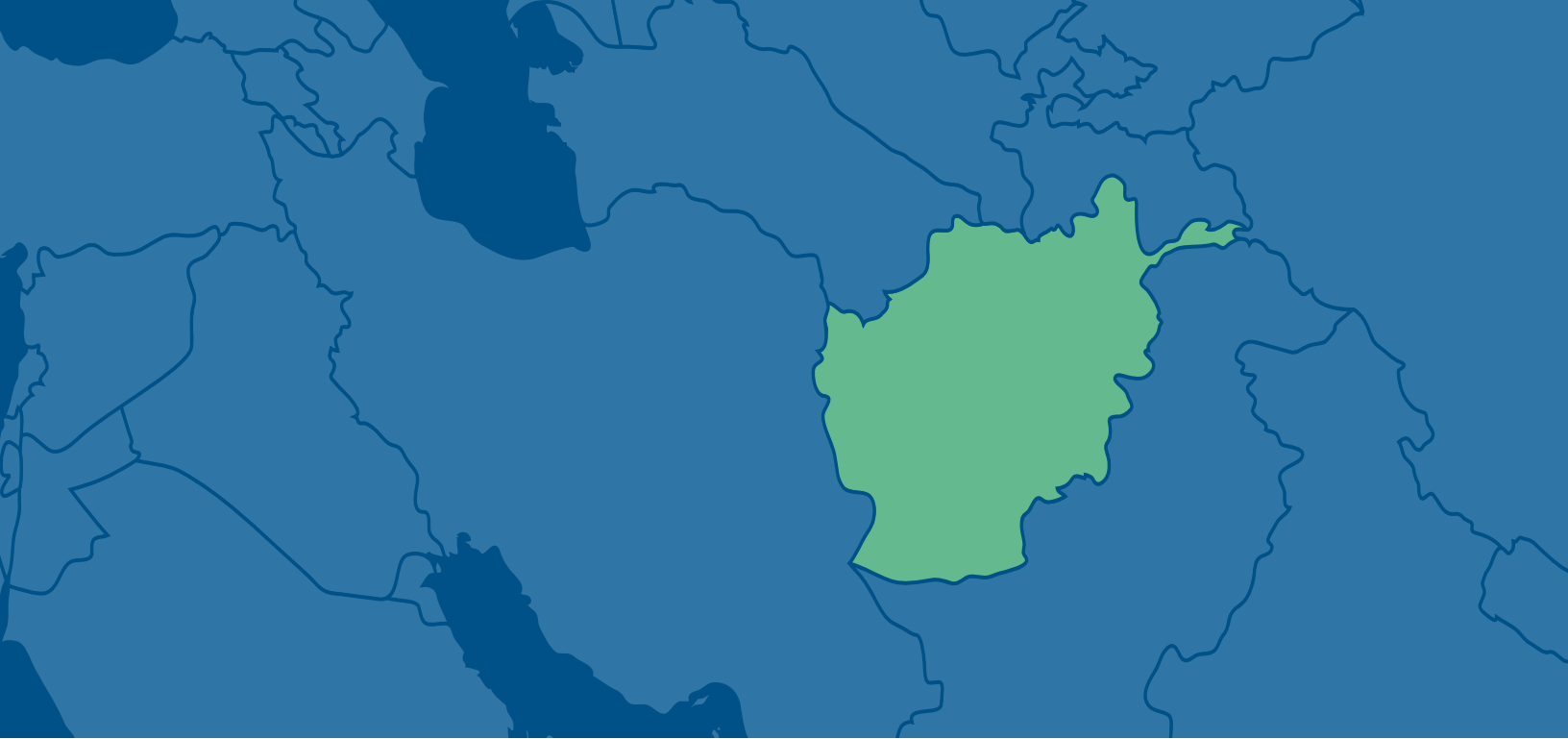
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