

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM MONITOR



AFGHANISTAN
NOVEMBER 2009 • NO.2

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ISSN 1920-1087

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Financial support for the *Security Sector Reform Monitor* provided by The International Security Sector Advisory Team.

Cover photo: Kandahar, Afghanistan – A local elder talks with representatives from the Afghan National Army and National Police while waiting for the opening ceremony for a new ANA hospital. (US Navy Photo/David M. Votroubek)

INTRODUCTION

The recently leaked assessment of the situation in Afghanistan by US General Stanley McChrystal, the top US and NATO commander in Afghanistan, signals a clear departure from existing US strategy in Afghanistan, stressing that success “demands a fundamentally new approach” favouring the protection of the Afghan population over the pursuit of insurgents (McChrystal, 2009: 1). The report recommends dramatically increased cooperation between Coalition forces and their Afghan counterparts, a more visible presence for US and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops in local communities, an acceleration of Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) development and an increase in the eventual size of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). This will no doubt place new emphasis on the security sector reform (SSR) process, which picked up momentum in mid-2009 but remains encumbered by coordination deficits, the growing security crisis and political inertia.

Widespread fraud in the presidential election of August 2009 further complicated the political environment for SSR, as it has eroded the legitimacy and viability of the Karzai administration. These political tensions, along with a deteriorating security situation, have contributed to a growing sense of crisis in Afghanistan. This edition of the *Security Sector Reform Monitor: Afghanistan* examines recent developments affecting the ANSF, with a particular emphasis on policing.

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, Timor-Leste, Haiti and Southern Sudan. 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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THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Civilian and military casualties — both national and international — in Afghanistan reached record levels in 2009, the deadliest year since the international engagement began in 2001. The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan Kai Eide asserted in July 2009 that “the current situation in Afghanistan is the most complex we have experienced for many years” due in large part to the unabated growth of insecurity in different parts of the country (AIHRC–UNAMA, 2009). Almost one third of the country is now directly affected by insurgent activity with varying degrees of intensity (see Figure 1).

AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

The Afghan National Army (ANA) is one of the most respected institutions in the country and has demonstrated adequate operational effectiveness, especially in comparison with other security forces, such as the Afghan National Police. Until September 2008, the target strength for the ANA was 134,000, to be achieved by 2013. In July 2009, the target date was brought forward to December 2011;¹ however, the US Department of Defence (US DoD) has cautioned that this target will only be reached “if required resources are provided” (US DoD, 2009). Shortages of training personnel for the ANA continues to be an ongoing problem. Of the 3,313 personnel required for ANA Embedded Training Teams, the US has fielded 1,665 and NATO states have contributed 799 personnel in the form of 52 Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT), leaving a significant gap of 849 personnel. The force expansion plan involves the growth of the ANA’s 117 fielded *kandaks* (battalions) to 179, the creation of a new division headquarters in the capital and the introduction of new corps-level artillery, engineer and Quick Reaction Force assets (US DoD, 2009).

¹ Some Afghan government officials and international experts suggest that the target date should be moved even closer, to late 2010 (senior Afghan government official, 2009).

FIGURE 1: NOTABLE INSURGENT ATTACKS (AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2009)

Date	Description	Casualties
August 15, 2009	A suicide car bomb exploded near the main gate of NATO Headquarters in Kabul, killing three Afghans and wounding around 90. The car, carrying an estimated 600 pounds of explosives, penetrated one of the most heavily fortified areas of the country, housing both the US Embassy and Afghan presidential palace.	3 killed, 90 wounded
August 25, 2009	A heavy bomb blast in the southern city of Kandahar, the worst incident of its kind in more than a year.	43 killed, more than 80 wounded
September 2, 2009	A Taliban suicide bomb killed Afghanistan's deputy chief of intelligence Dr. Abdullah Laghmani, during a visit to a mosque in Mehterlam, the provincial capital of Laghman, roughly 100 kilometers east of Kabul.	23 dead, over 50 injured (including several top provincial officials from Laghman)
September 5, 2009	Taliban gunmen hijacked two fuel tankers near a German military base in Kunduz, stopping in a nearby village to offer free fuel to civilians. Concerned about a possible suicide attack on their compound, German commanders called in an airstrike, which killed 70.	70 killed, including approximately 30 Taliban militants
September 17, 2009	A vehicle carrying over 150 kilograms of explosives was commandeered by two suicide bombers and rammed into two Italian armoured cars travelling on Kabul's airport road.	16 killed (6 Italian troops and 10 Afghan civilians)

Standing at roughly 90,000 troops, the ANA is gradually demonstrating greater capacity and capability.² As of June 2009, it had approximately 52,000 troops leading or engaged in major operations alongside ISAF forces. In fact, the ANSF led 54 percent of all joint military operations with NATO and Coalition forces between October 2008 and May 2009 (US DoD, 2009: 26–27). Concerns nonetheless remain over the focus of ANA deployments. For instance, in July 2009 British Prime Minister Gordon Brown revealed that President Hamid Karzai had made a commitment to send more ANA troops to Helmand province, one of the central battlegrounds in the Taliban-led insurgency, after it had emerged that fewer than 6,000 ANA troops were deployed there (Wintour, 2009).

² Six of the eight planned commando kandaks have been fielded and 76 of the 117 kandaks of the ANA are capable of leading operations (Cordesman, 2009).

At the time of writing, ANA recruitment rates were healthy and re-enlistment and absent-without-leave (AWOL) figures, once a major concern, were improving, which bodes well for efforts to meet accelerated force development targets. In July 2009 the US Department of Defense reported that “recruiting between March 2008 and March 2009 will surpass the previous five years in ANA recruitment of soldiers” (US DoD, 2009: 31). New incentives, such as pay increases and the option of shortened terms of service, have yielded about a 7 percent increase in the re-enlistment rate. With the rate standing at 57 percent for soldiers and 63 percent for non-commissioned officers, and the ANA desperately needing trained and experienced personnel, much work remains to be done. In May 2009, the ANA AWOL rate was 9.1 percent, with the number significantly higher for units engaged in combat. Considering that the rate ran as high as 40 percent for some

FIGURE 2: ANSF FORCE LEVELS

Component	Authorized	Assigned	Expected Completion
Ministry of Defence Forces			
MoD/General Staff	3,246	2,651	September 2011
Sustaining Institutions	1,519	1,259	June 2011
Intermediate Commandos	1,519	1,259	June 2011
Detainee Operations	554	520	TBD
Counternarcotics Infantry Kandak	854	780	TBD
ANA Combat Forces	66,406	53,417	June 2012
ANA Air Corps	3,412	2,562	June 2016
Trainee, transient, hospitalized and student	12,000	13,284	N/A
TOTAL MoD	103,475	89,521	June 2012
Ministry of Interior Forces			
MoI Headquarters	5,059	4,273	March 2010
Counternarcotics Police	2,519	3,572	December 2011
Customs Police	600	603	December 2008
Border Police	17,621	12,792	TBD
Anti-Crime	5,103	4,013	December 2012
Civil Order Police	5,365	5,462	March 2011
Fire/Medical/Training	3,149	2,388	TBD
TOTAL MoI	81,956	81,020	December 2012
TOTAL	190,275	171,030	December 2012

Source: US DoD (2009:26)

units in 2007, this marks a significant step forward (Hodes and Sedra, 2009: 58). Apart from the stresses of combat, the high AWOL rate in Afghanistan can be attributed to factors such as “poor leadership, difficulty returning from leave, and difficulty in supporting [...] families while deployed” (US DoD, 2009: 31).

In addition to accelerating the development of the ANA, proposals have been made to increase the size of the force. The government is advocating an increase to 300,000 troops, while the Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC–A) has suggested a force ceiling

of 240,000 to be achieved by 2014.³ Any increase in the ANA's end strength will require corresponding increases in resources, particularly training and mentoring personnel. Figure 2 lists authorized and assigned ANSF force levels.

AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE

As is the case with the ANA, the process to develop the Afghan National Police is also being expanded and accelerated, although at a slower pace. The professionalism

³ The latter figure appears to be acceptable to the government (international aid organization official, 2009a).

and effectiveness of ANP units are still variable and corruption remains endemic. As a result, the ANP has faced problems in winning popular support and legitimacy (AIHRC official, 2009). Over the past two years, the force target for the ANP has gradually expanded from 82,000 in 2007 to 96,800 in June 2009; current proposals call for an increase to a force ceiling of 160,000 (CSTC–A, 2009). As of August 2009, the ANP was 96,000 strong (Senior Afghan government official, 2009). Several Afghan officials consulted expressed concern that ANP force development is being dictated solely by a desire to improve security over the short term rather than by the need for a sustainable and effective force capable of upholding the rule of law and democratic values over the long term. To meet its short-term goals, the police has been asked to fulfil roles, primarily paramilitary in nature, for which it is neither mandated nor equipped, resulting in low morale and high casualties (Afghan parliamentarians, 2009; AIHRC, 2009).

If the ANP is to meet its target strength, an increase in the number of qualified mentors and trainers is urgently needed. Moreover, there is a broad consensus among Afghan and international stakeholders that a more “joined-up” or integrated approach is required, one that seeks to harmonize the ANP development process with initiatives to reform the judicial and prison systems. It is widely accepted that until the criminal justice system is improved, the ANP will not be able to overcome its problem with corruption (AIHRC official, 2009; Afghan parliamentarians, 2009; Governor of Wardak Province, 2009).

Gendarmerie

To enable the police to fulfil its diverse mandates — ranging from counter-insurgency support to community outreach — the structure of the force may be adjusted with the creation of a robust paramilitary wing, or Gendarmerie. The role of this branch would be similar to that of the Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP) — a rapid reaction unit endowed

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with specialized training — but in an expanded form. In the context of the counter-insurgency doctrine of “clear, hold and build,” the Gendarmerie would be responsible for holding territory immediately cleared by ANA and international military forces and would be equipped to

withstand insurgent attacks. Once control over an area is consolidated, the regular police would be responsible for facilitating the (re)building phase. The Gendarmerie would carry out key functions such as:

- protection of key strategic sites (such as government buildings, embassies and vital infrastructure);
- response to urban unrest, civil disorder, riots and national emergencies;
- operation of strategic checkpoints in high-risk areas; and
- securing populations and communities following military operations.

Expanding ANCOP, which has been widely heralded as the most competent wing of the ANP, would offer all the advantages of creating a Gendarmerie force. ANCOP officers are recruited nationally and represent all ethnic groups. Recruits undergo a 16-week basic training course focusing on topics such as crowd control, urban tactics and tribal/ethnic relations (Afghan government official, 2009).

The Focused District Development Program

The Focused District Development (FDD)⁴ program is progressing well, albeit at a slower pace than originally envisaged. The delays are primarily due to the limited availability of qualified mentor teams to shadow retrained Afghan Uniformed Police (AUP) units, and a lack of ANCOP units to backfill policing duties for the AUP during its eight-week training session, when units are absent from targeted districts. According to the CSTC-A, the ANP needs a minimum of 38 Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (POMLTs) by the end of 2009 and 144 by the end of 2011 to complete the FDD program.⁵ At the time of writing, 14 POMLTs had been deployed. These

FIGURE 3 : ANSF FUNDING (US \$ MILLIONS)

Area	2009	2010
ANA	4,023.9	4,792.4
ANP	1,513.6	2,752.9
Other Activities	69.3	7.4
TOTAL	5,606.8	7,462.7

Source: CSTC-A (2009)

Afghan Security Forces Fund

The Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan receives funding from the US government through the Afghan Security Forces Fund.

NATO ANA Trust Fund

The NATO ANA Trust Fund was established in February 2007 to support the transportation and installation costs of equipment donations by ISAF nations to the ANA. In early 2008, it was expanded to include sustainment costs and in March 2009 non-NATO members were allowed to contribute. As of June 2009, roughly US\$36 million (€24 million) had been contributed to the purchase of ANA equipment and services and US\$331 million (€221 million) towards ANA sustainment (NATO, 2009).

requirements will, however, be substantially increased if the force ceiling for the police is raised in the years ahead (CSTC-A, 2009).

To date, police in 55 districts of eight provinces have completed FDD training and 100 more districts have been earmarked for participation in 2010 (CSTC-A, 2009). CSTC-A officials expect that the program, if it is endowed with the necessary resources, will have achieved full national coverage by 2014. In addition to addressing the gap in police mentors, the completion of FDD will be dependant on a number of factors, including any changes in the force ceiling or organizational structure for the police (the *tashkil*⁶), the evolving security environment and fluctuations in funding levels (see Figure 3).

⁴ For a description of the FDD program, see CIGI (2009).

⁵ A POMLT typically consists of 7–10 military and/or civilian police.

⁶ The *tashkil* is an institutional document that outlines the organizational structure of a government ministry or department, including personnel end strength, command relationships, and unit and staff functions.

Some international observers have voiced concerns about the program's effectiveness, suggesting that a review be undertaken to ensure that provided assistance adequately addresses the needs of the ANP. These concerns have pertained both to the structure and design of the training as well as to the criteria for selecting priority districts. FDD is largely focused on expanding the paramilitary capacity of the police to better enable it to contribute to counter-insurgency operations. As a result, the training regimen offers little instruction in core policing skills such as community engagement and criminal investigation. Reflecting the counter-insurgency focus, the revised FDD training program of November 2008 removed modules on domestic violence, community policing, democratic policing and women's rights, and replaced them with advanced instruction on shooting and survival skills (Chilton, Schiewek and Bremmers, 2009). CSTC-A officials have admitted that problems in threat assessment and insufficient advisors have meant that the selection of districts has not always been adequately informed by the needs on the ground (see Figure 4).

ANP force development is not solely the domain of the CSTC-A. After a slow start following its establishment in 2007, the EU Police Mission (EUPOL) gradually expanded its operations. Current EUPOL training programs include leadership development, counter-terrorism, crime scene investigation, and surveillance (International aid organization official, 2009c). EUPOL has faced problems staffing the mission since its inauguration. While progress has been made to rectify this problem, the mission remains understaffed. With a personnel ceiling of 400, the mission currently has 225 officers supported by 123 local staff, operating in 16 of the country's 34 provinces.

Current Police Mentoring Capacity

More than 500 civilian police advisors are serving as instructors at the country's Central and Regional Training

FIGURE 2: FDD SELECTION CRITERIA

During the first seven cycles of the FDD program, there were no formal procedures to facilitate Afghan government input into the selection of districts to be targeted. FDD cycle eight, however, will incorporate a more collaborative approach to district selection (international aid organization official, 2009b). In June 2009, CSTC-A, US Forces Afghanistan, ISAF, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the Integrated Civilian–Military Action Group and the Ministry of Interior compiled a prioritized list of FDD districts coordinated closely with the counter-insurgency strategy. This collaborative approach to district selection will continue for future FDD cycles. It is important to note that the first six cycles of FDD included only district-level AUP. In contrast, cycle seven consisted of eight provincial police companies and four district units mentored by teams from Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom (Chilton, Schiewek and Bremmers, 2009).

Centres and as mentors in the field at the regional, provincial and district levels. Civilian police mentors, many of whom operate within POMLTs, work alongside more than 1,000 military mentors focused on police development. The widespread engagement of military personnel can be attributed to the difficulty of attracting qualified civilian policing experts. US mentors, numbering more than 600, consist of contractors from the private security company DynCorp, military police, reservists with a police background and special police advisors attached to CSTC-A (Chilton, Schiewek and Bremmers, 2009). Various donors also provide ad hoc bilateral police mentorship at the provincial and district levels through Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Concerns have been expressed over the allocation and distribution of mentors. Several high-ranking Afghan police officials have been provided with multiple mentors — up to four in the case of one police general — while whole districts of the country lack any mentor presence whatsoever (International aid organization official, 2009a).

The International Police Coordination Board

The International Police Coordination Board (IPCB) has become the primary coordinating body for police reform in Afghanistan. Although formed in January 2007, the IPCB did not demonstrate the capability to fulfil its mandate until the beginning of 2009, leaving a coordination gap in the process (International aid organization official, 2009c). Previously, due to the absence of an overarching police strategy, individual donors focused on the establishment of bilateral policing programs and initiatives with the Afghan government. This approach resulted in overlap, duplication and confusion.

With key stakeholders in the police reform process now demonstrating a greater willingness to be coordinated by a central body, the IPCB is showing promise that it may bring greater coherence to a process that has largely been defined by its dysfunctionality. In several areas, donors and the Ministry of Interior still operate outside of agreed structures and beyond the authority of the IPCB, but this may be becoming the exception rather than the rule. The IPCB is expected to take a lead role in supporting the Afghan government to develop a comprehensive policing strategy. To further empower the body, plans have been introduced to appoint an IPCB Special Representative, who will serve as the chairperson and political representative for the board and, by extension, the whole police reform process.

THE AFGHAN PUBLIC PROTECTION PROGRAM

As discussed in the July 2009 edition of the *Security Sector Reform Monitor: Afghanistan*, the goal of the Afghan Public Protection Program (APPP) is to engage and empower the Afghan population to secure their communities. The pilot

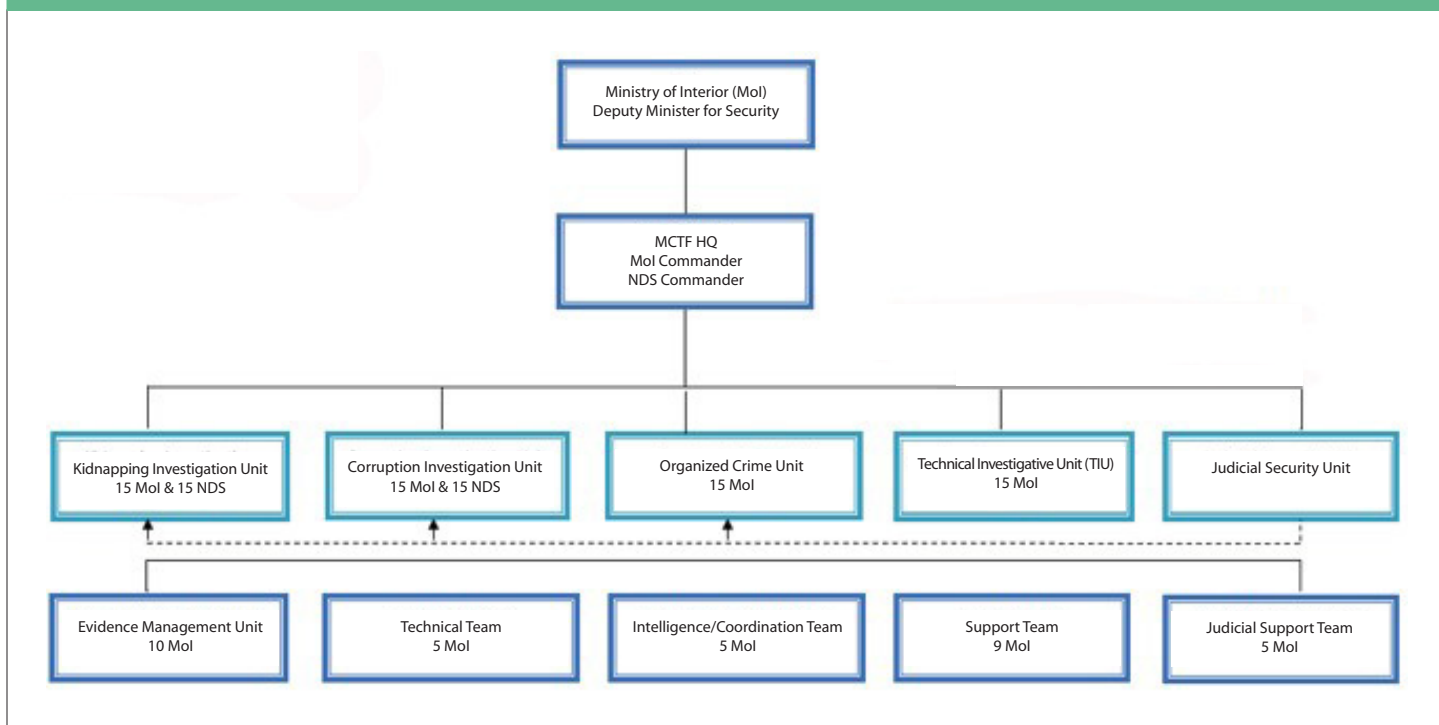
for the APPP in Wardak Province was touted by Afghan government and Coalition military officials as a success, although some more critical reviews have emerged from other segments of the international donor community and civil society.⁷ The Governor of Wardak province, Mohammad Halim Fidai, has identified a number of lessons from the pilot program that should inform its roll-out across the country (governor of Wardak Province, 2009; AIHCR, 2009):

1. Candidates for the program need to be fully vetted by local community leaders.
2. ANP command and control over the force must be clear and robust.
3. ISAF needs to play a strong advisory and oversight role over the program.
4. The program needs to be better linked to local development initiatives.
5. It is important to avoid a “one size fits all” approach to the implementation of the program in different districts and geographic areas.

The success of the program will depend largely on the level of legitimacy it enjoys at the community level, raising the importance of community outreach and the endorsement of key local leaders. In areas where anti-government sentiments are strong, the APPP is unlikely to gain much traction and may even prove counterproductive if it is perceived as an attempt to co-opt or control the local population. It is therefore not likely that the program can be uniformly applied across the country. Rather, informed decisions will have to be made, based on detailed assessments

⁷ Some civil society groups have expressed concern that the Wardak pilot initiative was rushed to coincide with the timetable for the presidential elections and that adequate safeguards to ensure the observance of human rights standards have yet to be established.

FIGURE 5: MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE STRUCTURE



of the program's suitability in a given geographic area. Kunduz has been selected as the site for the second phase of the pilot program.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE

As illustrated in Figure 5, the Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF) is a collaborative initiative of the Afghan Ministry of Interior and National Directorate of Security (NDS); the US Marshals Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Drug Enforcement Administration; and the UK Serious Organized Crime Agency. The US Department of Justice is also devoting six attorney mentors/advisors, the CSTC-A is providing funding and administrative support and the Australian Federal Police is providing a senior liaison officer. The MCTF will serve as the central investigative agency in the country, focusing on the most serious criminal offences.

The MCTF comprises three investigative units: anti-corruption, kidnapping and organized crime. The current

tashkil provides for 130 Afghan investigators, 100 of whom are affiliated with the Ministry of Interior and 30 of whom have ties to the NDS. This number will probably exceed 200 by late 2010 (International aid organization official, 2009d). All of the agents are carefully vetted and provided with specialized training in investigative techniques. The cases developed by each of the three units will be passed forward to relevant departments in the Attorney General's Office (AGO) for prosecution. The Corruption Investigation Unit will, for example, forward all the corruption-related cases to the newly established Anti-Corruption Unit of the AGO. Discussions are ongoing between government and key MCTF donors on a proposal to assign dedicated staff in the AGO and the Supreme Court to handle all cases submitted by the MCTF.

CONCLUSION

Afghanistan's rapidly deteriorating security situation, coupled with a rise in political tensions surrounding the disputed presidential election, has cast a pall over the entire

state-building project — and the SSR process is no exception. Nonetheless, new infusions of resources and some progress in the development of an integrated, “joined-up” approach to reforms, which had been lacking since their inception, could facilitate a major leap forward. Current debates over plans to drastically expand the Afghan National Security Forces represent an important recognition of the centrality of SSR for the country’s long-term stability, but only as long as they do not serve as a pretext for a premature withdrawal of international military forces or a decline in support for civilian dimensions of the process, such as justice reform. A trend towards militarization in the process can already be detected in programs such as the FDD and the APPP, which does not bode well for the development of a democratically accountable, rights-respecting security sector rooted in the rule of law.

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CIGI was founded in 2002 by Jim Balsillie, co-CEO of RIM (Research In Motion), and collaborates with and gratefully acknowledges support from a number of strategic partners, in particular the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario. CIGI gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the Government of Canada to its endowment fund.

Le CIGI a été fondé en 2002 par Jim Balsillie, co-chef de la direction de RIM (Research In Motion). Il collabore avec de nombreux partenaires stratégiques et exprime sa reconnaissance du soutien reçu de ceux-ci, notamment de l'appui reçu du gouvernement du Canada et de celui du gouvernement de l'Ontario. Le CIGI exprime sa reconnaissance envers le gouvernement du Canada pour sa contribution à son Fonds de dotation.



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