



# AFGHANISTAN

## TASK FORCE





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Afghanistan Task Force  
*What India Can Do*

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## PREFACE

The Ananta Aspen Centre-Delhi Policy Group Task Force on Afghanistan was set up in 2013. Its purpose is to outline policy options for the Government of India post 2014, when the decline in international military presence and attention will set in, throwing greater responsibility on regional actors to take the lead in initiatives for peace and stabilization in Afghanistan.

India has good reason to be concerned about the post-2014 period. Indian security was severely threatened by factions in Afghanistan during the late 1990s and could be threatened once again. This is an eventuality that the Indian Government must seek to prevent.

With the onus now on regional countries to step up their aid and support for Afghanistan as it undergoes three transitions – security, political and economic – the Government of India will have to take some tough decisions. To what extent can India take a leadership role, along with other regional powers such as China, Iran and Russia, in accordance with Afghan wishes? Can India afford to focus on some sectors of the transition alone or is a comprehensive approach called for? What would a comprehensive approach require, and what will the new government in Afghanistan (which should be in place by late summer 2014) expect?

India is a close partner of Afghanistan and one of the most popular countries as far as Afghans are concerned. This position has been hard and painfully won: Many Indians have lost their lives in humanitarian action in Afghanistan, as have Afghans in protecting them. India's options have been severely limited by Pakistani hostility and by the Afghan and international need to make Pakistan a part of the solution. The Indian Government has worked hard to assuage the Pakistan Government's reservations about Indian engagement in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's other neighbours and the wider Heart of Asia region also welcome India's close engagement with Afghanistan and would like to see India take a more proactive role in the post-2014 period. So, would the rest of the international community. Given this situation, we believe India needs to step up its political, diplomatic, security relations with Afghanistan, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

The Task Force has worked for close to a year on this Report. Task Force members have visited Afghanistan, China, Iran and Tajikistan and held extensive discussions with a wide cross-section of actors. Its recommendations have been developed after a series of bilateral, trilateral and regional meetings in Kabul, Herat, Goa, Jaipur and New Delhi involving Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the U.S. and Uzbekistan, as well as the EU and UN.

Given that considerable uncertainty surrounds the future of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF), as of the writing of this Report, the Task Force members agree that security issues are paramount. The core of this Report, therefore, comprises the security recommendations. We hope these will spur a wider policy consideration of India's options in Afghanistan and its neighbourhood.

## **Task Force Team Members**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. India has a vital stake in Afghanistan's stability and in avoiding a repetition of the spillover of tensions and terrorist activity into the country. India's developmental assistance to Afghanistan has thus far been shaped to build infrastructure, aid capacity building and support social empowerment, all as per Afghanistan's own requests; this must now be expanded to incorporate military cooperation. India shares a common interest with Afghanistan in strengthening the bilateral strategic partnership through substantive and long-term exchanges in all sectors, including security. Mere supply of infrastructure and economic assistance without backing it with a display of the intention to protect Indian interests would be a waste of strategic effort and investment. Simultaneously, India should maintain active dialogue and cooperate with all major external players in creating an environment that helps to secure peace, stability and economic and social progress in Afghanistan.
2. Uncertainties permeate the security, political and economic transitions in Afghanistan as the withdrawal of American and International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) approaches in the course of 2014.
3. The security transition hinges on the ability of the ANDSF to maintain peace and stability within the country in the face of terrorist violence by the Taliban, who continue to receive sustenance from and in Pakistan. The security threat is thus both internal and external. The ANDSF have the intrinsic capability to deal with the threats but are underequipped and underfinanced. They require appropriate and adequate personnel and equipment to be able to achieve their objectives of safeguarding Afghanistan's people and territory and defending the country's borders.
4. External factors add to the uncertainties about security. Pakistan's position on the need for a friendly government in Kabul retains all the elements of a strategy to control any settlement in Afghanistan with a

veto on its relations with India. It is the old Pakistan pursuit of 'strategic depth' by another name. Nevertheless, New Delhi could continue to explore ways to arrive at mechanisms for meaningful discussion on Afghanistan with Islamabad to the extent this is possible.

5. Afghanistan's strategic alliance with the United States is marked by mutual mistrust and divergent objectives. Amidst the U.S.' preoccupation with a safe and orderly withdrawal on schedule, there are questions about the nature and extent of the residual American military presence. Afghanistan has concerns about U.S. intentions towards the Taliban, Kabul's exclusion from select discussions on the peace process and Washington's vulnerability to its dependency on Pakistan. The U.S. has been impatient about signing the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), for which President Hamid Karzai sought and obtained widespread domestic support.
6. President Karzai's attempts to draw the Taliban into a dialogue with the U.S.-sponsored attempt to install them in an office in Doha backfired. The Taliban have clearly signaled their intention to claim power and legitimacy as an alternate government while continuing to strike at will.
7. Afghanistan's neighbours and other countries in the region, including the Central Asian Republics (CARs), China, India, Iran and Russia, have diverse security, economic and strategic interests and concerns. Even as they facilitate investment for projects and cross-border economic linkages, however, they are joined in a common interest in combating terrorism. China is grappling increasingly with fundamentalism and violence in Xinjiang province; Russia faces similar threats from terrorist groups. The narcotics problem stemming from heroin production in Afghanistan continues to grow and spread, with a serious social impact and as a source of funding for terrorist activity well beyond the region.
8. The political transition swirls around the Presidential election scheduled for April 2014, with some calls for a delay for climatic,

- logistical and security reasons. Realignment following the mandatory exit of President Karzai after his second term will be inevitable. All the leading candidates are however in favour of close relations with India. Assistance by India in planning election logistics would be useful and welcomed.
9. The challenges of sustaining an evolving democratic state structure amidst a highly diversified but not necessarily fractured society after 12 years of war include managing a post-war economy, which will lose a significant part of the inflow from foreign military spending. Afghanistan will continue to require foreign grants and assistance for the foreseeable future. The development of Afghanistan as a regional transit hub and the growth of agriculture and of mining hold the best promise for economic progress.
  10. Socio-cultural transformation in the past 12 years is most significantly indicated in the spread of education, empowerment of women, rise of the middle class and civil society and emergence of independent media. Each of these sectors is fragile in the face of historical biases. There are serious concerns, even fear, about the return of fundamentalism and extremism if the Taliban were to seize power.
  11. Several multilateral initiatives starting with the Bonn Conference of 2001 have sought to shape the country's institutions and policies. Latterly, there has been a growing recognition that the countries of the region – the Heart of Asia (HoA) – could and should play a more central role. An essential and effective element would be non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs through an enforceable regional compact, with guarantees.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The year 2014 marks three major transitions in Afghanistan: (a) security, (b) political and (c) economic. As the 2014 deadline for the withdrawal of US and ISAF troops approaches, one part of the security transition has been completed: the ANDSF are now responsible for securing the country. The other part, comprising the transition of the ISAF to an assistance and training mission, is yet to be agreed. The BSA between Afghanistan and the U.S., on which the Status of Forces Agreement between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Afghanistan is contingent, has not been signed by President Karzai, though recommended by the ANDSF commander and the November 2013 Loya Jirga. Most Afghans agree that the BSA is in the interests of Afghan security, especially after the changes/additions negotiated by the Afghan government; indeed the ANDSF will be unable to sustain itself unless the BSA and Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) are signed, as NATO is committed to raise USD 4.5 billion for its costs. A large number of regional countries agree with this assessment, believing that the BSA will prevent a security support vacuum and militate against spillover effects in the region. President Karzai's reservations stem from lack of clarity about the U.S.' moves on peace talks with the Taliban, with the active involvement of Pakistan.
2. The political transition is chiefly focused on the presidential election in April 2014 and parliamentary elections in 2015. But it also marks a shift in international and regional approaches: the former will focus increasingly on diplomacy and monitoring, while the latter – especially the larger countries such as China, India and Russia, and heavily invested neighbours such as Pakistan and Iran – will feel impelled to play a more prominent role, whether for stabilization, hedging or as spoilers. A critical issue will be whether they, along with the Afghan government and the international community, can achieve consensus on a multi-sectoral and multi-pronged approach to attain peace and stability, sustain the democratic framework of the country and prevent the collapse of the state institutions that have been built over these years.

3. The economic transition will be equally complicated. Afghanistan's economy, especially in Kabul, will be immediately and negatively affected by the drawdown of troops and the probable resultant shrinkage of civilian international presence, including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). An immediate injection of aid will be required to sustain present levels. The Tokyo Framework commits donors to such immediate aid, though it remains to be seen whether the pledges will translate into cash in time. Looking ahead, the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference for Afghanistan (RECCA), the Kabul Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and the Heart of Asia economic initiatives should, if fast-tracked, have a medium to longer-term impact.
4. Of the three transitions, investing in security capital requires the highest priority and is central to any possibility of stability. Though there is every indication that Afghanistan with an improved ANDSF will be able to confront the post-2014 challenges, the possibility of complete breakdown and return of the Taliban cannot be discounted due to the ANDSF being underequipped and underfinanced. The impact of such a situation will extend far beyond the borders of Afghanistan and will be seen as a victory of fundamentalism over a western superpower. It would have global impact and be a catalyst to similar forces in Asia and Africa with grave consequences for the region in particular, especially in the CARs, China, India, Iran, Pakistan and Russia.
5. While there is an appreciation of the gravity of this problem, agreement on preventive action, especially in view of the western desire to disengage, is lacking, more so under the misguided assumption that appeasement may soften and change hearts in Pakistan.
6. U.S. assistance and support is currently vital for the ANDSF. However, this alone will not do and regional powers, most so India, must play their part.

7. The issue is not whether supportive measures will succeed; rather it is that without such support, the chances of failure increase manifold. Investment in building and strengthening institutions in Afghanistan is thus the key and India needs to be active in this effort.

### India's Policy Options

8. India's strategic interests in Afghanistan comprise the prevention of terrorist attacks against India, including training and sanctuaries, and as a corollary disallowing Pakistani "strategic depth" against India, including conventional attacks; supporting and strengthening a friendly neighbour in India's near abroad; and gaining access to Central Asia.
9. In support of these interests, India's goals are to aid Afghan sovereignty, including control over its borders and internal integration, bolster its economy and institutionalise cooperative mechanisms, from strategic to human development.
10. The available tools/instruments for India to protect its interests and pursue its goals include: extensive goodwill for India among the Afghan population; excellent bilateral relations; the Strategic Partnership Agreement; capacity-building programs, including scholarships, ITEC and the India-Afghan Foundation; the Central Asia Connect program; and international desire for trustworthy regional actors to fill the vacuum caused by external downsizing.
11. While this is a formidable list of assets, India's obstacles are equally formidable. They comprise Pakistani opposition to Indian presence and/or engagement with Afghanistan, including jihadi attacks on Indians in Afghanistan; western desire to ease a smooth exit through a deal with Pakistan; a weak and divided Afghan neighbourhood; a weak and challenged Afghan state; and minimalism sometimes amounting to fatalism amongst Indian policy analysts and opinion-makers.



12. In this connection, India has four basic policy options; the Government of India can pursue a minimalist approach; a status quo approach; a status quo plus approach; or a game-changer approach.

### **The Minimalist Approach**

12. In the minimalist-fatalist analysis, Pakistan will acquire a decisive role in Afghanistan once the transition is completed, and India's presence/engagement will become progressively untenable. Thus, it would be wise for India to start scaling down its engagement with Afghanistan; further investment will be wasted.
13. As counter analysts point out, fatalism has to be accompanied with the bottom line of security against attacks on India. Pakistan is not likely to be willing to guarantee security against attack by Pakistan-based or linked groups in return for a diminished/no Indian presence in Afghanistan.
14. What then are the minimum arrangements India would need with Afghanistan in order to deter attacks (for example counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing, joint investigation, extradition arrangements)? What would Afghanistan's incentives be for entering into any/all of these, given they would incur heightened risk in doing so?
15. Risk: This could therefore be a lose-lose proposition.

### **The Status Quo Approach**

16. India can continue with its present/evolving policy. The policy trajectory is as follows: from 2001-8, the Government of India began with establishing its footprint in Afghanistan, working with the government, civil society and district by district, giving aid and capacity-building that the Afghans wanted. From 2009-2012, India lobbied hard to be included in international mechanisms for Afghanistan (Istanbul, Bonn, Kabul and Tokyo) and founded RECCA.

The primary Indian focus was development and the economy, though India did contribute to setting red lines on reconciliation at London.

17. India has apparently pushed its Afghan engagement into higher gear from 2013, with the recently announced Central Asia Connect program. However, it is not clear whether this will remain within the development paradigm or take on the added dimensions of cooperative security and political consensus building. India did protest at not being in the loop on the High Peace Council's Roadmap, but is that enough?
18. Risk: Being left out of decisions that will affect India's security, as happened with the Roadmap.

### **Status Quo Plus**

19. This is the most likely option for the Indian government. It implies more can-do activism in the existing forums and/or mechanisms (some of which has already begun), and far more regular engagement with the Afghan President and key ministries/agencies, especially defence, interior, intelligence, and economic, as well as with the Afghan Parliament and political parties.
20. This will require careful balancing with the Afghan government and the U.S.-NATO. India has no interest in putting Afghanistan in a difficult position, which it will be, if forced to choose. Thus India should support an early signing of the BSA and the NATO SOFA, together with greater trust and transparency between the Afghan government and the U.S.; look for ways in which it can supplement the U.S.-NATO on military training for the ANDSF, and work more closely with donors and regional actors for fast-track regional cooperation. Additionally, a more active policy of discussing the issues with regional actors, which has already begun, could be strengthened. India would need to seek regular consultations on the

reconciliation process as a bottom line, on the understanding that India's concerns would be only those aspects that affect India's security.

21. Risk: Being proactive will spur Pakistan to exert greater pressure, including intensified attacks on Indians in Afghanistan.

### **Game-changer**

22. A game changer approach would be one that would decisively tie Afghanistan and India in such a way that India and Indian interests would not be attacked from Afghanistan or with Afghan support.
23. Some of the Status Quo plus actions will have a game-changing impact if determinedly pursued. But most of them rest on good faith action and are non-binding. They therefore run the additional risk that Afghanistan could use these to gain leverage with Pakistan, ignoring Indian interests.
24. Additional measures that would compensate for this gap include a Defense Dialogue towards a mutual defense cooperation agreement under the Afghanistan-India Strategic Partnership Agreement; unilateral agreements on training and equipping the ANDSF; an institutionalised intelligence-sharing mechanism; and a regionally coordinated "pincer of peace" policy in which the CARs, Afghanistan and India could jointly offer incentives to Pakistan.
25. Potentially the most important game-changer would be a Regional Compact in which Afghanistan, its neighbours, and regional countries both immediate and slightly more distant, would provide mutual security guarantees. Such a Compact would need international ratification and would include punitive measures. This may seem to be a distant dream; but the sooner the HoA countries start working towards it the less distant it will become.

26. As the above indicates, there are some strong factors in India's favor, and several against it. If properly used, the tools and instruments India has created with and in Afghanistan should provide a powerful impetus for achieving its goals, at least partly, though Afghanistan's fragility makes the task difficult. While the obstacles are formidable, given the large proportion of Pakistani resources that are devoted to its negative campaign, India's most powerful asset is that the majority of Afghans have helped set goals for their country that India shares.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Security

1. The situation in Afghanistan has changed from a coalition against terror to that of a sovereign government seeking assistance to maintain its unity and territorial integrity. From the Indian perspective a realistic assessment needs to be carried out to ascertain what can be done. In the 1970s India had provided support, which continued till the regime change in 1982. There has been an increasing thrust in providing security assistance since 2002, with genuine appreciation from Afghanistan, more so because it is based on regional ethos. In 2012 almost 1200 Afghan National Army (ANA) personnel were trained in India, the largest number outside Afghanistan in any country.
2. Given the limited time available, the adage of 'prepare or perish' may not be out of context. It is imperative therefore that India should widen its scope of assistance to the Afghan Government including supply of lethal military equipment to the ANDSF and effective training for Afghan Army, Police and Special Forces. Mere supply of infrastructure and economic assistance without a display of intention to protect Indian interests is a waste of strategic effort and investment. It simply means allowing adversarial forces to use infrastructure built by India to be used against India. It thus also means waste of effort, manpower, money and goodwill and loss of strategic advantage.
3. It is therefore recommended that: Consistent with the demands of the Afghan Government, a military delegation under GOC-in-C Army Training Command (ARTRAC) including representatives of the Indian Air Force, Counter Terrorism experts, Personnel, Logistics and Medical Branches, Indian Defense Accounts Service and others need to visit Afghanistan with a view to expeditiously assess requirements to build the ANA into a balanced and stable institution. They must be

mandated to conduct an urgent and comprehensive review and recommend options for cooperation and capacity building. This would include assessment of requirements of heavy weapons such as artillery, tanks and armoured personnel carriers (APCs) et al. Aspects which need to be followed up on are:-

- a) Training in conduct of counter terrorist operations. Establishment of an intelligence and counter-infiltration grid. India's experiences in this regard are relevant.
- b) Assistance in enhancing integration and unity of the ANDSF. The Indian Army Institute of National Integration at Pune could be asked to suggest means for increased pride and unity.
- c) Addressing personnel issues. Afghanistan is an underdeveloped country with limited options for employment. With suitable incentives, the ANA can provide livelihood and long-term security. Systems of pension, care of families in case of death, medical facilities and other incentives need to be implemented in the Afghan scenario. Remedial solutions for desertion have to be found.
- d) Building a semi permanent cadre of Other Ranks (OR) to ensure stable army. Given the ethnic and tribal nature of Afghan society, the aspect of a proportion of regional regiments could be considered. The inherent advantage of securing one's region for long term good may provide the basis. This is specially so as the last 12 years have seen all-round progress in Afghanistan specially in the fields of awareness, connectivity, education and employment.
- e) Establishing military hospitals in addition to those set up by the U.S. Given the security scenario, this could start in the safer Northern areas. Such hospitals would get inherent security, as they would also attend to the local populace. Establishment of Field Hospitals may also be considered.

- f) Ideally a training team such as that in Bhutan or Botswana needs to be inducted. Given security constraints and sensitivities, this may not be possible. The option of setting it up in Tajikistan when India has a base could be considered.
- g) Extensive and increased training of ANA and ANP personnel in operational logistics, repair and recovery, engineering tasks to include mining, demining, anti- Improvised Explosive Device (IED), road and defense construction et al. This would include humanitarian aspects like medical care. This would cover all ranks.
- h) Winning the battle for hearts and minds (WHAM). India has considerable success in this field in areas affected by insurgency. Programs such as Sadbhavana could be adapted for and supported in Afghanistan.
- i) Setting up communication and other networks based on simple systems. Increased usage of mobile phones has empowered the poor and encouraged literacy. Some aspects could be adapted to local conditions.
- j) IT training for all ranks, as also that for information operations and psychological operations.
- k) Training of complete sub units in India's Counter Insurgency schools. India has considerable experience in training units and sub units in its Corps Battle Schools in 15 and 16 Corps. All units being inducted into such areas undergo a period of orientation. This could be implemented for the ANA. With induction of strategic lift capacity in the Indian Air Force, complete units and sub units could be airlifted for such training. This would require screening of personnel and security precautions. Commando and Special forces would also benefit from such exposure.

- l) Training of Special Forces for various facets of Internal Security (IS). Also counter IED.
- m) There has been a special effort in commissioning of officers for the ANA. Posting of ANA instructors in Indian training establishments has helped in improving quality of training. This must increase. Attachment of young officers of the ANA with Indian Army units will also help. Groups of middle level officers of ANA must visit various establishments in India, as has been done for South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries as also Myanmar.
- n) Conduct of strategic orientation capsules on staff aspects and more so for higher command for officers of the ANA. This is essential for a young army. The Army War College, Mhow has organised these for the Sri Lankan Forces and it is recommended this be implemented to build up a senior cadre and long term relations between the two militaries.
- o) While language issues could be overcome with interpreters, increased language training will greatly benefit both nations. Posting of English language instructors in the new Academy in Kabul must be considered. Also Dari and Pashto training for the Indian Army. This is inescapable in the long term. This could form part of the increased cultural and educational package to include other sections of society.
- p) The Afghan government has requested assistance in revamping maintenance and overhaul facilities of Soviet equipment. This should be expedited, especially repair of T-55 or BMP APCs. Some old tanks are available in the Indian inventory and can be cannibalised. Indian repair and recovery training facilities, as also civilian technicians are available. Additional options, such as repair and overhaul by Russia and former Soviet Republics in Central Asia should also be considered.



- q) Provision of specific equipment as requested. Most of the equipment in the ANA is of U.S. origin, but the ANA is also exploring options from the Russian Federation and former Eastern Bloc countries. Defense equipment including 'A' Vehicles (armoured), should be provided or funded, as mutually agreed upon, between India and Afghanistan.
  - r) Provision of Indian equipment such as the 105mm Indian Field Gun (IFG) of which there is pressing need. Also, equipment solely for defensive purposes such as earth moving plant, GPSs, survey facilities.
  - s) Indian surveillance equipment such as the Nishant unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).
  - t) Overhaul of the four AN32 aircraft held with the Afghan Air Force (AAF). This would, in view of poor connectivity and 'no-go areas' possibly be the most significant goodwill gesture. Thereafter assistance in setting up permanent maintenance facilities for these aircraft.
  - u) Training of AAF personnel in air traffic control and airport management. Equipment for the same could also be considered.
  - v) Assistance in setting up ordnance factories for the manufacturing of basic items such as uniforms. Infrastructure exists and old factories could be overhauled and renovated.
4. All such requirements will emerge after the visits by integrated team as mentioned above.
5. With the exit of NATO combat forces, Indian nationals spread across Afghanistan would become more vulnerable to attacks by the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and similar groups, with both direction and support from Pakistan. Consequently, it

becomes imperative for the Government of India to work closely with the Afghan government with details of such Indian nationals and cooperate with the establishment for their multi-level protection while sensitizing other partners about India's security concerns and related issues.

6. The ANA needs continued commitment and support. The past three decades have seen untold strife and suffering. The possibility of the security structure breaking down and a return to war-lordism is real. There have been fervent Afghan appeals for India's support, seen as vital in this difficult period. What is proposed for India is feasible and along with NATO and regional support, should ensure the growth of an institution, which could provide for long-term stability. The time for assistance is now.
7. At the regional level, the option of a 'mutual nonaggression pact' with all neighbours should be considered. This would at least formally allay apprehensions that Afghan territory could be used against Pakistan. Regional powers, i.e. Russia, China and India must form part of this. This must include the aspect of 'non-interference' including the role of so called non-state actors.

## **Political and Diplomatic (Internal Environment)**

### **Political**

8. India's commitments must be made with clarity and implemented effectively, without delays as vague promises would send negative signals. The two most crucial events that determine the future course of Afghanistan post NATO withdrawal are the Presidential Election scheduled for April 2014 and the Parliamentary elections in 2015. The Election Commission of India can assist substantially. As the Indian elections will take place at the same time, one suggestion is for a small number of retired elections commissioners/officials to spend three to four months with the Afghan election commission to help them prepare and oversee the elections as well as deal expeditiously with any complaints of malpractice.

9. Many polling centers in provinces bordering Pakistan (South, Southwest and East) lie in a difficult security zone. The security situation can be eased if Afghanistan has airlift and evacuation facilities for the army and police. Better security would be aiding a relatively good election, contribute to political stability in Afghanistan and raising donor confidence. The enemies of the elections are likely to be deterred if the government is able to press the necessary aircraft into service. India could seek to assist with alleviating this situation.
10. Given the threats against Indians in Afghanistan, it is understandable that relatively few Indian Parliamentarians, think tankers and civil society groups visit the country, while a large number of Afghans from government and civil society come to India. It is important for regular visits to take place from India, especially by Parliamentarians, policy analysts and the media. Government should, where necessary, sponsor these visits. Wider Indian involvement in implementing the assistance programs will help ensure that Afghanistan has priority in the thinking of influential policy circles in India.
11. The Government of India should commission research in India on issues of interest to the Afghan government and policymakers, for example on current codes and best practices to resolve water-sharing issues.
12. The visa regime should be liberalised for Afghans. Afghanistan is a close partner yet it is on the Home Ministry shortlist of countries whose nationals require intelligence clearance for visas. Police reporting is a major thorn.
13. India should ramp up its mission in Kabul. More personnel are needed, especially at the support staff levels.

14. India has considerable experience of dealing with domestic insurgencies. It can thus avoid a formulaic position on the Taliban and Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami so long as this does not undermine the integrity of the current Afghan Constitution.
15. For the sake of the presidential election in 2014 and for the sake of the parliament election in 2015, it should be kept in mind that it is for the first time since the ouster of the Taliban from office that the Afghans will be attempting to hold the polls without the direct help of foreign forces. India should encourage all concerned in Afghanistan to work for a transparent and inclusive election and a smooth and timely political transition.

## Multilateral

16. Istanbul HoA Process. India is an active member of the Istanbul HoA Process and recently hosted its Senior Officials Meeting that is planning the next Ministerial to be held in Beijing in summer/autumn 2014. Despite being very active in the CBMs that comprise a key part of the HoA initiative (discussed in the Economic recommendations), India has been relatively low-key in the political discussions. The process will not be fast-tracked without political effort. India therefore needs thus to ratchet up its diplomatic efforts, both at the HoA level and through trilateral and quadrilateral talks. One step is to work closely with China to ensure that the 2014 Ministerial injects political dynamism back into the process, around the goal of creating a "narrative of hope". Such cooperation would also pave the way for a next step, to host the 2015 Ministerial in India.
17. India-Afghanistan-Iran Trilateral Mechanism. As Iran's relations with the western powers undergo transformation, with deep possibilities of a rapprochement and opening up of the country, India should ramp up the trilateral India-Afghanistan-Iran mechanism. Political dialogue apart, this mechanism should be to seek greater international interest and investment in using the transit route through Chabahar

to Afghanistan and Central Asia. It is unlikely that Pakistan will provide transit facilities in the foreseeable future, although negotiations for transit routes should be persisted with. In this regard, it is crucial that the Chabahar Port construction be undertaken with Iranian collaboration, with greater efficiency and commitment. Iran has specified that concessions at Chabahar will be given on a first-come-first-served basis, India should not miss this opportunity. India should also pursue joint development with Afghanistan of the land that Iran has set aside next to the port for the Afghan government's facilities.

18. India-U.S.-EU-Japan-UNTalks After the U.S. ends combat operations, the U.S. and its key allies will remain partners in [strengthening democratic institutions], promoting economic growth and supporting security and stability. India's ties with the U.S. and the EU partners need to be maintained. The Afghanistan-India-U.S. trilateral has held only a couple of small meetings; it could now be reframed to cooperate on the further transitions that will take place from 2014-17 and beyond to 2024. India, the U.S., EU and Japan have a common interest with the Afghan government, in supporting the democratic and governance institutions that have been established in Afghanistan over the past 12 years. An India-U.S.-EU-Japan dialogue on which aspects should be prioritised for support and development, would be helpful. Where these areas overlap with the UN mandate, the dialogue could be held with the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan UNAMA.
19. Afghanistan-India-China Trilateral Forum. Post 2014 the focus is going to shift increasingly to regional actors, including Afghanistan's immediate neighbours and regional powers, particularly China and India. China has until recently taken a relatively low-key posture, engaging both with the Afghan government and with Taliban leaders. However, China is gradually taking a more active role and will host the next HoA Ministerial meeting in summer 2014. There are Chinese concerns about a spillover of terrorism from Afghanistan to China's

restive Xinjiang region where the radical outfit East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) has launched armed insurgency against the state. The India-China Joint Statement issued during H.E. Mr. Li Keqiang's, Premier of the State Council, recent visit to Delhi was strong on terrorism and radicalization, and India and China have held a round of discussions on stabilization of Afghanistan. Continuing dialogue with China is important to ensure that efforts by India, Russia, Central Asian countries and the rest of the international community are complemented with Chinese cooperation.

20. India-Afghanistan-Russia Trilateral Framework. In the Joint Statement issued during PM Manmohan Singh's visit to Russia in October 2013, the two sides displayed a meeting of minds on terrorism as a major threat, conditions for talks with the Taliban, illicit drug production as a source of terrorist funding as well as several other security concerns. They resolved to cooperate in tackling these areas. There is a need for a high-level trilateral India-Afghanistan-Russia framework for dialogue on stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan, promoting economic development projects and ensuring that efforts by the international community are supplemented to strengthen the ability of ANDSF to meet the future challenges to security and stability. When India has supplied 105mm Field Guns and Howitzers to Myanmar, there is no conceivable excuse to refrain from doing so for Afghanistan. Arms transfers have to be complemented by an institutionalised tripartite India-Russian-Afghanistan dialogue on security issues, so that proposals for promoting security cooperation are expeditiously implemented.
21. Donor Engagement. At the international level, India should constructively engage with donor countries on continuing financial support in the foreseeable future, irrespective of the nature of security-related agreements they reach with Kabul. The focal point here would be the Tokyo Framework.

## Economic

22. India's economic assistance has been a factor in winning immense goodwill throughout Afghanistan. This has to be sustained, with priority given to the early construction of the Salma Dam on the Hari river in Herat province. The multi-million dollar project that was earlier scheduled for completion by 2010 has been delayed largely due to security issues. The project is estimated to meet the energy and irrigation requirements of Western Afghanistan, with a capacity of 42Mw of power and irrigation of 75,000 hectares.
23. The ongoing construction of the Parliament building complements other multi-million Indian investments in the country like the Delaram-Zaranj road project. The Parliament building project has been considerably delayed and its completion is urgent. If the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) is not up to the task, private Indian companies should be called in on a priority footing to assist.
24. A number of business and investment opportunities are available for Indian companies in Afghanistan, especially its safer areas. Balkh (capital Mazar e Sharif), for example, is one of the safer northern areas, bordering on Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. It is developing rapidly, with oil refineries at the Uzbekistan border, and aims to provide 80 percent of Afghanistan's electricity. There is a construction boom, mainly reaped by Turkish companies, and Kazakhstan plans to build a cement factory. The railway line to Uzbekistan is in operation as is vehicular traffic, including containers by inland waterways and by road.
25. There are several other provinces that are secure enough to offer both immediate business as well as longer-term investment opportunities in extractive industries, such as minerals, metals and ore. Both Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Investment (FICCI) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) should consider sending small teams to research industry opportunities.

26. Tens of thousands of Afghans come to India for medical treatment. An informal network of middlemen has come up to help Afghan patients through Indian hospitals; this has also allowed for cheating. Indian hospitals could consider appointing authorised agents, preferably opening small offices in select Afghan provinces, to facilitate the movement of patients can come, with a complaints mechanism for cases of cheating (unauthorized extra charges). (For a detailed review India's past developmental assistance to Afghanistan, see Appendix A)



## CHAPTER 1: SECURITY TRANSITION

### Overall Security Situation

- 1.1. The security situation in Afghanistan will not be determined solely by the number of troops, their equipment or their professional qualities. Various other uncertainties in Afghanistan will increase in the months ahead. The U.S. vacillates from talking about a zero option at the end of December 2014 to assurances from its emissaries that the U.S. would keep enough special operation forces in the massive bases that they have constructed in Afghanistan. Another determinant will be the ability of the Taliban to grab and hold territory especially in the north and west of the country. Related to this would be the ambitions and fears of other ethnic groups when confronted with the possibility of Taliban dominance. A third major determinant will be the attitude of Pakistan to the U.S. departure and its own role in Afghanistan, which so far has been predictable and there are no reasons to expect a change from its own objectives of achieving strategic depth.

### U.S.-Pakistan Relations: Signs of Bipolar Disorder

- 1.2. There are several Pakistani surrogates active in Afghanistan apart from the Quetta Shura, notably the Haqqanis and even the Hizb-e-Islami of Gulbuddin Hikmetyar. Pakistan is aware, as are others, that the U.S. is tired of this war and would, in this mood, be willing to continue to concede most of Pakistan's demands in Afghanistan. The latest evidence was the Doha talks fiasco. The continued running down by the U.S. of its one time favourite President Hamid Karzai, mostly at Pakistani prodding, does not give the Americans much credit for abiding by their friends.
- 1.3. It was Pakistan's interventionist role in Afghanistan in the 1990s that brought that country to the state it was in 2001, from which it has not recovered in the years that have followed. Despite, or perhaps because of this, Pakistan remains indispensable to the U.S.

perception and to U.S. action for its immediate objective, which is to leave Afghanistan with some honour intact. All the earlier objectives of bringing peace, prosperity and democracy to Afghanistan have been given up. The current discourse emanating from Washington DC is designed to bolster the cause for early departure and negotiating with the Taliban. Pakistan knows this and has effectively played on U.S. susceptibilities, many of which were created through astute manipulation of U.S. perceptions.

- 1.4. Pakistan is, therefore, not likely to relent in its efforts to take control of the situation in Afghanistan to try and ensure a pliant regime in Kabul which keeps India out of the reckoning. This would give it the strategic depth that it has aspired to and also hopefully a conclusive relationship to settle the Durand Line issue. There are enough reports to show that Pakistan is training a new breed of deep penetration, pro-Taliban Pakistan-based insurgent to be its eyes and ears once the U.S./NATO troops leave.

### **Where Things Could Keep Going Wrong for Afghanistan.**

- 1.5. Fears of instability in Afghanistan are very real. Some of the main destabilising factors are in the domestic political scene with elections due in 2014 (presidential) and 2015 (parliamentary), President Karzai's term due to end with no apparent successor having emerged, and his relations with both Pakistan and the U.S. in a trough. Added to this would be the economic and infrastructure problems of the country and the narcotics situation, which provides money power and authority to the warlords which in turn feeds ethnicity. Although some human development indices have shown improvement, Afghanistan's main problem would be to continue to find funds for economic development and management of its security apparatus and prevent the rural areas from slipping away from Kabul's control.
- 1.6. In evaluating the kind of situation that could emerge in Afghanistan one has to realistically assume that there will be a fractured polity and

a possible stalemate between the ANDSF, the Taliban and the Haqqani Network backed by Pakistan, which could include camouflaged Pakistani intervention as in the past. Will this kind of interventionism lead the country to chaos?

- 1.7. As in most cases of this nature, all-inclusive security would obviously include political security and stability, economic and psychological security, apart from physical security of the nation and its people. It is therefore necessary to evaluate the strengths and capabilities of the ANDSF, which the U.S. now says is ready to take on the task of securing Afghanistan on its own.

### **Security Considerations and the Role of the ANDSF**

- 1.8. The big questions are: can the ANDSF maintain internal peace and secure the country against external threats? Is its intelligence agency efficient and equipped to handle terrorist threats? Does the ANDSF possess any rapid deployment and strike capability to counter simultaneous dispersed attacks by the Taliban? Are the Afghan National Police (ANP) and the Afghan Local Police (ALP) adequately manned and equipped to manage internal security matters?
- 1.9. It is difficult although very important to evaluate the efficiency of the ANDSF after the U.S. drawdown. Important considerations would be its ability to deny access to the Pakistan-backed Taliban forces, to prevent its territory from being used as a base for international terrorist networks – although Pakistan seems to be the center now – and its ability to help maintain national unity before and after the forthcoming elections in 2014.
- 1.10. The size of the ANDSF has been scaled down from a once envisaged figure of 450,000 because of financial constraints, Pakistani objections to having such a big force on its western borders and practical problems of raising such a force in such a short time. Although the figure now cited has been 352,000 with the Army

comprising 186,500, the funds available are for a lower figure of 280,000. This would include the ANP and ALP as well as a public protection force.

- 1.11. The formation of the ANA is still a work in progress although after initial problems, it has shown that it has the potential to be effective. There are problems of shortages of qualified trainers, weaponry and military equipment, and the time available has to be telescoped. Reports also indicate that the ANA and Police have shown themselves to be substantially free of corruption than the other forces.
- 1.12. Given adequate equipment and funding the ANA may be capable of keeping insurgents out of critical populated areas, or at least drastically containing their influence. This also assumes that next year would see a government led by someone who proves to be effective in managing political contradictions and ambitions as well as ethnic factions to ensure political stability and certainty. The problem would lie with the Afghan Border Police, which is reputed to have far too many corrupt and ineffective elements whose loyalties are to local interests and powerbrokers. It is quite likely that after 2014, many sections of these forces will either simply wither away, or tie their fortunes to local powerbrokers or insurgents.
- 1.13. However, the ALP is still an enigma. One of its most significant problems has been its links with the Taliban. This is most probably a need based survival issue. Yet in the past when operating with the U.S., Afghan forces have been fairly effective. The Afghan New Beginning Programme (ANBP) in demobilizing the Afghan Military Forces (AMF) has been relatively successful in abolishing these links among the ANDSF. However, inadequate training or motivation could result in the force changing loyalties once the U.S. forces leave or if there is continuing political uncertainty in Kabul. (For a review of Afghanistan's New Beginning Programme, see Appendix B)

- 1.14. There are misgivings about the purpose of the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF), which is meant to replace private military contractors. It is viewed with suspicion as a ploy to corner more power. Future capability and utility remain uncertain and along with the countless militias that exist, the fear is that these will sell their loyalties to the highest bidder post 2014. Limited loyalties to the Central Government makes these forces both a threat to unity and ineffective against insurgency.
- 1.15. The AAF is a major weak link in the security apparatus of the country. Even after it becomes operational after 2016 as planned, it would have to be dependent on continued U.S. close air support for some more time.
- 1.16. There are far too many question marks regarding the capability and effectiveness of the ANDSF or its willingness to handle the security situation on its own in the country. This inability and unwillingness are ideal for Pakistan and certainly not in Indian interests. It is imperative therefore that India should widen its scope of assistance to the Afghan Government which should include the supply of lethal military equipment to the ANDSF and effective training for the ANA, Police and Special Forces. Mere supply of infrastructural and economic assistance without the backing of with a display of intent to protect Indian interests is a waste of strategic effort and investment. It simply means allowing adversarial forces to use infrastructure built by us to be used against us. It thus also means waste of effort, manpower, money and goodwill and loss of strategic advantage.

## **The ANDSF Background**

- 1.17. The ANDSF comprise the ANA, AAF and the ANP with a combined strength of about 352,000; also, the ALP, the National Directorate of Security (NDS) forces and Afghanistan's intelligence agency. The

ANDSF are the primary means of securing the Afghan people, preventing insurgent safe havens and deterring the Taliban from returning to power. (Table 1)

Table 1: ANDSF ASSIGNED STRENGTH, AUGUST 20, 2013			
ANDSF Component	Target	Status as of 5/20 13	Difference Between Current Strength and Target End -Strength Goals
ANA	187,000 personnel by December 2012	176,818	-10,182
ANP	157,000 personnel by February 2013	153,153	-3,847
AAF	8,000 personnel by December 2014	6,616	-1,384
<b>ANDSF Total</b>	<b>352,000</b>	<b>336,587</b>	<b>-15,413</b>

Sources: DOD, Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, 12/2012, p. 56; CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 10/1/2013.

- 1.18. The ANA is the main security component of the ANDSF. It is responsible for land-based military operations and defense of the state against foreign military incursions. It operates under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in Kabul and is being trained by NATO.
- 1.19. The ANA's strength today is in the region of 200,000. The past 11 years have seen a slow process of consolidation. As of late June 2013, the ANA was leading all operations across the country to good effect, with ISAF playing the supporting or back-up role.
- 1.20. As with any young force in an underdeveloped and war ravaged country, the ANA faces challenges as under:-
  - a) Quality of trained leaders, especially in senior ranks.
  - b) Inefficiency and corruption. Instances of vanishing supplies and discipline.
  - c) Low literacy levels. Poor knowledge of English amongst the officer class.
  - d) Drug abuse. Estimates vary from 50 percent to 75 percent.
  - e) Desertion and defection. This has since improved and according to the ANA, is manageable.
  - f) Some collaboration and infiltration.
  - g) Issues of ethnicity and tribal loyalties. (Table 2)

**Table 2: ANA and ANP Ethnicity**

	Pashtun		Tajik		Hazara		Uzbek		Others	
	ANA	ANP	ANA	ANP	ANA	ANP	ANA	ANP	ANA	ANP
<b>Officer</b>	43.1%	40%	39.5%	49%	7.4%	5%	4.3%	3%	5.8%	3%
<b>NCO</b>	49.6%	32%	41.3%	55%	6.5%	5%	2.0%	4%	1.4%	4%
<b>Soldier/Patrolman</b>	42.6%	47%	30.9%	35%	11.7%	4%	8.2%	7%	6.6%	7%
<b>Total Force</b>	44.8%	42%	35.2%	42%	9.3%	5%	5.8%	6%	4.6%	6%
<b>National Average</b>	44%		25%		10%		8%		13%	

NOTE: ANA numbers as of September 2012, ANP as of December 2011.

(For details regarding the status and training of the ANA, see Appendix C)

- 1.21. Each ANA HQ above battalion level has an embedded Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) of NATO trainers acting as liaisons between ANA and ISAF. The OMLTs coordinate operational planning and ensure that the ANA units receive enabling support.
- 1.22. An area of concern over the past couple of years, while not reflective of the readiness and state of Afghan forces and police as a whole, is the killing of U.S. and coalition forces by individual ANDSF personnel. (Table 3) These individuals are either Taliban or other militant infiltrators, disaffected or disturbed soldiers, turncoats, or those who took issue with perceived and/or improper conduct by coalition forces. It had worsened to the point where the U.S. Defense Department issued two decrees in the summer of 2012 stating that all serving American soldiers were to carry a magazine with their weapon at all times; also, that when a group of American soldiers was present and on duty and Afghan forces were also present, one American soldier must stand apart on guard with a ready weapon.

**Table 3: Green on Blue Attacks since 2008**

	Number of Attacks	Coalition Deaths per Year	% of Coalition Deaths	Coalition wounded
<b>2008</b>	2	2	<1%	3
<b>2009</b>	5	12	2%	11
<b>2010</b>	5	16	2%	1
<b>2011</b>	16	35	6%	34
<b>2012</b>	44	61	15%	81
<b>2013</b>	13	14	9.9%	29

(Sourced from the "Long War Journal")

- 1.23. Marin Strmecki, a member of the Defense Policy Board and a former top Pentagon adviser on Afghanistan in a speech to the United States Senate stated: "the Afghan Army should increase to 250,000 soldiers. Only when Afghan security forces reach those numbers would they achieve the level necessary for success in counterinsurgency". In 2009, Barack Obama called for an expansion of the ANA to 260,000 soldiers. Sales/supply of U.S. arms to Afghanistan were nearly USD 20 billion for fiscal years 2009 through 2011. It is understood that the U.S. has committed to fund the ANA until at least 2024. This includes soldiers' salaries, providing training and weapons and all other military costs. This support is vital to the ANA's growth and needs to be formalised.
- 1.24. Reports of ANA performance have been mixed. While the ANA Chief expressed confidence, the actual position varies. What is certain, is that training and equipment levels continue to improve. With support as promised, the ANA would be able to take on challenges post 2014.

### **ANA Structure**

- 1.25. Currently the ANA maintains six Corps; each corps is responsible for a major section of the country. Corps have three to four subordinate brigades and each brigade has four infantry battalions. Each infantry battalion is assigned a specific area of responsibility. Originally, the four outlying Corps were assigned one or two brigades, with the majority of the manpower of the army based in Kabul's 201st Corps. This was superseded by a build up in which each Corps was allotted additional brigades.
- 1.26. In late 2008 it was announced that the 201st Corps' former area of responsibility would be divided, with a Capital Division being formed in Kabul and the Corps concentrating its effort further forward along the border. The new division, designated the 111th Capital Division, became operational on 21 Apr 2009. It has the First and Second Brigade as also a HQ Special Security Brigade.

<sup>1</sup><http://weeklyphulse.org/details.aspx?contentID=3650&storylist=10>



## AAF

- 1.27. The AAF is responsible for air defense and air warfare. It is divided into three wings, with the 1st Wing at Kabul, the 2nd Wing at Kandahar and the 3rd Wing south at Shindand in Western Afghanistan. The command center of the AAF is located at Kabul International Airport. The Shindand Air Base in Herat Province serves as the main training area.
- 1.28. Since 2007, the U.S. led international Combined Air Power Transition Force (CAPTF) has worked to rebuild and modernise the AAF. The CAPTF serves as the air component of the U.S. led, international Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which is responsible for rebuilding the Afghan armed forces. The AAF currently has about 100 aircraft. By 2017 the NATO training mission in Afghanistan wants to raise the ranks of the AAF from 6200 to 8200 and increase the air fleet to 145 advanced aircraft. Four C-130s provide the main transport support.
- 1.29. Major needs include fighter and transport aircraft, air evacuation, infrastructure for air traffic control and surveillance.

## Role of the ANDSF

- 1.30. The role of the ANDSF is based on threats both internal and external. There is deep-seated concern about the threat from Pakistan. While in terms of a conventional attack this may be low, the material and equipment support Pakistan provides to the Taliban is of universal disquiet. ANA is also uneasy about infiltration by the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) Agency and the desire of Pakistan to take control of events in Afghanistan. Details of enemy initiated attacks and civilians killed are given in Tables 4 and 5.
- 1.31. Post 2014 the primary task of the ANDSF would be to counter the internal threat and maintain national unity and integrity. For this it must possess conventional capacity to confront the external

<sup>2</sup><http://fpc.state.gov/176614.htm>

challenge from Pakistan and its surrogates. There is considerable Pakistani pressure on the USA against this, leading to anxiety in the ANA. All this cannot be divorced from governance and economic development; hence any restructuring has to be within a comprehensive and sustainable national policy.

1.32. As highlighted in the Introduction, the success of the ANDSF in ensuring stability will have a direct impact on India's internal situation; India's experience in J&K after the 1989 Soviet withdrawal serves as a reminder of the threat from terrorist groups emanating from Pakistan and Afghanistan; given advanced technology and lethality of weapons, arrival of suicide bombers as also the need to divert the energies of large numbers of mujahidin, the situation post 2014 will be far more serious. Despite being the fifth largest donor to Afghanistan, India is not amongst the 46 countries with military forces deployed in Afghanistan. It is, however, likely to suffer most from any adverse fallout. There is thus every need and justification for India to assist the ANA in building capacity to maintain Afghanistan's internal stability and territorial integrity.

1.33. Such assistance should also be part of a regional initiative. The declarations in the India-Russia and India-China Joint Statements of October 2013 are relevant. With the 2014 drawdown, regional countries will have a common interest in working together to ensure stability.

### **Options for India**

1.34. The situation in Afghanistan has changed from a coalition against terror to that of a sovereign government seeking assistance to maintain its unity and territorial integrity. This was highlighted by President Karzai during his visit to India in May 2013.

1.35. From the Indian perspective, a realistic assessment needs to be made on how it can support creation of robust and sustainable

security forces capable of dealing with post 2014 challenges. In the 1970s India had provided support, which continued till the regime change in 1982. This was revived post 2002. There has been an increased thrust thereafter with genuine appreciation, more so because it is based on regional ethos. In 2012 almost 1200 ANA personnel were trained in India, the largest number outside Afghanistan in any country. Some proposals in this regard are outlined below.

- 1.36. At the regional level, the option of a 'mutual nonaggression and non interference pact' with all neighbours should be considered. This would formally allay apprehensions that Afghan territory could be used against Pakistan. Regional powers i.e. China, India, Iran and Russia must also form part of this Denial of support to non-State Actors or its 'denial' must fall within the purview of this pact.
- 1.37. It is evident that the structure of the Afghan Army has evolved based on experience post-2002 and will have to be built upon. An understanding of this process and the organisation is therefore essential. India must fill in the gaps and assist in building it as a regular army. Challenges as identified specially for achieving a balanced conventional capability, need to be specifically addressed.
- 1.38. Consistent with the demands of the Afghan Government, a military delegation under GOC-in-C ARTRAC, including representatives of the Indian Air Force, Counter Terrorism experts, Personnel, Logistics and Medical Branches, Indian Defense Accounts Service and others need to visit Afghanistan with a view to expeditiously assess requirements to build ANA into a balanced and stable institution. They must be mandated to conduct an urgent and comprehensive review and recommend options for cooperation and capacity building. This would include assessment of requirements of heavy weapons such as artillery, tanks and APCs et al. Specific recommendations in this regard have been collated with others in a separate Chapter of the Report.

## Chapter 2: Internal Environment

### Political Transition

- 2.1. The political changes that will follow the Presidential elections in April 2014 are crucial and future security and economic transitions will depend on them. It was earlier expected that the BSA would ensure the progress of the security transition; President Karzai's delay of signing, however, has made it an election and political transition issue.
- 2.2. Irrespective of who wins, the leading candidates are in consensus on (a) the need for the BSA and SOFA and more broadly good relations with the U.S. and EU; (b) continuing good relations with all HoA countries; and (c) regional peace and economic integration. However, the ability to implement these policies will depend chiefly on internal political dynamics, specifically on the provincial leaders and constituencies a new President can bring on board.
- 2.3. The story of Afghan politics after the Bonn agreement has been to avoid rocking the boat, and to further group or factional interests through political maneuvers of a kind that settled democracies are familiar with. The underlying reason is that the power elite drawn from all sections came to develop a vested interest in advancing the system, although political competition to get ahead remained at the heart of political dynamics. (For a detailed review of the Political Transition in Afghanistan, see Appendix D)
- 2.4. Counting the transitional phase before the post-Taliban Constitution was created, Mr. Karzai has been in power for 12 years. He has shown himself to be adept at coalition politics, and the creator of a broad consensus, drawing into the power structure leaders from all corners of the country and of all persuasions, save the Taliban: the former communists, their nemesis the "warlords" or mujahedeen,

the over ground faction of the Hizb-e-Islami, the Jamiat-e-Islami, both factions of the Hizb-e-Wahadat, as well as prominent individuals from all sides of the court, regardless of their previous positioning. There have been many instances of individuals and factions leaving him, only to return.

- 2.5. Whether a new President will wish or be able to do the same is a moot point. Afghan analysts say that a smooth political transition is essential, but simultaneously point to the need to tackle governance issues as a priority, even though the latter could well cause some upheaval in the existing administration. Moreover, on account of the Pashtuns being the single largest ethnic group, they become very significant in the electoral arena, although there are tribal and factional subdivisions among them. There are political and ideological currents as well which may prevail over tribal considerations at times.

### **The Taliban Factor**

- 2.6. The Taliban have declared their opposition to the elections and have already killed several political mobilisers, including the head of Dr. Abdullah Abdullah's election campaign in Herat. Though there were hopes that back-channel talks would lead them to agree to let the elections take place unopposed, and President Karzai continues to push for talks between the High Peace Council and the Taliban, facilitated by Pakistan, the prospects for any breakthrough before the election are dim.
- 2.7. It is unlikely that the Taliban will pursue a settlement even as they demonstrate their ability to strike at will. Talks with the Taliban are still at their inception, despite efforts by the U.S., UK, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar, amongst others. The entire Qatar process of enabling the Taliban to open an office in Doha and preceding developments, have been variously presented by the intermediaries as moves toward "reconciliation" and "peace" so that

Afghanistan may not be destabilised or troubled by the insurgents once foreign troops end their combat mission. But the question is, reconciliation with whom, if the elected government and various Afghan political parties and factions are not called to the table to talk peace with the Taliban on terms that uphold their dignity by virtue of being duly elected representatives of the people of Afghanistan? (For a list of all Taliban peace talks, see Appendix E)

- 2.8. As the ISAF troops prepare to leave, Pakistan-backed insurgents have tried to raise the tempo in different parts of Afghanistan in order to make an exaggerated political point. Support for Taliban in the country is limited, including in the Pashtun areas – some surveys giving it no more than 10 percent.
- 2.9. An ABC-BBC-ARD poll suggests that 58 percent of the Afghans see the Taliban as “the biggest danger” to their country (as compared with local warlords, drug traffickers, the U.S. and the Afghan governments), and 67 percent say that Pakistan allows them to operate. About 22 percent report “some Taliban activity” in their area (in southwestern Afghanistan this is as high as 57 percent). There are no data available on the percentage of the population that supports the Taliban outright.
- 2.10. However, 91 percent of Afghans have an “unfavourable” view of Pakistan and 86 percent say Pakistan has played a negative role. This view of Pakistan is not divorced from the attitude toward the Taliban, although much is made in some quarters of the fact that the Taliban are Pashtuns. It is even asserted that the latter will endorse the insurgents in a crunch situation. Some have gone so far as to give the Taliban’s designs the colour of Pashtun nationalism. Indeed, the opposite appears to be consistent with known facts. The Taliban were created as a fighting force to emerge out of Pakistan madrasas, with an overt appeal to religion and also with a view to trumping the well-documented tendency of Pashtun nationalism, which has posed a political problem for the Pakistan State since its creation in 1947.

- 2.11. Since the Taliban (and their provider Pakistan) appear to enjoy so little support within Afghanistan, winning electoral laurels is unlikely. In the event, they may reckon their best hope of getting back to power in Kabul might be through war-making once the U.S. and other Western armies have departed, in effect a repeat of the 1996 scenario. However, Afghanistan today is a wholly different place. The Afghanistan of the jihadi period was, in contrast, a wasteland, and internal disaffection levels were exceedingly high, allowing the Taliban to enter Kabul triumphant as “saviours”. Now, the country as a whole has developed a stake in the present system in spite of the many weaknesses in administration that manifest themselves every day, including the lack of funds, corruption, and unreliable delivery of justice.

## Political Developments

- 2.12. For all the divisive tendencies that exist (as in India), and the pains that rapid social, political and economic change can cause within a system, Afghanistan has worked hard to maintain its present Constitution which has brought equal rights to all ethnic groups, the Shia minority, and to women. While 25 percent of the seats in the Wolesi Jirga (the House of the People) are reserved for women, in the first Parliament constituted in 2005 women won 28 of the seats, according to the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. The bicameral legislature has often been stubborn in facing up to the executive presidency. It merits notice that Yunus Qanooni, who challenged Mr. Karzai in the presidential election of 2004 and lost, was elected Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga, from 2005 to 2010.
- 2.13. MPs in Afghanistan are all independents, although their past political affiliations, if any, are well-known. Political parties were not registered when the first Parliament was elected after the ejection of the Taliban. Today there are over a hundred registered political parties, but the overwhelming number are paper entities. In other words, deal making can cut across political divides.

<sup>3</sup>[http://csis.org/files/090701\\_brief\\_summary.pdf](http://csis.org/files/090701_brief_summary.pdf)

## The Economy

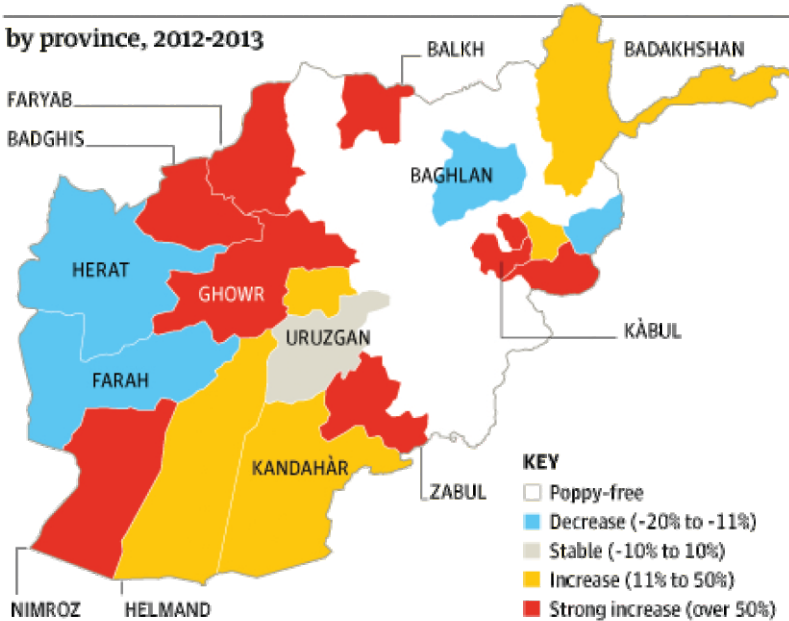
- 2.14. Afghanistan has been a war economy for three and a half decades, and continues to be, an economy run on the basis of perceived emergencies. For some of this time it has also been an aid economy, though the aid-giver has mostly decided where the aid should be directed, and on what terms or principles.
- 2.15. Some sectors have boomed, essentially those supporting military operations. Markets have opened up in many spheres. Economic activity is visible. But asset creation has not been a strong feature. Once the westerner leaves in less than a year, or pulls back on aid for political reasons (e.g., if the BSA question is not addressed to the satisfaction of the U.S.), the expansionary impulses in the economy would receive a jolt. Then much will depend on Afghanistan itself and its neighbours. (For comparative economic and social statistics, see Appendix F).
- 2.16. The World Bank projected growth for 2013 at 3.1 percent, a sharp decline from 14.4 percent in 2012. This impressive figure was the result of “an exceptional agricultural harvest” as well as a rapid expansion in services. The political and security transition that is underway accounts to a considerable degree for the decline in economic performance including revenue collection after a decade of solid fiscal performance.
- 2.17. Despite 10 years of international efforts to curb heroin production, a combination of economic and political instability and of global demand means farmers in the world's largest heroin-producing country are as drawn as ever to poppy cultivation. According to the UN's Afghanistan Opium Survey, farmers have planted a record poppy crop in 2013 (shown in the map bellow), covering an area equal to the size of Mauritius. Within Afghanistan there were regional variations and fluctuations year to year as indicated by the graphic



below. Trafficking in narcotics has created concerns among Afghanistan's neighbours about the impact on their social fabric. Iran and Russia in particular feel seriously affected; India and Pakistan too are beginning to suffer.

### Opium cultivation change in Afghanistan

by province, 2012-2013



SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN - NATIONAL MONITORING SYSTEM IMPLEMENTED BY UNODC

2.18. Nonetheless, agriculture is still the mainstay of the Afghanistan economy. Although only 12 percent of Afghanistan's total land area is arable and less than 6 percent is currently cultivated, more than 80 percent of Afghanistan's population is involved in farming, herding or both. The Afghanistan Ministry for Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) was established to restore Afghanistan's licit agricultural economy through increasing production and productivity, natural resource management, improved physical infrastructure and market development.

- 2.19. Tapping the potential of regional integration could become an important contributor to growth. Afghanistan lies at the crossroads of rapidly growing and resource rich economies in Central, South, and West Asia. A number of regional energy transit initiatives will require the direct participation of Afghanistan. These include the CASA-1000 project intended to carry Central Asian power to Pakistan and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline intended to carry Central Asian gas to Pakistan and India. In addition, Afghanistan can tap the potential of growing transit trade in the region. Taking advantage of regional integration will require investments in infrastructure, improving customs facilities, and strengthening trade agreements subject to a collective regional political will.
- 2.20. In spite of the transition-related uncertainty and underperformance, Afghanistan will need to stay focused on important medium term policy and reform goals, which include: (a) safeguarding sustainability by mobilizing revenue and securing grant assistance; (b) supporting inclusive and job-creating growth; (c) improving human capital and skills; and (d) continuing to strengthen institutions and governance. All are critical for growth and poverty reduction.
- 2.21. The July 2012 donor meeting in Tokyo pledged USD 16 billion in development aid for Afghanistan over 2012-16. Together with earlier pledges on the security side, this means annual aid of about USD 8 billion - roughly equally divided between civil and security aid. This would cover the projected budget, financing gap and allow the authorities to progress towards development and infrastructure targets. Donors wish to see a rise in domestic revenue, and pledges may be contingent on this. To this end the Government committed to increasing revenues to 15 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2016 and 19 percent of GDP by 2025. Such level of revenue can only be achieved in Afghanistan by developing the mining sector, fostering private sector development, broadening the tax base and reducing the leakages at Customs.

- 2.22. Afghanistan will continue to require substantial grant assistance for the foreseeable future. The projected total financing gap, while declining from more than 40 percent of GDP in 2012, will remain above 20 percent of GDP through 2025. (For a summary of the World Bank analysis of the Afghanistan economy, see Appendix G)
- 2.23. The wonder is life goes on in Kabul and elsewhere. There is public anxiety and uncertainty, as the shadow of the departure of the internationals, lengthens, but no hopelessness or panic, even though there is capital flight and a sizable refugee population outside the country.
- 2.24. The new Afghanistan is a reality hard to ignore as one travels around the country. There is newness of desire and aspiration, the urge to shake off the unwholesome aspects of the sociology of the past, although the old order reasserts itself forcefully. This vastly expanded constituency of the new elements of an old country – the bulk of whose population today is under 30 – is likely on the whole to resist future political arrangements that threaten the gains that have been made since the ouster of the Taliban from power. What it needs is help.

## CHAPTER 3: EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1. The external environment involves two crucial relationships for Afghanistan, with the U.S. and Pakistan. Both of these remain troubled for different reasons. The opportunities provided by a wider engagement with other neighbours and countries in the region are increasingly seen as a means to provide the assurance and even the guarantee of non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs.
- 3.2. Over the past 13 years U.S. policy has made several sharp turns, each of which has been contradictory, thereby enabling Al-Qaeda to flee from southern Afghanistan to safe havens that continue to exist in Pakistan. While Osama Bin Laden was tracked down to Pakistan and killed 10 years after 9/11, Mullah Omar directs the Taliban in Afghanistan from Quetta and Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) leaders have dispersed across Pakistan from Karachi to Peshawar. The U.S. and NATO strategy did not aim to defeat or subdue the Taliban completely, thereby enabling its resurgence while U.S. attention and expenditure was focused on Iraq. The surge initiated in 2007 was intended to repair this gap, but was not sustained. From 2009 the focus changed to exit options, including a deal with the Taliban. Over the past year, a new focus has seized attention, concerning the role and mandate of the small U.S.-NATO force that will remain.

### (Estimates in billions of dollars of budget authority)

Table 4: Estimated War Funding by Operation: 2001-2012

Operation and Source of Funds	2001-2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 Request
Iraq	0.0	53.0	75.9	85.5	101.6	131.2	142.1	95.5	71.3	49.3	17.7
Afghanistan	20.8	14.7	14.5	20.0	19.0	39.2	43.5	59.5	93.8	118.6	113.7
Enhanced Security	13.0	8.0	3.7	2.1	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Unallocated	0	5.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>81.2</b>	<b>94.1</b>	<b>107.6</b>	<b>121.4</b>	<b>170.9</b>	<b>185.7</b>	<b>155.1</b>	<b>165.3</b>	<b>168.1</b>	<b>131.7</b>
Annual Change	NA	140%	16%	13%	13%	41%	9%	-16%	7%	2%	-22%
Change Since 2003	NA	NA	16%	33%	50%	111%	129%	91%	104%	107%	62%

The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11 by Amy Belasco (Specialist in U.S. Defense Policy and Budget), March 29, 2011  
(Note that estimates for 2013 expenditures for Iraq and Afghanistan are USD 2.9 and USD 85.6 billion respectively )

- 3.3. Most Afghans and regional actors agree that continuing U.S. and international aid and support are crucial for Afghanistan, especially for the ANDSF. In this context, while it is important that the BSA be signed it is also important that a residual international force coordinate carefully with the Afghan Government (under whose authority they will operate) and with regional actors, keeping in mind the need to maintain a flow of aid that will pave the way for the longer-term goal of Afghan stability, peace and sovereignty. (For a list of all multilateral initiatives and conferences concerning Afghanistan, see Appendix H)

## Pakistan

- 3.4. The other major determinant will be Pakistan's attitude to the U.S. departure and its own role in Afghanistan, which so far has been predictable; there are no reasons to expect a change. The Pakistan establishment claims to seek to achieve its goals through negotiation, but provides multifaceted support for insurgency and terrorism in Afghanistan.
- 3.5. Pakistan is in the process of rebuilding its comfort level with the U.S. The Pakistan military also has a high comfort level with the UK and Turkey, both of whom have been extremely proactive in engaging the Taliban in the reconciliation process. With their support, Pakistan has a temporary upper hand on two issues: talks with the Taliban and border controls. In the past each issue has provided strong leverage, both with the ISAF and with the Afghan government (which has even dismissed and/or reshuffled ministers and senior security personnel at Pakistan's request).
- 3.6. Pakistan's own militancy problem will, however, take years to control, and a consensus policy is yet to be devised. Pakistan's role will continue to heighten in 2014, when the Afghan Government's efforts

to restart talks with the Taliban will redouble. The current emphasis is on these talks to be directly between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Despite PM Nawaz Sharif's promise to help in arranging access to members of the Afghan Taliban based (read 'held') in Pakistan, the only meeting that has been arranged was with a comatose Mullah Baradar, who could not respond to the High Peace Council's emissaries. Meantime the Pakistan Government's attempt at negotiations with the TTP have begun.

- 3.7. Afghanistan and India have long sought transit through Pakistan for Afghanistan-India trade, but thus far the Pakistan government has not agreed even though it would benefit the Pakistan economy. PM Sharif had made the grant of transit trade a part of his election campaign, but thus far the signs are not favorable.

### **Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar**

- 3.8. Important actors on the reconciliation issue include Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar. They have been referred to in the High Peace Council's Roadmap as key coordinators, along with the U.S., Pakistan and Turkey. Each is seeking to play a valuable role in supporting peacemaking over conflict and/or factionalism. However, it is not clear whether they are on the same page. There is lobbying to shift the Taliban address from Qatar to Saudi Arabia and rivalry on which of the three should have the initiative in reconciliation talks. Relations between Qatar in the one hand and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE on the other have been worsening for several other reasons. Tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran could also introduce further spoiler elements on the reconciliation track.

### **Role of Other Neighbours and Regional Actors**

- 3.9. The 2014 deadline has energised apprehensive neighbours. Key actors that wish to prevent a vacuum in Afghanistan include China, Russia and Iran, as well as the CARs.

## China

- 3.10. China is gradually moving to a more high profile regional role on Afghanistan, and will be hosting the next Istanbul Process/HoA Ministerial Meeting in mid-2014. China is concerned for its investments in Afghanistan and does not want a repeat of its previous experience after 9/11, when it was found that Uighur militants were training with the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan (500 Uighurs were handed over to China by Pakistan soon after). The recent attack on Tiananmen Square in Beijing by alleged Uighur militants has exacerbated Chinese fears of the spread of terrorism originating in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- 3.11. However, while asserting that the red lines set for reconciliation by the Afghan Loya Jirga must be implemented, China is hedging its bets through contacts within the Taliban, including the Quetta Shura, Russia and Iran are doing likewise. As a fallback, China has its all-weather friendship with Pakistan, but whether that will help with security in Afghanistan is a moot point. China is clearly aware of Pakistan's role in fostering terrorist groups.
- 3.12. As the most powerful actors in the region, China and Russia are beginning to see virtue in looking at common regional interests, and are involved in a number of regional bi-laterals and tri-laterals besides dominating the SCO. Both are as yet undecided whether their Afghanistan focus will remain on relatively narrowly defined national interests and therefore bilateral actions, but they have opened the door to regional and multilateral frameworks.
- 3.13. The trilateral Russia-China-India dialogue on Afghanistan that was initiated earlier in 2014 gains in importance in this context.

## The CARs

- 3.14. Most of the CARs fear the spillover effects of conflict in Afghanistan, but few of them are in a position to take a security or diplomatic

initiative. Tajikistan is Afghanistan's most popular neighbour and has been very supportive of Afghan goals, including internal integration (27 percent of Afghans are Tajiks). However, it has Russian troops manning its borders. Uzbekistan is the only CAR that has an army capable of border control, and has taken negotiation initiatives from time to time, but Uzbekistan is not currently a member of multilateral forums like the Istanbul/HoA Process or the SCO, though there is hope that it will join the former; nor is it part of post-Soviet security forums such as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). Turkmenistan is the least threatened by fear of spillover and is the most focused on regional economic connectivity, for example through the TAPI pipeline, which remains high on the regional priority agenda. Kazakhstan is not an immediate neighbour but has been active in the Istanbul/HoA Process and hosted the 2013 Ministerial at Almaty.

- 3.15. Though they have bilateral frictions, and fears ranging from spillover to domination, all the CARs are wedded to the HoA concept as a mechanism for stimulating regional trade and connectivity. This is remarkable given that the region is littered with old and ongoing security dilemmas. Most of the CARs will, however, follow the Russian and/or Chinese lead.

## Iran

- 3.16. Iran, has concerns about the reconciliation talks and has effectively been left out of the proposed Roadmap monitoring group. Post-2001 Iran has not been involved in insurgency, but it has tried hedging its bets through contacts with local commanders and/or the Taliban. Iran opposed ISAF presence in Afghanistan and is against the BSA, on the grounds that it may be misused against Iran. Recently however, Iran's opposition to the BSA has been muted, after the breakthrough in relations with the U.S. Iran has also been assured by the Afghan government that it will not permit any misuse of the BSA.



- 3.17. Iran's Chabahar port development has become a critical building block for regional connectivity, between Central Asia, Afghanistan, India and beyond to South Asia. Afghanistan, India and Iran's negotiations for a trilateral cooperation agreement for the development and use of Chabahar, should be completed soon. The Afghan government also plans to build rail extensions from Balkh to Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, and to link the line to the Zaranj-Delaram highway to Chabahar.
- 3.18. Chabahar has now become so important as an alternative route that China too is looking at bidding for a share of it. The Iranian position is that it will accept investments on a first-come first-serve basis.
- 3.19. Iran is a lead actor in the Education CBM, and is keen to support counter-radicalism initiatives.

### **Options for India**

- 3.20. Regionally the interests of the CARs coincide with India's. However, the CARs will go with Russia and China, given their close economic and security relationships. India has recently started trilateral talks with Russia and China on Afghanistan; is active in the Istanbul, Kabul and RECCA processes; and has several regional trilaterals with Afghanistan and Central Asian countries. These can be parlayed into a coordinated multilateral response to the power vacuum.
- 3.21. On the negative side, given Pakistan's determination to assert itself in Afghanistan, India will continue to suffer security threats there. The Indian government will also have to trump the Pakistan-initiated move to achieve progress (if not a settlement) with the Taliban.
- 3.22. One point is clear: India can parlay the factors in its favour into leverage in Afghanistan, the region and internationally by building on the considerable resources, time and energy it has invested in Afghanistan. Failure to do so will affect India's security directly. This will require a coordinated policy and its implementation with a larger number of stakeholders.

## CHAPTER 4: BUILDING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL IN KEY AREAS

### Education

- 4.1. The profile of education in Afghanistan since 2002 has changed and is a key feature of social transformation in the country. There has been significant expansion of all levels and types of education; increased access and educational opportunities for all Afghans, especially girls and women; and participation of the private sector in educational development. While in quantitative terms and variety of initiatives the developments are significant (Table 4), the quality and efficiency of education continues to be a challenge for national authorities. Problems include a shortage and poor quality of teachers and faculty, lack of adequate infrastructure including laboratories and libraries; out-dated curriculum and lack of suitable textbooks, especially for vocational and higher education; absence of a comprehensive national strategy for science and technology and for vocational training. There has been no significant improvement in the rate of literacy (26 percent for 15 year olds and over in 2009). It is unlikely that compulsory basic education for school age boys and girls from 7 to 12 years old will be achieved before 2020. (See Table 5 - Education Statistics)

Table 5: Education Statistics						
Year	General Education			Higher Education		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2002	1,700,000	700,000	2,400,000	27,000	4200	31,200
2004	2,700,000	1,300,000	4,000,000	24,500	6200	30,700
2006	3,500,000	1,900,000	5,400,000	30,600	8800	39,400
2008	3,900,000	2,300,000	6,200,000	48200	12,900	61,800
2010	4,300,000	2,700,000	7,000,000	62,900	14,830	77,730
2012	5,359,000	3,284,000	8,643,000	81,785	19,215	101,000

(Education Statistics in Afghanistan, Ministry of Education, Kabul, 2012)

- 4.2. The political, social, cultural and security situation have impacted the development of education in Afghanistan. Several hundred schools for girls have been destroyed or closed by extremists, especially in the south of the country. Religious, ideological and ethnic differences

in Afghan society have also influenced and sometimes disturbed the progress and functioning of the education system. Afghanistan is going through a period of political reform and social and economic changes which will have a profound impact on the future of Afghan society. There is a strong and growing demand for modern education and training for boys and girls. The aspiration of the majority of Afghan people is for a better life, especially for their children, democracy and respect for human rights, justice, peace and security in the country and region.

## Women's Empowerment

- 4.3. The end of Taliban rule opened up immense opportunities for Afghan women to reverse the oppression that they faced in previous years, when they were thoroughly subjugated and marginalised in the name of religion. The international support, donor aid and their own efforts ensured that women are now an essential part of the post-Taliban order and have played a major role in reconstructing the state and its institutions. Around 40 percent of all schoolchildren are girls. Women constitute more than 27 percent of parliamentarians. They are lawyers, entrepreneurs, journalists and civil society activists. They also have nominal participation in the bureaucracy, the judiciary and the ANDSF. Sustainable peace requires social justice, which in turn requires that the state respect and protect the rights of women as equal participants in nation building.
- 4.4. Stability post-2014 would demand the transition of women's roles from 'marginalised to centralised' in social reconstruction and a reversal of the oppression of past years. In the last 12 years, the legal empowerment of women has improved considerably, although much remains to be done in dealing with social prejudice and legal contradictions. Gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution. The Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law criminalises rape

<sup>5</sup>**Changing Profile of Education in Afghanistan** by Saif R. Samady, Ph.D.,  
Former Chairman of Independent High Commission of Education for Afghanistan, 2013.

for the first time; however, the prospect of Parliament ratifying the Presidential Decree of 2009, is so bleak such that certain activist groups prefer it in its current form. Conservative Members of Parliament have strongly opposed the EVAW law, calling it un-Islamic when it was introduced in Parliament in May 2013. The situation raises questions regarding the possibility of real progress in the empowerment of women.

- 4.5. According to a report of their International Crisis Group, persistent insecurity and violence threaten women's political, economic and social rights. Those in positions of authority are regularly threatened; many have been killed by insurgents. Militants have attacked girls' schools, students and staff. Qualified female teachers and health workers are reluctant to work outside relatively secure urban centers, undermining access of rural women and girls to education and basic health services. Since the formal transfer of the lead security role to the ANDSF in mid-2013, insurgent threats to women have increased. Their rights are also under attack from yesterday's warlords, now powerbrokers both within and outside government. Rearming their militias as a hedge against what may happen in the 2014 elections or after the transition and attempting to consolidate their electoral base, including by demonstrating independence from the West, they could undo the fragile gains achieved.
- 4.6. As the draw down of international forces approaches, women fear the rise of warlords and militias such as the ALP, which was created as a counterinsurgency force with U.S. support. With still fresh memories of the Taliban's gender apartheid and violence against women, including public beatings and executions there is understandably even greater concern about Kabul's efforts, with international backing, to broker peace with the Taliban.
- 4.7. The international community has reiterated its commitment to support for empowering Afghan women post-2014. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a new three-year women's empowerment project in September 2013, to strengthen

<sup>6</sup> **Women and Conflict in Afghanistan**, Report by International Crisis Group; October 2013.

the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). The Ministry of Women's Affairs Organizational Restructuring and Empowerment Project (MORE) project will be implemented in partnership with the Asia Foundation. MORE is intended to help MoWA advance its policy mandate, gender equality and empowerment in Afghanistan. MORE will support the delivery of two key components of MoWA's National Priority Program: institutional reform and organizational capacity building, and public awareness and education, outreach, and news-media relations. To what extent this would be possible to sustain after 2014 remains to be seen.

- 4.8. India has recently taken a number of important initiatives internally to improve maternal and child health and the sex ratio, as well as to improve legal and police measures for women's safety. Both could be important experiences to share with the Afghan MoWAs and Afghan women's organizations.

### **Rise of the Afghan Middle-Class**

- 4.9. The ouster of the Taliban witnessed the return of a large number of Afghan families from abroad along with migration from the countryside to the reconstructed cities. The new governance structures complemented by foreign aid generated fresh employment opportunities. Urbanisation is growing. This middle-class is expected to lead the reconstruction process post-2014.
- 4.10. Despite these social changes, the ground realities are more sobering. The Afghan middle-class comprises only a small segment of society and seems too small to initiate or even sustain the social changes. As the date for the U.S. drawdown approaches, there has been capital flight and emigration of the elite. As many as 40 percent of Afghan diplomats do not return from overseas postings, according to Parliament's Commission for International Affairs. Students, athletes and others who travel in an official capacity have also failed to return.
- 4.11. The increased number of civilian casualties and a surge in Taliban attacks in 2013 has created apprehensions regarding the post-2014

scenario. Wealthy Afghans have made exit arrangements in advance and are prepared with strategies to settle or re-settle abroad should security conditions worsen.

## Civil Society

- 4.12. Civil society in Afghanistan thrived post-2001 and is currently exerting influence at multiple levels. A large number of civil society groups are actively participating in a wide range of activities from women's empowerment to generating consensus on issues of national importance and creating democratic norms in the country, simultaneously giving expression to popular sentiment.
- 4.13. Several new advocacy groups are working to expand the role of civil society in policy making. A new generation of social and political movements is springing up, led by young, diverse and independent thinkers and activists. They display a vision, a confidence and seriousness of purpose. The women's political movement, for example, is no longer just a few courageous activists standing up to violence. Today, a diverse range of Afghans, including community elders, members of the local media and government, speak out against violence toward women, including sexual abuse and rape, and are demanding greater accountability and justice. International investment in Afghanistan over 12 years—particularly in its civil society—is now paying dividends.
- 4.14. There are signs that Afghan civil society is gaining the strength to fight back against corruption.

## Media

- 4.15. After the collapse of the Taliban regime and the formation of President Karzai's government, a new atmosphere for freedom of speech and press was created in the country. The Afghan Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and of the media.

<sup>7</sup> **Afghans seek their own exit strategy** by Alexandra Zavis, Los Angeles Times, April 2, 2013, LA, the US

Several government and private newspapers were established all across the country, ranging from the partisan press to commercial and ideological publications. Procedures for the establishment of private audio-visual media was set and the Afghan media law passed.

- 4.16. In the past 10 years, media in Afghanistan have played a very crucial and effective role as the fourth estate of a democracy. Experts believe that the role of media in encouraging people to participate in the two rounds of presidential elections and the two rounds of parliamentary elections have been extraordinary. The presidential debates, even though with some difficulties, were among the most important achievements of the democratic media in the country.
- 4.17. However, since 2013, Afghan media have been facing a number of problems. In September 2013, the Afghanistan Journalists Center (AFJC) announced that it had registered some 62 cases of violence against journalists over the past eight months. The group said that the recent high number of cases of violence “raises serious concerns about the safety of journalists and the situation of press freedom as the country prepares for the 2014 presidential and provincial council elections and international troops withdrawal.” AFJC’s executive director, Ahmad Quraishi had said the situation is worsening, especially in the south and east of the country; where the Taliban and other illegal armed groups have a strong presence.

## APPENDIX A: INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN

### Referenced in Paragraph 22.

#### Based on data from the Embassy of India, Kabul

1. India has played an active role in the development of Afghanistan based on the understanding that social and economic development is the key to Afghanistan becoming a source of regional stability. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Kabul in May 2011 during which he pledged an additional assistance of US\$ 500 million, taking India's total financial commitment to about US\$ 2 billion for reconstruction in Afghanistan. President Hamid Karzai had earlier visited India on October 4-5, 2011 and during his visit, a historic agreement on Strategic Partnership was signed, the first such agreement signed by Afghanistan with any country. The agreement reinforced the strong, vibrant, and multi-faceted relations between the two countries and at the same time formalized a framework for cooperation in various areas between the two countries: political & security cooperation; trade & economic cooperation; capacity development and education; and social, cultural, civil society & people-to-people relations. This agreement is a strong signal of India's abiding commitment to peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan during this critical period of security and governance transition. All Indian projects are undertaken in partnership with the Afghan government and are spread across Afghanistan in diverse economic and social developmental activities.
2. Most of India's development projects in Afghanistan can broadly be divided into four categories: Large infrastructure projects; humanitarian assistance; capacity building initiatives; and 'Small Development Projects'. A short, non-exhaustive description of some of the important projects and aspects of India's development assistance to Afghanistan is given below.



- (a) Government of India has taken on a number of medium and large infrastructure projects in its assistance programme in Afghanistan. These include Construction of a 218 km road from Zaranj to Delaram for facilitating movement of goods and services to the Iranian border (the project has been completed and handed over to Government of Afghanistan); Construction of 220kV DC transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul and a 220/110/20 kV sub-station at Chimtala, completed and handed over; two more sub-stations are being constructed at Doshi and Charikar. (The work involves the construction of two sub-stations at Doshi and Charikar from the 220KV transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul; Construction of Salma Dam in Herat province (ongoing project); Construction of Afghan Parliament; Setting up of 5 toilet-cum-public sanitation complexes in Kabul (completed and handed over); upgradation of telephone exchanges in 11 provinces (completed and handed over); Expansion of national TV network by providing an uplink from Kabul and downlinks in all 34 provincial capitals for greater integration of the country (completed and handed over).
- (b) India's humanitarian assistance initiatives include provision of free medical services and medicines through Indian Medical Missions (IMMs) located in Afghanistan; Provision of food assistance of 1 million MT of wheat (in the form of High Energy Biscuits (HEB) distributed to approx. 2 million school children across Afghanistan, under a 'School Feeding Programme' administered by the World Food Programme (WFP) & Assistance of 2.5 lakh MT of wheat to Afghanistan); Reconstruction and renovation of Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH) in various phases.
- (c) The sector of education and capacity development has been a significant area of attention in India's assistance portfolio. The Indian activities in this sector include: reconstruction and renovation of the Habibia School in Kabul; award of 500 ICCR long-term university scholarships (for undergraduate and post graduate degrees) and 500

short-term Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) vocational training slots for Afghan nationals annually from 2006-07 onwards (since 2009, both ICCR and ITEC slots were increased to 675 annually and it has been decided to grant 1000 scholarships for Afghan Nationals during the period 2012-13 to 2020-21.); Up to 258 Special Discretionary ITEC slots have been offered to Afghan Ministry officials for training programmes in India – over 5 such training programmes have been organised; 614 Agriculture scholarships (Bsc, Msc and PhD) have been made available to Afghan students under an Indian Council for Agriculture Research (ICAR)-administered scheme; Setting up of an India-Afghan Vocational training centre for training 3,000 Afghans in carpentry, plumbing, welding, masonry and tailoring; as well as a similar project by Indian NGO SEWA for setting up Women's Vocational Training Centre in Bagh-e-Zanana for training 1000 women in garment making, nursery plantation, food processing, marketing and the establishment of the National Agricultural University as a flagship institution in Kandahar. The university is gradually taking shape in a difficult security environment.

- (d) A significant addition to India's development portfolio in Afghanistan was a special programme to foster community-based, Small Development Projects in vulnerable border areas, in the fields of agriculture, rural development, education, health, vocational training, etc. that can have direct and visible impact on community life, and with focus on local ownership and management. The Small Development Projects were implemented in two Phases- the first in July 2006 and the second in June 2008. The implementation of the projects is done entirely by Afghan government agencies (with advisory inputs from Indian Embassy), which helps in building local capacity towards project management. An MoU for implementation of the Third Phase of the SDP scheme was signed during President Karzai's visit in November 2012.

## APPENDIX B: AFGHANISTAN'S NEW BEGINNING PROGRAMME (ANBP)

### Referenced in Paragraph 1.13.

The security sector reforms incorporated the ANBP under the UNDP mandate that comprised of three essential processes –

<b>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)</b>	<b>Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG)</b>	<b>Anti-Personnel Mines and Ammunition Stockpile Destruction Project</b>
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### DDR Process

1. The DDR process was essential for enforcing the rule of law and exerting state authority. Decades of conflict had resulted in the free flow of small arms across the country and a challenge to the state's jurisdiction. The DDR process began in 2003, two years after the collapse of the Taliban regime with the establishment of the ANBP under the UNDP mandate to assist the Government in the DDR of the ANDSF. It was at the Tokyo Donor Conference that it was decided that forces under the MoD, the ANAF were to enter the DDR process thereby creating conditions to raise an ethnically balanced and professional ANA.
2. DDR addressed all AMF personnel voluntarily choosing to participate and had two main goals:
  - a) To break the historic patriarchal chain of command existing between the former commanders and their men;
  - b) To provide the demobilised personnel with the ability to become economically independent - the ultimate objective being to reinforce the authority of the government. In this respect, DDR was never mandated to disarm the population or provide direct employment,

<sup>8</sup><http://www.anbp.af.undp.org>

but to assist ANDSF military personnel to transition from military into civilian occupations.

3. According to UNDP, the process disarmed 63,380 former officers and soldiers and decommissioned 259 units. Also, 53,145 former combatants selected the reintegration option, 53,054 former combatants completed the reintegration training; 90 percent are employed. Moreover, 94,262 light and medium weapons as well as 12,248 heavy weapons were collected and 56,163 weapons were destroyed.
4. The main obstacles to DDR stem from the weak commitment of local commanders to the new central government, animosity among armed groups, and a lack of public confidence in the availability of productive and sustainable alternatives to soldiering. Also the DDR process had no authority over those hired by the coalition forces.

## DIAG Process

5. The DIAG process is aiming to rid the country of parallel armed structures. It is more than a nationwide weapons collection programme. Its ultimate objective is to allow the re-establishment of the rule of law through the promotion of good governance.
6. In July 2004, remnants of the AMF as well as groups which had never joined the AMF were declared illegal (Presidential decree 50). It was estimated that there could be up to 120,000 persons, operating in over 1,800 illegal groups, who could fall into this category.
7. Since the inception of the program, in addition to the 41,264 heavy and light weapons handed over to UNDP's ANBP through the actions and measures undertaken by the Afghan security sector in law enforcement institutions, over 1,050 individuals belonging to various armed and criminal groups have been arrested or forcefully disarmed. More than 5,700 weapons confiscated or collected from these groups are presently in use by the Afghan Security Forces. By establishing a weapon registration and licensing system in the

<sup>9</sup><http://www.anbp.af.undp.org>

Ministry of Interior (Mol), over 7,000 additional weapons were brought under the control of the Government.

8. Furthermore, an estimated 14,000 weapons were confiscated or taken out of the control of illegal armed groups (IAGs), criminal groups and insurgents by ANA, ANP, ISAF and Coalition Forces through both military operations and non-military means such as persuasion and pressure.
9. This brings the total number of weapons brought under the control of the Government to 63,754 including more than 27,000 metric tons of ammunition. As a result of DIAG activities, over 285 main IAGs that cover 750-900 sub-IAGs.

### **Anti-Personnel Mine & Ammunition Stockpile Destruction**

10. In 2003, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan committed to establish a complete ban on anti-personnel mines within four years, with all stockpiles to be destroyed by 2007.
11. The project had nine Ammunition Survey Teams (ASTs) deployed in all the regions, along with Implementing Partners (IPs) and embedded MoD representatives. The teams in some regions, where there is less activity of DIAG or AST due to various constraints is led by one international staff members covering both the teams. The project has achieved the following till date:

Total ANDSF ammunition surveyed	33,878.07	TONS
Total DIAG ammunition surveyed	2,961.52	TONS
Grand total surveyed	36839.59	TONS
Ammunition consolidated	9669	TONS
Ammunition destroyed	20943	TONS
Anti-personnel mines destroyed	503174	PCS
Anti tank mines destroyed	22,503	PCS

<sup>10</sup><http://www.anbp.af.undp.org>

## APPENDIX C: ANA STATUS AND TRAINING

### Referenced in Paragraph 1.20.

1. The ISAF is coordinating responsibilities for training and consolidation of the ANA. All efforts are managed by the CSTC-A, a three-star level multi-national command headquartered in Kabul. From July 2006 all training and education in the Army has been managed and implemented by the ANA Training Command (ANATC), which reports directly to the Chief of the General Staff and has all training centers and military schools under its jurisdiction.
2. Individual training is conducted primarily by ANA instructors and staff at ANATC's Kabul Military Training Center. The U.S. military assists in the basic and advanced training of enlisted recruits to include required literacy courses. Other countries that provide support include France, the UK and Canada. Coalition Embedded Training Teams continue to mentor unit leadership and advice in the areas of intelligence, communications, fire support, logistics and infantry tactics.
3. Formal education and professional development is conducted at two main ANATC schools, both in Kabul. First is the National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA), a four-year military university, which will produce second lieutenants with degrees in a variety of military professions. Instructors from the U.S., Turkey and other countries jointly mentor the NMAA faculty and staff. Second is the Command and General Staff College (CGSC), located in southern Kabul, which prepares mid-level ANA officers to serve on brigade and corps staffs. France established the CGSC in early 2004 and a cadre of French Army instructors continues to oversee operations at the College.

4. A National Defence University (NDU) will also be established at a potential site in northwestern Kabul. Eventually all initial officer training (to include the NMAA) as well as the CGSC will be re-located to the new NDU facility.
5. The basic unit in the ANA is the Kandak, consisting of 600 troops. Kandaks may be further broken down into four Toli (company-sized units). Although the vast majority of Kandaks are infantry, at least one mechanised and one tank battalion has been formed; more are needed. Every ANA Corps is assigned a Commando Brigade with one designated as a special national unit under the Defense Ministry's purview. Seven Quick Reaction Forces (QRF) battalions are in the process of being raised, one QRF battalion for each of the ANA's six Corps and one Division. They are being created by converting existing infantry battalions into mobile QRF battalions. The first QRF battalion was trained and fielded in 2012 and the last one in 2013. This is the first major deployment of armoured vehicles.
6. The ANA also has 'Commandos' fully equipped and trained by the U.S. These battalions form part of the Special Operations Command. From amongst these Commandos, there are the 'Special Forces'. Special Forces soldiers are trained to focus on interaction with the population through jirgas with village elders, and to be capable of unilateral operations. As of December 2011, the force numbered 1,000 to 1,500. They also include women soldiers to act in support.
7. Soldiers in the ANA initially received about USD 50 a month. The basic pay for trained soldiers has since risen to USD 165 with up to USD 230 a month in an area with moderate security issues and USD 240 in those provinces where there is heavy fighting. This provides reasonable income and employment in Afghanistan. About 95 percent of the men and women serving in the military are paid by electronic funds transfer. Special biometrics are used during the registration of each soldier. This has cut down the number of 'ghost soldiers'.

8. To enable ANA to be a balanced force, it needs to have its own logistics. Development of the ANA Combat Support Organizations, the Corps Logistics Kandaks (CLK) and the Combat Support Kandaks (CSK) are vital. CSKs provide specialised services for infantry battalions. While most ANA Battalions have a CSK they are yet to be institutionalised. The CSK role includes motor fleet maintenance, specialised communications, scouting, engineering and long range artillery units. Eventually one fully developed CSK will be assigned to each of the 24 ANA Combat Brigades. Each CSK includes an Intelligence Company called a Cashf Tolai responsible for collecting information about the surrounding area and Taliban activities.



## APPENDIX D: POLITICAL TRANSITION IN AFGHANISTAN SINCE THE BONN AGREEMENT

### Referenced in Paragraph 2.3.

1. The Bonn process had articulated political transition of the country – from a tribal and clan based system to a modern democratic state. This required huge amount of investments and manpower. The challenge of democratization in country with virtually no experience in democratic process had made the transition an uphill task. The establishment of modern institutions of governance and creation of democratic norms among the people proved difficult on account of deep inter-ethnic division and suspicion fostered by years of violence and mistrust.

#### Below is a brief description of the Afghanistan Political Transition Process

<b>Interim Administration</b>	Formed by Bonn Agreement. Headed by Hamid Karzai, an ethnic Pashtun, but key security positions dominated by mostly minority "Northern Alliance." Karzai reaffirmed as leader by June 2002 "emergency loya jirga." (A jirga is a traditional Afghan assembly.)
<b>Constitution</b>	Approved by January 2004 "Constitutional Loya Jirga" (CLJ). Set up strong presidency, a rebuke to Northern Alliance that wanted prime ministership to balance presidential power, but gave parliament significant powers to compensate. Gives men and women equal rights under the law, allows for political parties as long as they are not "un-Islamic;" allows for court rulings according to Hanafi (Sunni) Islam (Chapter 7, Article 15). Set out electoral roadmap for simultaneous (if possible) presidential, provincial, and district elections by June 2004. Named ex-King Zahir Shah to non-hereditary position of "Father of the Nation;" he died July 23, 2007.
<b>Presidential Election</b>	Elections for president and two vice presidents, for five-year term, held October 9, 2004. Turnout was 80 percent of 10.5 million registered. Karzai and running mates (Ahmad Zia Masoud, a Tajik and brother of legendary mujahedin commander Ahmad Shah Masoud, who was assassinated by Al-Qaeda two days before the September 11 attacks, and Karim Khalili, a Hazara) elected with 55% against 16 opponents. Second highest vote getter, Northern Alliance figure (and Education Minister) Yunus Qanooni (16%). One female ran. Funding: USD 90 million from donors, including USD 40 million from U.S. (2004).
<b>Parliamentary Elections</b>	Elections held September 18, 2005, on "Single Non-Transferable Vote" System; candidates stood as individuals, not in party list. Parliament consists of a 249 elected lower house (Wolesi Jirga, House of the People) and a selected 102 seat upper house (Meshrano Jirga, House of Elders). 2,815 candidates for Wolesi Jirga, including 347 women. Turnout was 57 percent (6.8 million voters) of 12.5 million registered. Upper house is appointed by Karzai (34 seats, half of which are to be women), and by the provincial councils (68 seats). When district councils are elected, they will appoint 34 of the seats. Funded by USD 160 million in international aid, including USD 45 million from U.S. (2005 supplemental)

<b>First Provincial Elections/ District Elections</b>	Provincial elections held September 18, 2005, simultaneously with parliamentary elections. Exact powers vague, but now taking lead in deciding local reconstruction Provincial council sizes range from 9 to the 29 seats on the Kabul provincial council. Total seats are 420, of which 121 held by women. 13,185 candidates, including 279 women. District elections not held due to complexity and potential tensions of drawing district boundaries.
<b>Second Presidential/Provincial Elections</b>	Presidential and provincial elections were held August 20, 2009, but required a runoff because no candidate received over 50 percent in certified results issued October 20. Second round not held because Dr. Abdullah pulled out of runoff. Election costs: USD 300 million.
<b>Second Parliamentary Elections</b>	Originally set for May 22, 2010; held September 18, 2010. Results disputed, but agreement reached for Karzai to inaugurate new lower house on January 26, 2011. 70 women elected, two more than quota. Speaker selected on February 27, Abdul Raoofbrahimi, an ethnic Uzbek. Special tribunal set up to investigate results and on June 23 ruled that 62 results be altered, but crisis eased on August 11, 2011, when Karzai announced that only the election bodies have standing to overturn results and Independent Election Commission unseated only nine lower house winners. For the upper house, 68 seats council are appointed to four-year terms by the elected provincial councils in each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, and remain in office. Karzai made his 34 appointments on February 19, 2011. The speaker of that body is Muslim Yaar (a Pashtun).
<b>Third Presidential/Provincial Election</b>	<p>To be held on April 5, 2014. Needed election laws have been passed by the National Assembly and signed by Karzai, who cannot run again. Twenty six slates filed for the presidential race, and ten were approved by the election commission. Major slates include that of Islamic conservative Abd-i-RabRasul Sayyaf, Foreign Minister ZalmayRassoul, Karzai's brother Qayyum, and Northern Alliance opposition leader Dr. Abdullah.</p> <p>The Independent Election Commission announced candidate names for the election ballot as on November 2013. (When nominations were filed in November 2013 there were 11 candidates)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah</li> <li>2. Dawoud Sultanzoi</li> <li>3. Abdul Rahim Wardak</li> <li>4. Quayum Karzai</li> <li>5. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai</li> <li>6. Sardar Mohammad Nadir Naeem</li> <li>7. Zalmai Rassoul</li> <li>8. Qutbuddin Hilal</li> <li>9. Gul Agha Sherzai</li> <li>10. Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayyaf</li> <li>11. Hidayat Amin Arsala</li> </ol>

(Congressional Research Service Report: Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy by Kenneth Katzman, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs) with added inputs

## APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF PEACE TALKS WITH TALIBAN

### Referenced in Paragraph 2.7.

#### Brief overview: US–Taliban talks

**March 2009.** Obama proposes the notion of reaching out to moderate elements of the Afghan Taliban.

**November 2010.** Direct contact between the Taliban and U.S. officials begins in Munich, Germany, brokered by German officials and Qatari royals.

**February 2011.** Preliminary talks in Doha between the Taliban and the U.S. about the release of five Guantanamo detainees, including three senior commanders, in exchange for an American soldier.

**May 2011.** Preliminary talks in Germany between the Taliban and the US.

**January 2012.** The Taliban meets with American officials in Qatar to discuss preliminary trust-building measures, including a possible prisoner transfer. The Afghan and Pakistani governments are not directly involved but have reluctantly accepted the negotiations.

**March 2012.** Negotiations between the U.S. and the Taliban break down, among other reasons due to disagreement over whether the Taliban commanders released from Guantanamo would remain under supervision in Qatar or not.

**June 2013.** The Doha Process. The U.S. initiates talks with the Taliban with the Qatari Govt. as the mediator. The talks discussed fate of 29-year-old Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, the only known American prisoner of war in Afghanistan. However the Talks collapsed with the Taliban, which after being allowed to open an office, presented itself as an alternative government with a new embassy. They even flew the old Taliban government flag calling itself an Islamic Emirate. The publicity coup infuriated Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai, who immediately protested and called off all talks.

## BRIEF OVERVIEW: AFGHANISTAN–TALIBAN TALKS

**2005.** The reconciliation initiative programme Tahkim-e Solh launches.

**2010.** Afghanistan's High Peace Council is formed among other objectives to initiate peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban in the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Programme (APRP).

**September 2011.** Burhanuddin Rabbani, head of HPC, is assassinated. Negotiations are suspended and only slowly resumed in June 2012.

**February 2012.** The third annual Pakistan–Afghanistan–Iran trilateral summit called for an Afghan-led peace initiative free of foreign intervention. June 2012. The Taliban dispatches officials to track II meetings in Paris and Kyoto. The Kyoto meeting is also attended by Masoom Stanekzai from the Afghan High Peace Council.

**December 2012.** Launch of “Peace process roadmap to 2015”.

**September 2013.** Pakistan released the former Taliban No. 2, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, in September after years of detention, a move that stirred hope among many Afghan and Pakistani officials that he could help forge a peace deal between the insurgents and the Afghan government. Others, including the Taliban, have expressed doubt Baradar will make the difference. After Baradar's release, the Afghan government pushed for a meeting between him and the peace council, hoping it would help the peace process.

**November 2013.** A high-level delegation led by Afghan High Peace Council visited Pakistan and reportedly met Mullah Baradar, who had earlier expressed unwillingness to talk to Afghan officials. Contradictory reports questioned the authenticity of the meeting. Later an Afghan official disclosed that Baradar appeared to have been sedated and unable to talk during his meeting. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told the delegation that he will soon visit Kabul for more talks on Pakistan's role in the peace process.

**November 2013.** Pakistan has reportedly freed nearly 40 Afghan Taliban detainees since November to encourage them to join peace process. However, none of the freed Taliban has showed a willingness to talk to Karzai's government, Afghan and Taliban officials say.

**November 30th 2013.** Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif promised Afghanistan on that he would help arrange further meetings between Afghan officials and a former Taliban commander as part of renewed efforts to revive a defunct peace process.

**December 2013.** Sartaz Aziz, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, said that there is a need for increased informal contacts with Taliban as most of their leaders are in Afghanistan and in Qatar, and the Afghan government can approach them. He added that Pakistan does not have control over the Afghan Taliban and have been urging them for a long time to talk to the High Peace Council. He also confirmed that the High Peace Council met the Mullah Barader in November but could not hold details talk since he was not feeling well.

**January 2014.** Afghan President Karzai insisted that before he signs the BSA, the U.S. must stop military operations and bring the Taliban to the negotiating table insisting that reviving talks with Taliban are critical to ensuring that Afghanistan was not left with a weak central government.

**February 2014.** President Karzai's security adviser, Rangin Dadfar Spanta, accused Pakistan of becoming an 'obstruction' in the peace process in Afghanistan reacting to Sartaj Aziz remarks about the Taliban agreeing to talks after the presidential elections in April.

**February 2014.** President Karzai's spokesperson confirmed reports that the President has been holding secret talks with Taliban officials in Dubai and Riyadh in the hope of persuading them to make peace with his government. However, Westerners expressed scepticism about the talks and observed that the Taliban had no intention any more of negotiating with the Afghan government.

## APPENDIX F: COMPARATIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

### Referenced in Paragraph 2.15.

<b>Population</b>	28 million +. Kabul population is 3 million, up from 500,000 in Taliban era.
<b>Ethnicities/Religions</b>	Pashtun 42 percent; Tajik 27 percent; Uzbek 9 percent; Hazara 9 percent; Aimak 4 percent; Turkmen 4 percent; Baluch 2 percent.
<b>Size of Religious Minorities</b>	Religions: Sunni (Hanafi school) 80 percent; Shiite (Hazaras, Qizilbash, and Isma'ilis) 19 percent; other 1 percent Christians - estimated 500-8,000 persons; Sikh and Hindu-3,000 persons; Bahai's-400 (declared blasphemous in May 2007); Jews-1 person; Buddhist- small numbers. No Christian or Jewish schools. One church
<b>Literacy Rate</b>	28 percent of population over 15 years of age. 43 percent of males; 12.6 percent of females
<b>GDP, and GDP Growth and Unemployment Rates</b>	USD 33.55 billion purchasing power parity (PPP) in 2012. 109th in the world. Per capita: USD 1,000 purchasing power parity. 212th in the world. Growth has averaged about 9 percent per year every year since Taliban rule. GDP was about USD 10 billion (PPP) during last year of Taliban rule. Unemployment rate is about 8 percent, but underemployment rate may be nearly 50 percent.
<b>Children in School/Schools Built since 2002</b>	8 million, of which 40 percent are girls. Up from 900,000 boys in school during Taliban era. 4,000 schools built (all donors) and 140,000 teachers hired since Taliban era. 17 universities, up from 2 in 2002. 75,000 Afghans in universities in Afghanistan (35 percent female); 5,000 when Taliban was in power.
<b>Afghans With Access to Health Coverage</b>	65 percent with basic health services access-compared to 8 percent during Taliban era. Infant mortality down 22 percent since Taliban to 135 per 1,000 live births. 680 clinics built
<b>Roads Built</b>	About 3,000 miles paved post-Taliban, including repaving of "Ring Road" (78 percent complete) that circles the country. Kabul-Qandahar drive reduced to 6 hours. About 1,500 additional miles still under construction
<b>Judges/Courts</b>	Over 1,000 judges (incl. 200 women) trained since fall of Taliban
<b>Banks Operating</b>	17, including branches in some rural areas, but about 90 percent of the population still use hawalas (informal money transfer services). No banks existed during Taliban era. Some limited credit card use. Some Afghan police now paid by cell phone (E-Paisa).
<b>Access to Electricity</b>	15 percent-20 percent of the population. Much of its electricity imported from neighbouring states.
<b>Government Revenues (excl. donor funds)</b>	About USD 2 billion in 2012 compared to USD 200 million in 2002. Total Afghan budget is about USD 4.5 billion (including development funds)—shortfall covered by foreign donors, including through Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
<b>Financial Reserves/Debt</b>	About USD 4.4 billion, up from USD 180 million in 2002. Includes amounts due Central Bank. USD 8 billion bilateral debt, plus USD 500 million multilateral. U.S. forgave USD 108 million in debt in 2004, and USD 1.6 billion forgiven by other creditors in March 2010

<b>Foreign/Private Investment</b>	About USD 500 million to USD 1 billion per year. Four Afghan airlines: Ariana (national) plus at least two privately owned: Safi and Kam. Turkish Air and India Air fly to Kabul
<b>Legal Exports/ Agriculture</b>	80 percent of the population is involved in agriculture. Self-sufficiency in wheat production as of May 2009 (first time in 30 years). Exports: USD 400 million+ (2011): fruits, raisins, melons, pomegranate juice (Anar), nuts, carpets, lapis lazuli gems, marble tile, timber products (Kunar, Nuristan provinces).
<b>Oil Proven Reserves</b>	3.6 billion barrels of oil, 36.5 trillion cubic feet of gas. Current oil production negligible, but USAID funding project to revive oil and gas facilities in the north.
<b>Cellphones/Tourism</b>	About 18 million cellphone subscribers, up from negligible amounts during Taliban era. Tourism: National park opened in Bamiyan June 2009. Increasing tourist visits.

(CSR Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy Kenneth Katzman Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs January 17, 2014

CIA, The World Factbook; various press and U.S. government official testimony; International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank estimates.)

## APPENDIX G: WORLD BANK ANALYSIS OF THE AFGHAN ECONOMY

### Referenced in Paragraph 2..22.

Condensed Version of a World Bank Update on the Afghan Economy (June 2013)

1. Agriculture accounts for about a quarter of the GDP (excluding opium). Economic growth is influenced heavily by the volatile agricultural sector. Growth in 2012 (the fiscal year was made to coincide with the calendar year since 2012) benefited from rapid expansion of the services sector, which accounts for about half of the GDP.
2. Agriculture expanded by 18.2 percent in 2012, after two years of decline. Cereal production, which accounts for about half of agriculture, grew 43 percent, thanks to timely and well-distributed rainfall throughout the year. Wheat production exceeded 5 million metric tons – a level last achieved in 2009. Fruit production grew by 8 percent, triggering higher fruit exports during the last quarter.
3. The industrial sector grew by 7.7 percent in 2012, somewhat slower than the 9.8 percent growth in 2011, despite stronger growth in manufacturing. The manufacturing sector expanded 7.3 percent in 2012, the highest rate since 2003. Food and beverages, which account for 95 percent of total manufacturing output, drove the strong growth of the sub-sector.
4. Production of basic metal products picked up markedly from a very small base as two steel mills in Kabul and Herat started production. Construction, which accounts for about 40 percent of industry, slowed to 9 percent in 2012 from 13.3 percent in 2011. Official figures also show a decline in the small mining sector, contrary to



- expectations. This is because production from the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) concession in the Amu Darya basin was not covered in the 2012 national accounts survey although oil had started to flow in the last quarter of 2012.
5. The services sector expanded by 16 percent in 2012, another strong performance, driven by the brisk growth of transportation services and wholesale and retail trade activity. The transportation sector, which has been heavily dependent on international military contracts, is currently benefiting from shipments abroad due to the repatriation of international forces. Also in this sector, with three 3G license holders starting to provide services in 2012 and 2013, the number of broadband subscribers reached more than 200,000 in the first quarter of 2013. The number of internet users increased from 2 million people in 2012 to 2.4 million in 2013.
  6. With Afghanistan facing a demographic shift where about 500,000 new workers are entering the labour force each year, generating jobs will be critical to improving incomes of the bottom quintiles of the population and reducing poverty and vulnerability of the population. A number of factors could affect the impact of growth on poverty reduction and the prospects for raising incomes of the bottom two quintiles of the population.
  7. First, the volatility of agricultural growth could considerably affect prospects for poverty reduction since agriculture accounts for more than half of employment. Second, limited overall employment generation and pervasive underemployment could limit the impact of growth.
  8. Agriculture is highly relevant to poverty reduction and job creation. Agriculture generates more than 50 percent of employment; 84 percent of the poor live in rural areas. However, poor irrigation means that agricultural production is also highly volatile, improved irrigation

should reduce volatility in the sector. Leveraging the potential of agriculture to create better jobs and reduce poverty will require investments in irrigation, extension services to improve the capacity of farmers, and progressively tapping opportunities to move into higher value-added products.

## **Mining Sector**

9. The mining sector has significant potential for growth but with modest employment impact. The best-case scenario would suggest 100,000 to 125,000 jobs over the next ten years. The resource corridor approach, however, provides an opportunity to enhance the impact of the sector. This approach rests on the idea of using mining development as an anchor for the infrastructure development that underpins the viability of the other sustainable activities.
10. It combines necessary investment in mining infrastructure with the enhancement of objectives in local livelihood, social and environmental ideals and governance. This involves strategic planning and investment in supply chains, which produce spillovers to other economic activities and synergies with private-sector investment.
11. According to the World Bank, mineral and hydrocarbon developments can be a pillar of future economic growth in Afghanistan, creating both direct and indirect employment and income. Developing transport and other infrastructure will help open up areas for overall economic development and generate considerable domestic revenue, trade and balance-of-payments benefits. If managed properly, with benefits accruing to the local communities in addition to government and industry, mining in Afghanistan has the potential to be a driver of economic growth and diversification, key tools in poverty reduction.

12. Afghanistan is estimated to have mineral reserves in excess of USD 1 trillion, but with much of it in the ground pending development of infrastructure that will link mines to global markets. The deposits are mainly of copper but include gold, iron ore, uranium and precious stones such as emeralds. U.S. hydrologists and mining engineers are working with Afghans southeast of Kabul to conduct tests to determine whether mining activity can be supported. It could be up to 10 years before new mine operations are established.
13. Afghanistan presently has two known world-class mineral deposits – the Aynak copper deposit and the Hajigak iron ore deposit. Aynak and Hajigak represent two large potential investments by Afghan and global standards and have respectively been allocated to China and India. The mine developments would each require USD 2-3 billion in investments, as well as auxiliary infrastructure in the order of at least USD 2-3 billion. A low-impact scenario, based on prevailing market conditions, projects that Aynak could create 4,500 direct, 7,600 indirect and 62,500 induced jobs and approximately USD 250 million in annual revenues once the operations reach a projected capacity of 250,000 tons per year of copper. Hajigak iron ore is estimated to have similar employment and fiscal potential. In addition, the development of the mining sector will provide a stimulus to much-needed social and physical infrastructure and technology transfer through the development of professional skills.
14. Afghanistan hopes to rely on its natural resources to support the national economy following the pull-out of NATO forces in 2014. Current mining revenue in the country is estimated at USD 146 million annually. By 2024, the Finance Minister estimates mining will contribute USD 4 billion to the government and USD 20 billion to the overall economy.

<sup>11</sup> **Afghanistan mineral deposits estimated at USD 1 trillion by Kerry Hall,**  
www.mining.com; April 9, 2013

15. Improving literacy, skills and education in Afghanistan, especially in rural areas, is a key priority. The stock of skills available to the domestic labour market is extremely low in spite of significant improvements in school enrolment rates and education achievement over the past decade. The recent gains have only attempted to make up for with lost opportunities during decades of conflict.
16. Only one out of four Afghans aged 16 or above is able to read and write or has completed some formal level of schooling. Low human capital reduces the rate of return on physical capital, diminishes the profitability of investments, the adoption of new technologies as well as the structural transformation of the economy. It is therefore paramount that investments in education at all levels remain a priority in Afghanistan's development strategy.
17. Meeting Afghanistan's development objectives will require continued strengthening of institutions and governance. Failure to credibly address transparency, accountability, and political economy risks—especially the balance of revenue flows between the central level and provinces and communities in which the mines are located—could result in a further deterioration of governance and the security situation. The government's decisiveness to strengthen the rule of law, public financial management systems, fight pervasive corruption, improve regulatory oversight and enhance the capacity for public service delivery will be critical in achieving Afghanistan's development objectives.
18. Afghanistan requires considerable financing for security, infrastructure development, service delivery, and operations and maintenance. Meeting these needs will require significant grant assistance for the foreseeable future.
19. During the first seven months (January – July) of 2013, only 2,000 new firms registered with the Afghanistan Investment Support

Agency (AISA), compared to 3,500 new firm registrations over the same period in 2012. The slowdown appears to be across all sectors. In light of the slowdown, the government has recently endorsed a package of tax and other incentives for private investment. (The World Bank doubts their efficacy and regards them as a matter of concern)

20. Consumer price rises have remained below ten percent in the first half of 2013. Period-average inflation in the first two quarters of 2013 was 7.5 percent, compared to 7.4 percent in the same period of 2012. The rise in non-food prices is driven in large part by housing and clothing, which together account for about 28 percent of overall consumer spending. Core inflation (excluding fuel and cereals) – averaged 6.8 percent for the first half of 2013.
21. Customs and tax revenues during the first six months of 2013 were, respectively, 6.7 percent and 4.1 percent lower in nominal terms compared to 2012. Sales tax and income tax are the largest sources of tax revenue in Afghanistan. The decline in non-tax revenues is due to lower income from capital property and sales of goods and services.
22. The decline in tax revenues in 2013 is in part a result of the slowdown in economic activity and changes in the structure of imports toward items with lower duties. However, weaknesses in administration and higher leakages, particularly in Customs, have also played a significant part. The increased uncertainty surrounding the political transition has likely encouraged more rent-seeking behaviour in Customs administration. With the political uncertainty undermining enforcement, revenues are expected to remain weak at about 10-10.5 percent of GDP during 2013-14. In this context, the Ministry of Finance has introduced a number of measures to stabilise revenues, reduce leakages, and improve administration.

23. These measures include the implementation of a computerised risk management module, improving procedures for random post-verification examination, introducing post-clearance audits, and salary incentives for detection of non-compliance. In addition, a number of additional revenue measures were introduced in April/May 2013, including an increase in fuel valuation at customs, an increase in tariffs on cement and steel rods, and higher air travel fees. The effect of these measures has been modest to date.
24. Operating expenditure increased to Afs 82.1 billion in the first six months in 2013, compared to Afs 75.4 billion over the same period in 2012. Development expenditure declined to Afs 23.7 billion in the first half of 2013, compared to Afs 27 billion in the first half of 2012. Low budget execution continues to be a problem in Afghanistan and has particularly affected development expenditure in 2013.
25. Budget execution was only 36.4 percent of the operating budget and only 17 percent of the development budget in the first half of 2013, compared to 50 percent and 24 percent, respectively, in the first half of 2012. Among ministries with development budgets more than USD 50 million, only three (Ministries of Health, Finance, and Rural Development) executed more than 20 percent through the first half of 2013. In nominal terms, the ministries that have executed the largest development budgets include the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Public Health, and the Ministry of Education.
26. The trade deficit widened to USD 8.6 billion in 2012 from USD 7.5 billion in 2011. Total estimated exports increased by about 3 percent to USD 2.76 billion in 2012, while total estimated imports increased by about 11 percent to USD 11.4 billion.
27. Official exports increased in the first half of 2013, most likely due to improved recording. They grew by 76 percent to USD 267 million in

the first two quarters in 2013 from USD 152 million in the first half of 2012. This increase took place across most product categories. Exports of dry fruits rose by more than 50 percent to USD 58 million and exports of carpets quadrupled to about USD 65 million in the first six months in 2013. Exports of fresh fruits, which are usually low in the first half of the year and pick up in the second half, were recorded at USD 12.8 million in the first half of 2013 compared to only USD 2.2 million in the first half of 2012. Other significant export items such as oil seeds, medicinal plants and animal by-products (such as wool and skin) also increased significantly in the first half of 2013. The higher trade (and current account deficit) was financed fully by higher official grants, which increased to USD 9.4 billion in 2012 from USD 8.1 billion in 2011.

28. Foreign exchange reserves plateaued in the first half of 2013 after rising steadily over the last several years. Gross international reserves declined from the all-time-high level of USD 7.1 billion in December 2012 to USD 6.7 billion in March 2013, before increasing to USD 6.9 billion in June 2013. The pause in foreign exchange accumulation is a break from the trend since 2006, but is not unexpected in light of the political and security transition. International reserves during this period can be expected to be affected by a slowdown in capital inflows and grants (due to a decline in foreign military spending or the pace of policy implementation) as well as any changes in the pace of capital flight. ISAF announced that they have so far closed 700 of their military bases in Afghanistan, and now have only 100 military bases operational in the country.
29. The Afghani has continued to depreciate against the US dollar and the euro. The depreciation of Afghani comes as other major South Asian currencies, such as the Indian Rupee and the Pakistani Rupee, have also strongly depreciated against the US dollar in the second quarter of 2013.

30. The exchange rate can be expected to be affected by a number of factors during the transition. First, capital inflows can be affected by the drawdown in international security forces. Second, official grants could be affected by slower policy implementation during the political transition. Third, increased uncertainty during the political and security transition could raise demand for foreign exchange and lead to an increase in the pace of capital flight. In this context, the flexible exchange rate provides an important anchor of external sustainability.
31. Economic growth is projected to slow considerably to 3.1 percent in 2013 and 3.5 percent 2014 due to the increased uncertainty surrounding transition and flat growth in the agricultural sector. Uncertainty surrounding the political and security transition is expected to persist through the middle of 2014, thus resulting in a slowdown in private investment and growth in the non-agricultural sectors.
32. A smooth political and security transition would help to pick up, investor confidence and growth in the non-agricultural sectors should pick up. This, coupled with the assumption of favorable weather conditions for agriculture, should generate growth of about 3.5 percent in 2014.
33. In the medium term, post-transition growth is projected at about 5 percent per year during 2015-16. This is less than the average growth of 9.4 percent per year during 2003-12 that was fueled by the surge in international aid and security spending. The post-transition growth outlook is contingent upon a relatively stable security environment, with agriculture and extractive industries likely to be among the significant sectors driving growth.
34. The medium term growth outlook is subject to serious risks, which will need to be carefully managed. Continued violence, economic crime and systemic corruption have often undermined progress.



## APPENDIX H: MULTILATERAL INITIATIVES AND CONFERENCES

### Referenced in Paragraph 3.3.

The Bonn Conference 2001

<http://www.thekabulprocess.gov.af/images/conferences/bonn2001.pdf>

International Conference on Reconstruction and Assistance to Afghanistan  
Tokyo 2002 <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/56/a56801.pdf>

International Afghanistan Conference Berlin 2004

<http://www.thekabulprocess.gov.af/images/conferences/berlin2004.pdf>

The London Conference on Afghanistan 2006

<http://www.thekabulprocess.gov.af/images/conferences/london2006.pdf>

Rome Conference on Rule of Law in Afghanistan 2007

<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/IMG/pdf/Romejointrecommandations.pdf>

Declaration of the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan Paris  
2008

<http://www.thekabulprocess.gov.af/images/conferences/paris2008.pdf>

International Conference on Afghanistan the Hague 2009

[http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle\\_e/afghanistan/conf0903.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/afghanistan/conf0903.html)

International Conference on Afghanistan Kabul 2010

<http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/Kabul%20Conference%20Communique.pdf>

London Conference on Afghanistan 2010

<http://www.thekabulprocess.gov.af/images/conferences/london2010.pdf>

The Istanbul Process 2011

<http://mfa.gov.af/en/news/4598>

The International Afghanistan Conference in Bonn 2011

<http://mfa.gov.af/en/news/5337>

Second International Conference Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan 2012

[http://mfa.gov.af/Content/files/CFC\\_Afghanistan\\_Tokyo-Conference-Backgrounder\\_June2012.pdf](http://mfa.gov.af/Content/files/CFC_Afghanistan_Tokyo-Conference-Backgrounder_June2012.pdf)

The Chicago Conference 2012

<http://www.thekabulprocess.gov.af/images/conferences/chicago/chicago-summit-declaration-on-afghanistan.pdf>

Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) Senior Officials Meeting  
Kabul 2013

<http://mfa.gov.af/en/news/co-chairs-statement-tokyo-mutual-accountability-framework-tmaf-senior-officials-meeting-kabul-afghanistan-3-july-2013>

## APPENDIX I: ESSAYS

### POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON AFGHANISTAN: HOW CAN INDIA CONTRIBUTE?

**Anand K. Sahay**

1. The people of Afghanistan have been intensely politicized and mobilised at the mass level since about the mid-1960s. It is not widely known that two relatively free parliament elections were held in the 1960s during the “democracy decade” (1963-72) under the 1964 constitution brought about by King Zaher Shah – in 1965 and 1969. Political parties had not yet been permitted, but the election of 1969 brought into the Wolesi Jirga (the House of the People) a range of opinion that included anti-royalists, conservative Muslim leaders, even a small Left group which had in it Babrak Karmal and Hafizullah Amin (communist leaders who for a time presided over the destiny of their country with fearful results), a clutch of liberals, a few women, some Pashtun nationalists, and many more non-Pashtuns than before. On the whole, however, it was local notables who had won. The House was essentially pro-government.
2. Still, the principle of electing representatives whose actions might circumscribe royal prerogatives was no longer obscured. Afghanistan was not a democratic country, of course. The powers of parliament were hardly extensive, and – as is the case to this day – power did not radiate out of institutions of a democratized State. Besides, only the early yearnings of a civil society were manifest. Even so, new modes of thinking had permeated to the surface.
3. In rapid sequence, subsequently, was seen the overthrow of monarchical rule (by Sardar Daoud Khan of the royal family in 1973); the failed effort to establish a national democratic but authoritarian power structure (the Daoud regime); an aborted attempt at an

Islamist insurrection (against Daoud's power, and before the communist takeover- with a wink and nod from elements in Pakistan in the Bhutto years); a socialist style revolution or putsch in 1978 (that toppled Daoud); nearly a decade- long military intervention by a former super-power- the Soviet Union- in support of the communists; the three-year popular interregnum (1989-92) of Dr. Najibullah, the communist-turned Afghan nationalist who defeated an army of tribal and religious warriors sent from Pakistan in the Benazir years but failed to persuade the "jihadis" to coalesce for nationalist consolidation and paid with his life; armed counter-revolutionary counter-blast supported by Pakistan, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia that embraced elements of nationalism as well as political Islam (the principal actors of the time, derided as "warlords" in the West, are more commonly known as "jihadis" or those who waged "jihad" against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) , the godless enemy); the rise, subsequent military rout, and then rehabilitation and resurgence of the Taliban on foreign soil next door in Pakistan; and the entry of international forces led by the U.S., although nominally under the umbrella of the UN.

4. These bewildering developments- associated with such a wide canvas of actors and range of ideologies- occurred with unsettling speed, in the space of no more than four decades, in a conservative Muslim country (whose social system has traditionally not manifested fanatical religious behavior). These occurred in a society that was very poor; culturally, educationally, materially and, in communication terms, backward; a society that was driven by ethnic and tribal antagonisms rooted in history although it is worth noting that there seems to exist in Afghanistan a sense of a national identity (historically, from the Oxus to the Indus) that transcends divisions of ethnicity, and the country has cohered in its present shape and outline for approximately 250 years (with minor adjustments when the British influenced its foreign affairs). A 2009 ABC-BBC-ARD German T.V. survey, that covered all the 34 provinces of Afghanistan,

confirms this. It found that 72 percent of its 1,500-odd respondents gave priority to their Afghan identity, rather than to the ethnic.

5. We should also keep in view that the succession of political tremors noted above was generated in a territory in which the State, for the most part, was fragile from the time it was founded by Ahmad Shah Abdali 'Durrani' in 1747, for the primary reason that it could not produce sufficient internal revenue. It was frequently subjected to internal and external challenges. But at no time did it capsize or lose self-belief as a unit (the prize for imperial and other buccaneers was always Kabul, the hoary capital), eventually repelling the British over a hostile 81-year engagement (1838-1919) without material support of any external power.
6. In the ten-year period of the Soviet invasion and occupation (1979-89), which was a crucial part of the tumultuous changes since the '60s in which mass politics came into being, approximately a third of the Afghanistan population were made refugee, as much as 96 percent in countries (Pakistan, Iran) that were in the grip of militarism and/or religious fundamentalism (not necessarily only at the elite level). According to a 2009 paper by Mamiko Saito prepared for the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, an internationally supported Kabul research institution, Afghanistan is still the source of the world's largest number of refugees under UNHCR mandate. Some 1.7 million refugees remain in Pakistan and one million in Iran, and half of these are estimated to have been born outside Afghanistan, and the majority of those still outside their 'home' country have been away for 20 years. The refugee factor, among others, affords Pakistan and Iran influence over Afghanistan.
7. It is hard to imagine that a society which has undergone such extreme experiences as noted above can be devoid of a conception of politics, although in the circumstances of today- with foreign forces on the point of departure and the country's security concerns not yet

resolved- it may not have arrived at a clear-cut idea of political articulation or political action or mapping pathways to maintaining national unity despite the desire to do so. The vehicles of mobilization to be harnessed are likely to depend on the kinds of dangers various elements of the society perceive, and the degree and quality of support that becomes available regionally and internationally. India potentially has an important role to play in developing a conversation within Afghanistan and helping shape a regional and international conversation on Afghanistan.

8. It is pertinent to keep in mind that we are talking about a country which remains a war zone 12 years after the U.S. and its allies occupied it. Nevertheless, it is also a vast space in which millions of people work very hard every day trying to lead normal family lives. A substantial and immediately noticeable class (with a wide internal range) has arisen- cutting across traditional fault-lines- that seeks a better quality life through education, health and work opportunities in the urban and the rural milieu.
9. Once the stylish, imperial and liberal Kabul- the only Afghan city to be ravaged by internal fighting in the years of intra-jehadi competition for power preceding the Taliban interregnum- has re-emerged as a throbbing, if in great parts shabby, city of several million (compared to a population of fewer than 500,000 when the Taliban ruled). It is marked by entrepreneurship, hectic commercial activity, educational institutions old and new, medical facilities, a staggering number of free media outlets (print, television and radio), impressive mobile phone connectivity, road links to all parts of the country, incipient civil society organisms, and the re-emergence of the woman factor in every aspect of life outside the home that had been a striking feature in the Soviet years and had been brutally stamped out afterward.
10. But just as Afghanistan, nestling in the high mountains, is no Switzerland, Kabul is no Berne. The security situation is unstable and

anything but certain. This, indeed, is the country's clearest major problem, as it has been for three decades. Suicide bombings and Taliban attacks have been a regular feature since about 2005 in spite of the armies of the world's most powerful nations being present. Whatever the geopolitical realities the U.S. and its allies may have laboured under on account of the Pakistan factor, the people of Afghanistan mock at the performance of the ultra-sophisticated militaries, and it is not difficult to see why.

11. As these armies prepare to leave, the Pakistan-headquartered insurgents have tried to raise the tempo in different parts of Afghanistan in order to make an exaggerated political point (Support for Taliban in the country is limited, including in the Pashtun areas—some surveys giving it no more than 10 percent.) The wonder is life goes on in Kabul (and elsewhere) in spite of the ever-present security threat. There is anxiety and uncertainty among the public, as the shadow of a major scheduled event (the departure of the internationals) lengthens, but no hopelessness or panic. People are not voting with their feet although there are reports of some wealthy people taking their money out.
12. All the same, the New Afghanistan is a reality hard to ignore as one travels around the country. There is newness of desire and aspiration, the urge to shake off the unwholesome aspects of the sociology of the past, although the old order does occasionally seek to reassert itself, sometimes with success. This vastly expanded constituency of the new elements of an old country— the bulk of whose population today is under 30— is likely on the whole to resist future political arrangements that threaten the gains that have been made since the ouster of the Taliban from power. What it needs is help.
13. The attitude toward women is an important signifier of this class. The ABC-BBC-ARD survey cited above tellingly reports that 92 percent Afghans favour girls going to school, 91 percent support women

casting their vote, and 77 percent are for women working outside their home. (The figures are lower for Pashtun areas, known to be more traditional than other parts). The implications of this for a traditional society can be extraordinary. This indeed is the measure of the social change, or radicalization, that has taken place in Afghan society in spite of the rule by jihadis (the Pakistan-supplied religious parties run by “warlords” who fought the Soviet army and came to power (1992-96) at the end of Dr Najibullah’s rule in the post-Soviet period) and the Taliban (1996-2001). Those were desolate years. Education, health care and economic activities suffered grievously. Women could not step out of their home in the Taliban period, and faced difficulties during jihadi rule, a time of internal civil war that imposed heavy costs on society as a whole.

14. Afghanistan is a diverse land, in terms of its ethnic composition and languages. Its national anthem mentions 14 ethnic groups. According to a 2008 study of the U.S. Library of Congress (Country Studies), the principal groups are Pashtun (42 percent of the population), Tajiks (27 percent), Hazaras and Uzbeks (each 9 percent), Aimak and Turkmen (each 4 percent), and others such as Baluch, Pashai, Nuristani, and Arab. In the absence of a census, these figures should be treated as approximations, but it is generally understood that the proportion of the Hazaras in the population is somewhat higher than the Uzbeks, making them the third largest ethnic group. At any rate, they carry social and political influence in more provinces than the Uzbeks.
15. The Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmen and the Aimak, can move in tandem, although there is no hard and fast rule. They appear to have ethnic similarities on account of broad Turko-Mongol ancestry. Unlike the other groups, however, the Hazaras are nearly all Shia, and make up most of the country’s Shia population, which is thought to be around 10 percent. On this account they are influenced by Iran, while the others like them are impressed with Turkey. The Hazaras were discriminated against in the last one hundred years and denied



- government employment. The post- Bonn constitution of December 2003 changed this. Afghanistan now is a progressive Islamic state, one among very few, in which the Shia enjoy the same rights as the Sunni.
16. Historically, the Pashtuns have been the most significant nationality within Afghanistan. Their language is Pashto. The country's other key language is Dari, as Farsi (Persian) is known in Afghanistan. Dari and Pashto are both deemed national language. The Pashtuns founded the Afghan state in mid-18th century, and were its rulers until the Soviets arrived on the scene. President Hamid Karzai is a Pashtun of aristocratic background. On account of the Pashtuns being the single largest ethnic group, they become very significant in the electoral arena, although there are tribal and factional subdivisions among them. There are political and ideological currents as well which may prevail over tribal considerations at times. Much depends on the wider conjuncture.
  17. For all the divisive tendencies that may exist (as in India with factors like caste, region, or religion), and the pains that rapid social, political and economic change can cause within a system, Afghanistan has worked hard to maintain its present constitution which has brought equal rights to all ethnic groups, the Shia minority, and to women. While 25 percent of the seats in the Wolesi Jirga (the House of the people) are reserved for women, in the first parliament (constituted 2005), women won 28 percent seats, according to the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan. The bicameral legislature has often been stubborn in facing up to the executive presidency. It merits notice that Yunus Qanooni, who challenged Mr. Karzai in the presidential election of 2004 and lost, was elected Speaker of Wolesi Jirga.
  18. MPs in Afghanistan are all independents, although their past political affiliations, if any, are well-known. Political parties were not

<sup>12</sup>Country Profile: Afghanistan, U.S. Library of Congress; August 2008.

registered when the first parliament after the ejection of the Taliban was elected. Deal making can cut across political divides. Today there are over a hundred registered political parties, but the overwhelming bulk are paper entities.

19. The main parties likely to matter are the traditional ones: Jamiat-e-Islami (led until recently by former president Ustad Burnahudin Rabani, the head of the High Peace Council who was assassinated by the Taliban in 2011), Hizb-e-Islami (of Gulbudin Hekmatyar, which, like the Taliban, officially wages war against the Karzai regime, and is supported by Pakistan; before the Taliban came on the scene, Mr. Hekmatyar was Islamabad's card in Afghanistan), and Hizb-e-Wahadat (the Hazara Shia party with two factions, one headed by vice-president Khalil Karimi and the other by Mohammed Mohaqeq, who had contested for the presidency in 2004). Personal interviews with political actors in Afghanistan suggest that the former communists now form about 16 loose groups with no leadership or programme. About a dozen former communists were individually voted to the first parliament, and some of them were respected figures, their political background being no inhibiting factor. Mr. Karzai had little difficulty appointing Hanif Atmar, formerly of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan(PDPA) - as the communist party was known- his interior minister, and Mr. Atmar enjoyed a positive reputation as minister.
20. If Hizb-e-Islami contested as a party, it is likely to have an organizational advantage over other parties in some parts. This party has a degree of popularity among educated sections and university students, especially in eastern Afghanistan (capital city Jalalabad, near the de facto boundary with Pakistan). Being essentially Pashtun, the Hizb may have a wider following than the Jamiat (better established among the Tajiks and others in Northern Afghanistan), whose Pashtun offshoot it is.

21. Unlike the Taliban, the Jamiat and the Hizb-e-Islami emerged from the early crop of proponents of political Islam in Afghanistan, though the Jamiat has undergone changes in its personality, and has seemed more Afghan nationalist in the post-Soviet context. The Hizb, on the other hand, has stuck close to the Pakistan wind (though it has also dealt with Iran at a specific juncture in spite of Iran's status as a Shia power). In the case of the Jamiat and the Hizb, their appeal was, to begin with, to the intellectual sections of the newly emerging middle class in the 1960s and the 70s, and they represented the ulema (the interpreters of the Islamic faith). The Taliban, as a totally opposite case, rose from village maulvis- disdained by the educated classes- through the agency of Pakistan.
22. Counting in the transitional phase before the post-Taliban constitution was created, Mr. Karzai has been in power for twelve years. He has shown himself to be adept at coalition politics, and as creator of a broad church, drawing into the power structure leaders from all corners of the country and of all persuasions, save the Taliban. The former communists and their nemesis, the "warlords" or jihadis, the overground faction of the Hizb- e- Islami, the Jamiat-e-Islami, both factions of the Hizb-e-Wahadat, as well as prominent individuals from all sides of the court, regardless of their previous positioning, have been drawn into the power circle by Mr. Karzai. There have been many instances of individuals and factions leaving him only to return.
23. On the whole, the story of Afghan politics after the Bonn accord has been to avoid rocking the boat, and to further group or factional interests through political manoeuvres of a kind that settled democracies are familiar with. The underlying reason is that the power elite drawn from all sections came to develop a vested interest in advancing the system, although political competition to get ahead remained at the heart of political dynamics. It is noteworthy that gun battles haven't erupted to settle even nettlesome political problems, unlike in the jihadi period.

24. Since the existing system has served the needs of the elite, there has as yet been no factionalisation along ethnic or party lines of the various instruments of government, in particular of structures relating to the security services (although tension may simmer from time to time). The institutions of administration so necessary in a democracy- such as the bureaucracy and the military hierarchies- do not derive from a merit-based selection through a process of open examination. They rely, instead, on informal selections effected by political actors and the compromises they reach with one another.
25. It is important for friends of Afghanistan, more particularly India, to work for the successful culmination of the presidential election in April-May 2014, and the parliament election in 2015. This will be crucial to efforts to prevent the splintering of the security services, the army and the police, and the civilian bureaucracy, on the basis of any fault-line, and keep the country politically stable once the process of the departure of the foreign military and civilian contingents gathers pace in the months ahead. While civil war is sometimes easily spoken of in some quarters, this is unlikely if sufficient confidence is generated in the system that elections will not disadvantage any group. This understanding is also the best guarantor of defence against external military incursions.
26. The foreign armies are so far committed to ending their combat mission in the middle of 2014, by when presidential election is scheduled to conclude. However, the focus of the U.S. (from which other Western nations will take their cue), can be said to be no longer on keeping Afghanistan militarily protected. Its priority may now be expected to get its men and materials out safely, and the forces may leave even earlier than scheduled as a measure of expediency, if this is required. In any event, America needs the goodwill of Pakistan and the Taliban as the exit route lies through Pakistan.

27. As American focus has begun to change, it is necessary that the political process within Afghanistan- geared toward not only a peaceful but also a fair and open election (which is crucial to acceptance of the result as impartial)- be kick-started in right earnest at the earliest with friends of Afghanistan playing a supportive role.
28. The reality of U.S.' dependence on Pakistan and the Taliban in the short-term affords us a better understanding of the Western moves in respect of the recently established Doha (Qatar) office of the Taliban, the U.S. perseverance of the past years in seeking to engage with the Taliban (and its overall solicitousness toward it more lately, and possibly also toward the Haqqani group). The elected and duly constituted government in Kabul has complained- not without justification- of having been cut out of these processes, although appropriate pro forma statements have been made. This was the nub of the Indian statement made in the contentious backdrop of the opening of the Doha office in June 2013.
29. The entire Qatar process, and developments along the continuum preceding it, has been variously presented as moves toward "reconciliation" and "peace" so that Afghanistan may not be destabilised or be troubled by the insurgents once foreign troops end their combat mission. But the question is, reconciliation with whom if the elected government and various Afghan political parties and factions are not called to the table to talk peace with the Taliban on terms that uphold the dignity that accrues to them by virtue of being duly elected representatives of the people of Afghanistan?
30. The ABC-BBC-ARD poll cited above suggests that 58 percent of the Afghans see the Taliban as "the biggest danger" to their country (as compared with local warlords, drug traffickers, the U.S. and the Afghan governments), and 67 percent say that Pakistan allows them to operate. About 22 percent report "some Taliban activity" in their area (in southwestern Afghanistan this is as high as 57 percent).

There is no data available on the percentage of the population that supports the Taliban outright. In July 2013, the AfPak ambassador of a leading western country noted while briefing this Task Force that up to 15 percent Afghans may support the insurgent group, but he conceded this may be speculative.

31. However, 91 percent Afghans have an “unfavourable” view of Pakistan and 86 percent say Pakistan has played a negative role. This view of Pakistan is not divorced from the attitude toward the Taliban, although much is made in some quarters of the fact that the Taliban are Pashtuns. It is even asserted that the latter will endorse the insurgents in a crunch situation. Some have put themselves out so far as to give Taliban’s design the colour of Pashtun nationalism. Indeed, the opposite appears to be consistent with known facts. The Taliban were created as a fighting force to emerge out of Pakistan madrasas also with a view to trumping the well-documented tendency of Pashtun nationalism (which has posed a political problem for the Pakistan State since its creation in 1947) with an overt appeal to religion.
32. Asked what in his view Taliban’s “mission” was, the ambassador referred to above noted it might be to get the foreigners out of Afghanistan. This makes sense. Since the Taliban (and their provider Pakistan) appear to enjoy so little support within Afghanistan, winning electoral laurels is unlikely; in the event they may reckon their best hope of getting back to power in Kabul might be through war-making once the U.S. and other Western armies have departed- in effect a repeat of the 1996 scenario. However, Afghanistan today is a wholly different place now. The country as a whole has developed a stake in the present system in spite of the many weaknesses in administration that manifest themselves every day, including the lack of funds, corruption, and unreliable justice delivery. The Afghanistan of the jihadi period was, in contrast, a wasteland, and internal disaffection levels were exceedingly high, allowing the Taliban to enter Kabul triumphant as “saviours”.

33. India is the most approved of nation in Afghanistan. Successive polls have shown this to be the case in the post-2001 period. The survey cited above held that 74 percent Afghans saw India “favourably” (57 percent for Iran; 61 percent for Germany, which operates in northern Afghanistan and is not engaged in fighting; 47 percent for the U.S., down from 85 percent in 2005; 39 percent for Britain). A crucial reason for this is the much-applauded development role played by India. An imperceptible factor may be that the Indian connection is deemed non-threatening, as this country does not have a border with Afghanistan while the two countries have strong cultural similarities on account of associations produced by history. But possibly the most significant reasons for approbation of India among Afghans is that it is a democracy—a status to which Afghanistan aspires—and has the necessary economic, scientific and technological capability to be of assistance to it in the present stage of its development. None of Afghanistan’s immediate neighbours and regional allies fits India’s profile.
34. India’s security interests in Afghanistan are evident. A return of a Pakistan-backed fundamentalist force like the Taliban in Kabul can inordinately pressure Jammu and Kashmir all over again (besides other parts of the country). India’s recent decision to build Chabahar port, and cooperate with Iran and Afghanistan, is an important geo-strategic move with focus on transportation lines for the moving of trade, including natural resources, all the way up to the Amu Darya (the Oxus). It is congruent with bilateral and/or regional efforts, which may lead to the holding of peaceful and fair elections in Afghanistan in 2014 and 2015 in furtherance of the country’s transition to a secure democracy with dependable economic assets of its own.
35. Should India shy away from the pursuit of a political objective of substance in Afghanistan, the vacuum is likely to be filled by Islamabad backing extremist forces such as the Taliban (and other

regressive elements) once again. The emergence of such an egregious axis, with terrorism as its instrumentalist vector, is likely to menace Iran, Russia, and the former CARs of the erstwhile USSR, who may just begin to coddle the “bad boys” so as not to invite their unwanted attention. If the “bad boys” are thus courted by regional entities, the Western powers too could treat them with kid gloves, not wanting to be outdone for regional influence by Iran or Russia. A lack of visible Indian political assertion in the run-up to the Western withdrawal could encourage pro-extremist sections within Afghanistan, inordinately embolden Pakistan, and make opportunists and fence-sitters do deals and cross over to the wrong side.

## Recommendations

36. India should ramp up its mission in Kabul. More personnel are needed at all levels to deal with complexities that arise with the upcoming elections for the presidency (and provincial councils) and the departure of the foreign forces and civilians.
37. New Delhi should open discussions with regional countries on future processes in Afghanistan so that regional stability is not undermined. Iran, Russia, the CARs of the former USSR, and Turkey have a political interest in seeing Afghanistan being neutral, sovereign and democratic.
38. New Delhi could also explore ways to arrive at mechanisms for meaningful discussion on Afghanistan with Islamabad to the extent this is possible. Discussions have begun with Beijing, and these could develop into a collaborative mechanism with Russia as well, terrorism and the economy being at the center of cooperation. India’s position in Afghanistan will be strengthened if it is seen to commence work on a major commercial enterprise, as the Russians are contemplating in the short-term.



39. India has considerable experience of dealing with domestic insurgencies. It can thus avoid a formulaic position on the Taliban and Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami so long as this does not undermine the integrity of the current Afghan constitution.
40. At the international level, India should constructively engage with donor countries on continuing financial support in the foreseeable future, irrespective of the nature of security-related agreements they reach with Kabul.
41. President Karzai cannot contest the upcoming election on account of constitutional restrictions. But he is in a position to offer moral support to a candidate/candidates. This could upset the recently formed opposition coalition (some of whose leaders have been with the Karzai government), although it may be fluid in nature. India could seek to encourage all parties to deliver a viable election free of violence. The election is likely to be seen as viable if it can be held in all the provinces even if some 40 percent of voting centers in the country may not be operational on account of security-related anxieties.
42. About 50 percent of the polling centers in the provinces bordering Pakistan (south, southwest and east) will lie in a difficult security zone. The security situation can be eased if Afghanistan has airlift and evacuation facilities for army and police. India could seek to assist with alleviating this situation and speak with Russia for a cooperative effort in this area. Better security is important for yielding a relatively good election, which is important for political stability in the country and for raising donor confidence. The enemies of elections are likely to be deterred if the government is able to press the necessary aircraft into service.
43. Any steps envisaged by India should keep a perspective that embraces the presidential and provincial council elections of 2014

and the parliament election in 2015. The holding of the latter will be influenced by the success/failure of the former. It is important to bear this in mind, considering that U.S. and NATO's combat mission will be over before the parliament election.

44. For the sake of the presidential election in 2014 and for the sake of the parliament election in 2015, it should be kept in mind that it is for the first time since the ouster of the Taliban from office that the Afghans will be attempting to hold the polls without the direct help of the foreign forces who have already passed control of the security in almost all the 34 provinces to the Afghans themselves. India should encourage all concerned in Afghanistan not to delay the presidential election unless this becomes unavoidable for a short period on account of extreme winter conditions or a precipitous drop in the security situation.
45. The new president is not likely to be in office right after the election result is known. In the Afghan system, several months are permitted for resolution of complaints of wrong-doing and tampering with votes. Effectively, this means President Karzai could remain in charge about six or seven months after the elections, as some believe. The time between the end of polling and the entry of the new president can be a testing one, politically. If India is seen as a friend in need by helping in the election process (even indirectly) with support systems and election management systems, besides arranging some much needed defense gear (e.g. transport aircraft/choppers), its political voice urging stability is likely to be heard at such a time.

(July 2013)

## BARACK OBAMA'S FAITH IN 'RECONCILIATION' WITH THE TALIBAN

Barack Obama's faith in 'reconciliation' with the Taliban could prolong the agony of the Afghans. A Taliban-controlled Afghanistan will make the AfPak region an epicenter of global terrorism.

### Pioneer, Friday, June 21, 2013

1. On February 17, 2009 U.S. President Barack Obama announced that in order to "stabilise the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan" he was authorising the deployment of an additional 17,000 U.S. troops there. He added: "The problem of Afghanistan, the Taliban and the spread of extremism in that region cannot be solved solely by military means." Shortly thereafter, he announced the deployment of an additional 4,000 troops. At the London Conference in 2010, the U.S. announced that responsibilities for security would be transferred to Afghan forces so that U.S.-ISAF forces could begin withdrawal by July 2011. On June 22, 2011, Mr Obama announced that the U.S. intended to end all combat operations in Afghanistan by the end of 2014, while transferring responsibility for security to Afghan forces. This process is in place and the bulk of security operations even now are undertaken by Afghan forces, with American logistical backing.
2. The American strategy also involves a process of "reconciliation" through talks in Qatar between the Taliban on the one hand and the Afghan High Peace Council, on the other. The U.S. and the Karzai Government aver that this process will be based on "respect for the Afghan Constitution, rule of law, and democratic values." While the nucleus of a Taliban office has been set up in Qatar, even the most optimistic are sceptical that the Taliban and its ISI backers will settle for anything short of getting substantial control, in initial years, of the bulk of southern Afghanistan. The U.S. is expected to retain a residual military presence of around 8,000 troops in Afghanistan, together

with control of around half-a-dozen military airports, while focusing on training and counter-terrorism operations. It will be financing, training, equipping and providing logistical support to the 3,50,000-strong ANDSF. There is scepticism about the will of the U.S., to stay the course on its commitment in its Strategic Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan to “combat Al-Qaeda and its affiliates and enhance the ability of Afghanistan to deter threats against its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity”. Virtually every Afghan will aver that his country faces these threats only from Pakistan and its proxies.

3. Interestingly, like Mr Obama, Mr Mikhail Gorbachev suddenly announced his decision to withdraw Soviet forces in Afghanistan, and commenced the withdrawal in 1988. Mr Gorbachev’s entire strategy was based on the naïve belief that Pakistan will cease arming the Peshawar-based Afghan Mujahedeen, in accordance with its commitments in the Geneva Accords. (In the preceding years, the CIA funded and provided the ISI with weapons, enabling them to arm and equip an estimated 80,000 fighters to challenge the writ of the regime of President Mohammed Najibullah). Pakistan’s President, General Zia ul-Haq, however, made it clear that he had no intention of abiding by the Geneva Accords and he would deny Soviet accusations of the ISI arming the Afghan Mujahedeen, telling
4. President Ronald Reagan: “We will deny any arms aid is going through our territory. After all, that is what we have been saying for the past eight years.”
5. Like President Obama is now looking for ‘reconciliation’ with the Taliban, Mr Gorbachev made an ill-advised and desperate attempt to negotiate with the Peshawar-based, ISI-backed seven-party alliance of fundamentalist Afghan parties. The Mujahedeen just stalled for time as they obtained ever more direct Pakistani military assistance to oust the Najibullah Government, which, interestingly, offered fierce resistance, till the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991

and arms supplies dried up. Pakistan's long-term objectives in Afghanistan were clearly spelt out earlier by President Zia, who stated: "We have earned the right to have a friendly regime in Afghanistan. We took risks as a frontline state, and won't permit it to be like it was before, with Indian and Soviet influence there and claims on our territory. It will be a real Islamic state, part of a pan-Islamic revival that will one day win over the Muslims of the Soviet Union, you will see it"

6. Mr Gorbachev's naiveté and Pakistani duplicity and territorial ambitions led to the instability, violence and international terrorism that tore apart the body politic of Afghanistan and brought misery and suffering to its people. Is Mr Obama's 'end game' in Afghanistan and his faith in 'reconciliation' with the Taliban set to prolong the agony of the Afghans? Afghanistan is and will likely remain, an international basket case for at least a decade. It will need at least USD 4.1 billion annually to maintain its armed forces. The economy can become self-sustaining only if the country's mineral wealth can be put to use, which will require at least a decade of conditions conducive to economic development. The only redeeming feature is that the U.S., unlike the Soviet Union, will not collapse. Moreover, there is some recognition in the international community that a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan will lead to the AfPak region remaining the epicenter of global terrorism.
7. Much is going to depend on how domestic developments within Afghanistan play out and on the credibility of its Government. It is crucial to ensure that the forthcoming presidential election in 2014 is transparent, fair and credible. It would of course be ideal if India can work with others to try and see that the leading presidential candidate enjoys genuine domestic and international credibility and respect. Given his experience and role as an Afghan patriot, President Hamid Karzai could then assume the role of an elder statesman. Given the ideological inclinations of the Zia era officers,

who now run the Pakistani Army, it is going to be a difficult task to persuade and pressurise the military establishment to discard Gen Zia's grandiose notions of Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and the Islamic world. The Pakistan Army would claim that it is essential to keep on the right side of Mullah Omar and Sirajuddin Haqqani, given its ongoing operations against the Pakistani Taliban in the Khyber and Kurram tribal agencies. But, New Delhi will be making a serious mistake if it allows misplaced concerns about Pakistani 'sensitivities' to inhibit its political and economic partnership, or its defense relationship, including arms supplies, with the dispensation in Kabul.

8. India has already eroded its credibility and compromised its interests by the extent to which it has sought to appease Chinese 'sensitivities' in the conduct of its relations with the U.S., Japan, Vietnam and others. It must, therefore, not repeat the mistake in dealing with Pakistan.

## TASK FORCE CO-CHAIRS AND MEMBERS

### Co-Chairs

**Radha Kumar**, Director General, Delhi Policy Group and Former Interlocutor for Jammu & Kashmir



Dr. Radha Kumar, Director General of the Delhi Policy Group, is a specialist in ethnic conflicts, peacemaking and peace-building. Formerly Director of the Mandela Centre for Peace at Jamia Millia Islamia University (2005-10), Dr. Kumar has also been Senior Fellow in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York (1999-2003), Executive Director of the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly in Prague (1992-4), Associate Fellow at the Institute for War and Peace

Studies at Columbia University (1996-8) and was a member of the Council on Security and Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP India). She is currently on the Board of the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the Foundation for Communal Harmony (India, Ministry of Home Affairs) and an Associate Fellow of the Asia Society in New York. From October 2010 to October 2011, Dr. Kumar served as one of the three-member Group of Interlocutors appointed by the Government of India for Jammu and Kashmir. Dr. Kumar holds a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi and an MA and BA from Cambridge University, UK. She is the author of 5 books and over 100 journal articles & book chapters, as well as several dozen op-ed and about 30 reports. Dr. Kumar also appears frequently on T.V. and radio. Her publications include –

- Negotiating Peace in Deeply Divided Societies: A Set of Simulations, Sage, 2009
- Making Peace with Partition, Penguin India, 2005
- Divide and Fall? Bosnia in the Annals of Partition, Verso Books, 1997, 1999
- A History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for

Women's Rights and Feminism in India, 1800-1990, Kali for Women and Verso Books, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2002, Zubaan, 2004. Marathi edition 2000, Hindi edition 2002

A full list of her articles can be accessed on the Delhi Policy Group website.

**G Parthasarathy**, Honorary Visiting Professor, Centre of Policy Research, New Delhi



Ambassador Gopalaswami Parthasarathy is a career diplomat who retired from Service in June 2000. He was a Commissioned Officer in the Indian Army prior to joining the Indian Foreign Service. He has served in Indian Missions in Moscow, Dar es Salaam and Washington and as Consul General of India in Karachi. After completing his term as Spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs and thereafter as Information Adviser and Spokesman in the Office of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Mr. Parthasarathy was posted as Ambassador of India to Myanmar and served as High Commissioner of India to Cyprus, Australia and Pakistan. He is currently Honorary Visiting Professor in the Centre of Policy Research, New Delhi.

## Task Force Members

**Indrani Bagchi**, Diplomatic Editor, Times of India



Indrani Bagchi is Diplomatic Editor with The Times of India, where she reports and analyses foreign policy issues for the newspaper. Indrani covers daily news on foreign affairs in the foreign office, as well as interpret and analyze global trends with an Indian perspective. She writes news stories as well as opinion articles, news features, a blog, "Globespottin'" and a



fortnightly column for The Times of India Crest edition. The subjects she covers are diverse: India's neighbourhood, US, China, Pakistan, terrorism, nuclear weapons, national security issues etc. She joined the Times of India in 2004. Earlier, Indrani was associate editor, also covering foreign affairs for India Today, a premier news magazine. Indrani started her journalism career in The Statesman where she was the weekend editor, before moving to The Economic Times in Calcutta to edit the Metro Magazine. Having graduated from Loreto College, Calcutta University with English Honours, Indrani has been a Reuters Fellow, in Oxford University (1996). In 2010, India was awarded the Chang Lin-Tien fellowship by the Asia Foundation to study US-China relations at Brookings Institution, Washington DC. She is a Fellow of the India Leadership Initiative of Ananta Aspen Centre.

**Syed Shahid Mahdi**, Member, Governing Body Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)



Education: MA (History –Political Science) Aligarh Muslim University. Stood First in all School and University Exams. Teaching : Aligarh Muslim University, Kurukshetra University Government : IAS 1963 (Second position in All India list), served in various positions in Bihar and Government of India. India's Alternate Permanent representative in Food and Agriculture Organization ( FAO ) of United Nations,

Rome and Member of several FAO of the United Nations, Rome Inter Governmental Committees. United Nations: More than a decade in D2, senior most professional position with FAO of the United Nations at Headquarters, Rome and Director of country offices in Nepal, Yemen, Ethiopia. Vice Chancellor: Jamia Millia Islamia (a Central Government University), quantum improvements and expansion in Academics, Infrastructure and Information Technology etc. Among others, established Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies, Centre for Management Studies, Centre of Open and Distance Learning, Centre for Information Technology, Faculty of Architecture and Unit for Central Asian

Studies, and initiated Centre for Study of Comparative Religions and Civilizations Member of many educational bodies and institutions. e.g Court of Aligarh Muslim University, Executive Council of Central University of Hyderabad, Central University Nagaland, State University of Kumaon, and Senate of State University Jodhpur University, Central Government Himachal University Chairman, Governing Body of Dayal Singh College, Delhi University etc Travel: widely travelled in Europe, West and East Asia. USA and some in Africa. Member several official delegations abroad (China, Egypt, Jordan, Syria. Saudi Arabia. Afghanistan, Iran NGO: One of the founding Trustees and until recently Managing Trustee PRATHAM, Delhi, engaged in education of the disadvantaged. Member Governing Body of KATHA, a literary and social service NGO. Member, India Afghan Foundation, Ministry of External Affairs, until recently Vice President Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and currently Member Governing Body of ICCR. One of the three Indian members of the Ministry of External Affairs India Afghanistan Foundation.

**Leela K. Ponappa**, Trustee, Delhi Policy Group



AMBASSADOR LEELA K. PONAPPA was the Deputy National Security Advisor and Secretary, National Security Council Secretariat from 2007-2009. Ambassador Ponappa, a career diplomat, joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1970. Her last appointment was as Ambassador to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. She was also Ambassador to Thailand and Permanent Representative of India to the UNESCAP (2002-2004). Earlier, at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in New Delhi, Ambassador Ponappa held several positions including Additional Secretary for Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and the Maldives (1998-2001), Joint Secretary in charge of the Consular, Passport, Visa and Overseas Indians Division (1992-1994) and for SAARC from 1986-1990. She was Senior Directing Staff at the National Defense College from 1995-1998.

She was also Research Associate at the Centre for South and Southeast Asia, University of California, Berkeley. She also dealt with India's relations with Pakistan and Afghanistan from 1975-1978 at the MEA. She has dealt with India's relations with its neighbours covering a wide range of issues including border negotiations; national security issues including terrorism and narcotics; sharing of river waters, disaster management and infrastructure projects; economic affairs including India-U.S. trade and investment, negotiation and implementation of the India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement; regional cooperation through SAARC, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the UNESCAP.

**Anand K Sahay**, Senior Journalist



Until recently, Coordinating Editor, Asian Age. Previously Special Correspondent Times of India, Diplomatic Correspondent The Hindu, News Chief BITV, Senior Editorial Writer Hindustan Times. Wrote columns and articles for several newspapers, including Hindustan Times, Indian Express and Times of India. Foreign correspondent in London for The Daily of Bombay and Blitz Weekly. Spent a year in Kabul in the

war years as advisor to Afghanistan Times, an English language daily, travelled in the country, and taught Hindi at Nangrahar University, Jalalabad. Reported the fall of Gorbachev and end of communism, the dismantling of apartheid and the first all-race election which helped establish the new South Africa, and the transfer of Hong Kong to China. Ground reporting from Kashmir, Punjab and Assam for various publications when these states were in the throes of terrorist violence. Have covered India's parliament, political parties, and government. Formerly Visiting Professor at the Nehru Centre at Jamia Milia Islamia University in New Delhi, and guest lecturer, National Defence College, New Delhi.

**Aditya Singh**, Advisor, National Security Programme, Delhi Policy Group



Lieutenant General (retd.) Aditya Singh was formerly a member of India's National Security Advisory Board. Currently, he is the Security advisor to the National Security Program being carried out at the Delhi Policy Group. General Singh retired in Sep 2007 as GOC-in-C of the Southern Command - the largest and senior-most Command of the Indian Army. Prior to this he had been Commander-in-Chief(C-in-C), Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) Command - the only Joint Command of

India from Jan 2005 in the aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami of 26 Dec 2004. In this capacity, he was also the Vice Chairman and Operational Head of the Integrated Relief Command responsible for the emergency relief and successful rehabilitation of the ravaged Islands. A fourth generation Army Officer he volunteered as a continuum of the family legacy which dates back to 1859. He completed his education from Mayo College, Ajmer, and was commissioned into the Indian Armoured Corps in 1967 at the top of his batch. A graduate of Staff College, Camberly (UK) in 1978, he obtained a Masters Degree in Military Science in 1990 and is an alumnus of the Indian National Defence College. He is a three times recipient of the highest national awards for distinguished service and a former Aide de Camp to The President of India. He now devotes time to strategic and national security issues, looking after educational establishments and building institutions.

**Vikram Sood**, Adviser, Observer Research Foundation, India



Vikram Sood was a career intelligence officer who retired in March 2003 after heading the Research and Analysis Wing. He is currently Adviser, Observer Research Foundation, an independent public policy think tank. He has been writing regularly on intelligence, terrorism, security, energy, Pakistan,

Afghanistan, China, the US, Russia and West Asia; foreign relations and strategic issues in journals and Indian newspapers like the Hindustan Times, the Asian Age and Midday (Mumbai) in addition to other contributions elsewhere like the Indian Defence Review and some journals published abroad. Has co authored/co edited books like "Radical Islam" a joint ORF and Russian collaboration, "Does South Asia Exist" (with Stanford University) apart from many other article for the ORF. Vikram Sood completed his Masters in Economics from St Stephen's College Delhi University in 1965.

## ACRONYM LIST

AAF	–	Afghan Air Force
AFJC	–	Afghan Journalist Center
AISA	–	Afghanistan Investment Support Agency
ALP	–	Afghan Local Police
AMF	–	Afghan Military Force
ANA	–	Afghan National Army
ANASTU	–	Afghan National Agricultural Sciences and Technology University
ANATC	–	Afghan National Army Training Command
ANBP	–	Afghanistan New Beginning Program
ANP	–	Afghan National Police
ANDSF	–	Afghan National Defence and Security Forces
APCs	–	Armoured Personnel Carriers
APPF	–	Afghan Public Protection Force
APRP	–	Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Programme
ARTRAC	–	Army Training Command
ASTs	–	Ammunition Survey Teams
BMP	–	Infantry Fighting Vehicle
BSA	–	Bilateral Security Agreement
CAR	–	Central Asian Republics
CAPTF	–	Combined Air Power Transition Force
CASA	–	Central Asia-South Asia Electricity Trade and Transmission Project
CBM	–	Confidence Building Measure
CDA	–	Capacity Development Advisors
CGSC	–	Command and General Staff College
CIA	–	Central Intelligence Agency
CII	–	Confederation of Indian Industry
CLJ	–	Constitutional Loya Jurga
CLK	–	Corps Logistics Kandaks
CNPC	–	China National Petroleum Corporation
CPWD	–	Central Public Works Department

CSK	– Combat Support Kandaks
CSTC-A	– Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan
CSTO	– Collective Security Treaty Organization
DDR	– Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DIAG	– Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups
DIMTS	– Delhi Integrated Multi-modal Transit System
ETIM	– East Turkestan Islamic Movement
EU	– European Union
EVAW	– Elimination of Violence Against Women
FICCI	– Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
GDP	– Gross Domestic Product
Gol	– Government of India
HEB	– High Energy Biscuits
HoA	– Heart of Asia
IAGs	– Illegal Armed Groups
ICAR	– Indian Council for Agricultural Research
ICCB	– International Center for Building Capacity
IED	– Improvised Explosive Device
IFG	– Indian Field Gun
IGICH	– Indira Gandhi Institute for Child Health
IMF	– International Monetary Fund
IMMs	– Indian Medical Missions
IP	– Implementation Partners
IS	– Internal Security
ISAF	– International Security Assistance Force
ISI	– Inter-Service Intelligence
ITEC	– Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation
J&K	– Jammu and Kashmir
LeT	– Lashkar-e-Taiba
LoC	– Line of Credit
MAIL	– Ministry for Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MEA	– Ministry of External Affairs
MoD	– Ministry of defence

MoE	–	Ministry of Education
Mol	–	Ministry of Interior
MoPH	–	Ministry of Public Health (Afghanistan)
MoPW	–	Ministry of Public Works
MORE	–	Ministry for Women's Affairs Organizational Restructuring and Empowerment Project
Mo	–	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWA	–	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	–	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (Afghanistan)
NATO	–	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDS	–	National Directorate of Security
NDU	–	National Defence University
NGO	–	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIBP	–	National Institute Building Programme
NMAA	–	National Military Academy of Afghanistan
OMLT	–	Operational Mentor and Liaison Team
OR	–	Other Ranks
PDPA	–	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
QRF	–	Quick Reaction Forces
RECCA	–	Regional Economic Cooperation Conference for Afghanistan
SAARC	–	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDP	–	Small Development Projects
SCO	–	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SOFA	–	Status of Forces Agreement
TAPI	–	Turkmenistan – Afghanistan – Pakistan – India Pipeline
TTP	–	Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan
UAE	–	United Arab Emirates
UAV	–	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UN	–	United Nations
UNAMA	–	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP	–	United Nations Development Programme
UNHRC	–	United Nations Human Rights Commission



- U.S. – United States
- USAID – United States Agency for International Development
- USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- WB – World Bank
- WFP – World food Program



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