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**AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES:
AFGHAN CORRUPTION AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE
FIGHTING FORCE**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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[There were no Documents submitted.]

WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted during the hearing.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted post hearing.]

AFGHAN NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES: AFGHAN CORRUPTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS,
Washington, DC, Thursday, August 2, 2012.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 3:05 p.m. in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Rob Wittman (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROB WITTMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM VIRGINIA, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. WITTMAN. Ladies and gentleman, thank you all so much.

We will call to order the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations for a hearing on Afghan National Security Forces, specifically looking at Afghan corruption and the development of an effective fighting force. I want to welcome folks today as our subcommittee convenes the fifth and final hearing in our series related to the Afghan National Security Forces.

This afternoon we have before us a panel of experts to provide testimony about how corruption in Afghanistan might impede the development of that nation's security forces.

Corruption could prevent army and police units from successfully assuming the responsibility for securing Afghanistan from internal and external threats after 2014. Corruption also potentially reduces the operational effectiveness of security forces and jeopardizes their legitimacy with their population.

In order for the United States to achieve its strategic goal of denying terrorists safe haven in Afghanistan, it is essential that Afghan forces be capable of maintaining security and stability after transition is complete in 2014.

Our purpose today is not to undertake a comprehensive assessment of corruption in the region, but instead to narrowly focus on how corruption affects the development of an effective Afghan army and police.

Our panel today includes retired Lieutenant General James M. Dubik, Senior Fellow at the Institute for the Study of War; Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown, a Foreign Policy Study Fellow at the Brookings Institution; and Dr. Kenneth Katzman, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs at the Congressional Research Service.

Thank you for your participation today. We appreciate you taking your time and we look forward to your testimony.

I note that all members have received your full written testimony. It will also be entered into the record as submitted. Therefore, this afternoon I ask that in the interest of time that you summarize your comments and highlight the significant points to allow members greater time to pose questions and ask for additional information. I will make sure that I sound the gavel at 5 minutes to try to keep you all as closely as we can to 5 minutes so that panel members have a chance to ask questions.

This hearing marks the conclusion of a 7-week effort overseeing the development of the Afghan National Security Forces and the timetable to withdraw U.S. combat troops and cede security responsibility to Afghan units.

The subcommittee has also held five hearings and received one classified briefing on the topic. In addition to our three panelists today, we have heard from sixteen other witnesses. Among other topics, these specialists have assessed the President's declared strategy and drawdown schedule and the method by which the United States and its allies train Afghan forces and measure the results.

The subcommittee has also taken testimony from historians who reflected upon applicable lessons from earlier cases in which indigenous forces assumed security responsibility from withdrawing allies.

Like the remarks we will hear today, the briefing statements and testimony have informed subcommittee members about the situation in Afghanistan, and they equip us to consider how the U.S. should proceed.

With that, Mr. Cooper, I will turn it to you for any opening statement you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wittman can be found in the Appendix on page 29.]

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no opening statement.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you.

We will go to our witnesses. We will go first to Lieutenant General Dubik.

**STATEMENT OF LTG JAMES M. DUBIK, USA (RET.), SENIOR
FELLOW, INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF WAR**

General DUBIK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to address the committee.

Developing security forces, military and police, during an active insurgency where the outcome remains unclear and government proficiency and legitimacy are still emerging is no simple task and is harder still in the face of a strategic deadline. Yet the task is not impossible.

During my tenure as the Commanding General of Multinational Security and Transition Command in NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] Training Mission Iraq, we did accelerate the growth of the Iraqi Security Forces in size, capability, and confidence and improve the Ministries of Defense and Interior as well as the Iraqi joint headquarters well enough that when the counteroffensive of 2007 and 2008 ended, the Iraqi forces were large enough, capable

enough, and confident enough for coalition forces first to withdraw from the cities and then altogether.

So using that experience in my several trips to Afghanistan prior to on active duty and active duty, I present four major points for the committee's consideration.

First, our goal with respect to the Afghan National Security Forces must be to create a large enough, capable enough, and confident enough set of security forces. Numbers matter. The U.S. offsets size with the highest quality leadership, recruiting, training, and equipment, but nations like Iraq and Afghanistan use size to offset their lack in those categories. Capability, combat power, is a function of fighting skill and supporting systems, and fighting skill is the easiest to develop. The systems that support a soldier or a policeman, intelligence, fire support, logistics, command and control, are as important as fighting skill, but are much harder to develop.

And confidence comes in three categories. First, the Security Force is confident in itself; second, the people's confidence in their own security forces—and this confidence is a function of the ability to impose security; and then fairness in enforcing security, once imposed; and last, the government's confidence to use their security forces.

My second major point. Three types of partnerships will be required to meet this ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] development goal: Partners in training and institutions, embedded partners, and unit partners. The numbers and types of partners will change and diminish over time, but all three will be required, in my view, in some form well after 2014. In a post-2014 Afghanistan, the Office of Security Cooperation approach used in Iraq will not work.

My third major point. Neither the ANSF nor their associated ministries will be self-sustaining by 2014. This is the main reason why an Office of Security Cooperation approach will not work. They will need assistance in developing their human capital, acquiring and maintaining their equipment, funding, and most importantly, in improving the systems and procedures associated with good tactical through institutional performance.

My last main point. Illiteracy and corruption are conditions that cannot be ignored, but need not impede progress toward the ANSF development goal. In Afghanistan, insufficient literacy is a national condition and growing the literacy rate will be a multigenerational activity. In the last 2 or 3 years, the ANSF has played a huge part in improving this national problem. Illiteracy rates do affect the growth rates of both leadership and technical skills and therefore aggressive literacy training will have to continue for some time. But the literacy programs are a positive influence in a retention within the ANSF.

Corruption is also a national condition. It is not going away anytime soon. For the Ministry of Defense and the ANSF themselves, this means a robust inspector general and a sufficiently independent criminal investigation division is important. In the Ministry of Interior it means sufficient independent internal affairs organizations, from ministerial to a district level. While we can't expect these kinds of anticorruption measures to be immediately ef-

fective, we can expect that they exist, that their caseloads expand, and that cases are closed with some sort of satisfactory action.

So in closing, I have addressed the development of the Afghan National Security Forces as if such development is an independent activity. Of course, it is not. Rather, it is very much a dependent activity. First, depending on the sense that the government of Afghanistan has credibility with its people and will prevail over the insurgency. Second, and related to the first, the capability of any security force is always relative to the enemy it is fighting. Thus, the ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] requirement is to drive down the capacity of the Taliban, the Haqqani network, and others, to a level that the Afghans can in fact handle with the size force they have. And finally, success depends upon continued U.S. and NATO commitment.

Again, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity and I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you very much, Lieutenant General Dubik.

[The prepared statement of General Dubik can be found in the Appendix on page 30.]

Mr. WITTMAN. Now we will go to Dr. Felbab-Brown.

**STATEMENT OF VANDA FELBAB-BROWN, PH.D., FELLOW,
FOREIGN POLICY STUDIES, BROOKINGS INSTITUTION**

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I am honored to be able to address you today.

The linchpin of the transition strategy in Afghanistan and its most developed element is the gradual transfer of responsibility from ISAF to Afghan National Security Forces. However, in handing responsibility over to the Afghans, we are handing over a stalemated war and the territory clearly that is being handed over is much smaller than projected.

Few Afghans believe that a better future lies on the horizon after 2014. The result is pervasive hedging on the part of key power brokers as well as ordinary Afghans. Worse yet, Afghans have become disconnected and alienated from the national government and the country's other power arrangements. Governance in Afghanistan has been characterized by weakly functioning state institutions that are unwilling and unable to uniformly enforce laws and policies.

Standing up the ANSF has been one of the brightest spots of the transition. But it is also a big unknown. Its size and quality has been growing, but for many years beyond 2014 it will be dependent on ISAF for critical enablers such as in command and control, intelligence, air support, medical evacuations, and others. Moreover, much of the transfer of responsibility to ANSF remains undefined, including what does it mean that the ANSF will be in lead as of mid-2013, how many U.S. forces will stay, how narrow the U.S. mission will be defined, is it simply counterterrorism after 2014 or on-base narrow training.

One thing is clear, however; the faster we go out, the smaller the U.S. military presence, the greater the chance that whatever achievements have been accomplished will be undermined. A disturbing big unknown is whether the ANSF itself, including the Afghan National Army, will in fact be able to withstand the ethnic

and patronage fractionalization that is already fracturing the institution today.

Even the Afghan National Army is being increasingly threatened and weakened by corruption. The Afghan National Police is notorious for being both ethnically fractionalized and deeply corrupt, being seen by many Afghans as the true perpetrator of many crimes. It lacks any anticrime capacity.

Among the most controversial aspects of the transition strategy is the standing up of various militias, including the Afghan Local Police. In highly contested communities rift by ethnic and tribal divisions there is a substantial risk that the ALP [Afghan Local Police] itself will become the source of conflict as well as a source of corruption and it will start preying on both local and neighboring communities.

Let me offer a few policy recommendations. The political and governance system in Afghanistan is so pervasively corrupt that there is a need to prioritize some anticorruption efforts. Among the most critical one is to limit ethnic and tribal discrimination that drives entire communities into the hands of the Taliban, particularly such discrimination in the standing up of the ANA [Afghan National Army] and ANP [Afghan National Police]. Expanding access to markets and contracts and expanding such access so it is not ethnically and tribally driven is also critically important. Whatever effective local officials there are—and often there are very few—they should be supported and efforts to undermine them should not be tolerated.

The United States and the international community should seek to diminish and ideally neutralize the influence of problematic power brokers. There are very many and it is a difficult task, but we should get away from the policy of cobbling them for the sake of shortened battlefield exigencies. But whatever redlines we set for the power brokers, we need to be willing to uphold and punish those who transgress those redlines.

ISAF needs to resist the siren song of speeding up the formation of the ALP and expanding the program. In fact, I would argue it is important now to develop a credible and robust mechanism to roll back those units that have gone rogue and to start thinking about how to demobilize the ALP after 2014.

Persevering with whatever capacities and resolve can still be gathered in the United States and in the West and emphasizing good governance does not guarantee success. Many of the large and deeper trends may not be completely outside the control and beyond the diminishing leverage of the international community. But we still have leverage and we still can pull some levers. Going out fast, defining success and the mission in 2014, after 2014 in very narrow counterterrorism terms, and the writing off of governance only spells failure of the entire effort.

Thank you.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Dr. Felbab-Brown.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Felbab-Brown can be found in the Appendix on page 43.]

Mr. WITTMAN. We will go to Dr. Katzman.

**STATEMENT OF KENNETH KATZMAN, PH.D., SPECIALIST IN
MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH
SERVICE**

Dr. KATZMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the committee, for asking CRS to invite me today. I will summarize my testimony and look forward to your questions afterwards.

Having followed Afghanistan since 1985 as a U.S. Government analyst during Soviet occupation, one conceptual problem I think we have with the term "corruption" is that it is used to describe a lot of different behaviors in Afghanistan, some of which are illegal and illicit, some of which are simply cultural and traditional and do not involve the use of power and position for personal gain.

The ANSF, as I totally agree, is influenced by many related factors, ethnic, political and regional factionalism, that I would like to discuss today, because they have the potential for the ANSF to fracture after 2014.

Fundamentally, the ANSF is not a long-established institution. There was no military in 2001 when the United States led the effort to kick out the Taliban. The military had been completely disbanded during the fighting of 1992 to 1996 and the Taliban regime of 1996 to 2001. So there is no tradition of professionalism in the Afghan National Forces. We have built them from scratch.

After the Taliban fell in 2001, a lot of the factional fighters from the north, the Tajiks particularly, Uzbeks, Hazaras, who had fought the Taliban, they were simply put on the rolls of the Defense Ministry. They were declared Defense Ministry employees for all practical purposes, but they were basically militia fighters. The international community then decided to disband these militia fighters and build a new national army from scratch. And so this is the reason there is no professional tradition.

Even though there was a decision to disband these militias, many of them simply stashed weapons, many of them simply keep caches, and many of them continue to report to the informal power brokers that we have been discussing. In addition, because there is no tradition of professionalism, the force is subject to all the corruption factors that we see generally in Afghanistan. Demanding bribes; particularly the ANP demand bribes from citizens at checkpoints. Selective justice; putting people in jail or taking them out of jail, in many cases based on who they are or appeals from the family. Embezzlement. Numerous examples exist where the United States has given the ANA and ANP weaponry and then they have sold it and put the money in their pockets. They have sold fuel. And then they are claiming they are unable to move around to perform missions because they sold the fuel we gave them.

Ghost employees: putting people on the payroll that do not show up for duty in the ANP and ANA. Diverting of salaries. This has been a great problem. Initially, the salaries were given to the commanders to give out to their people. So the commanders were putting a portion in their pocket and then giving the rest to the people under their command.

As I said, selling of donor-provided vehicles. Illicit activity: we have had numerous reports of ANP headquarters with poppy fields growing poppy right there at the police headquarters. We had a recent example of U.S. investigators looking into half the Afghan Air

Force flying narcotics around the country. Absences without leave. Afghanistan has very little banking system, even today. So a lot it is dealt with in cash. And the tradition in Afghanistan is a soldier will go bring his mother his payroll in cash. It is very difficult to just wire money around. So a lot of them go home for a month, give their mother the money, and then they disappear for a month. And usually they do make their way back.

But the issue I want to in my remaining time get to is this issue of factionalism, because I think that really has the potential to destroy the force outright if it is put under pressure. Now if the United States is there in significant numbers after 2014, the U.S. can keep these pressures under control. If, however, the Taliban begin making gains after 2014 or if Karzai or his successor makes a deal with the Taliban that the Northern factions view as consolidating the Pashtun faction—Karzai is a Pashtun; Pashtuns are about 42 percent—the force could break up. A lot of them have loyalty to warlords, these factional leaders. The Vice President, Muhammad Fahim, a lot of Tajiks are loyal to him. Uzbek leader Abdul Rashid Dostam, from the north, many in the ANSF are loyal to him. He has a very unsavory record of human rights abuses. Atta Mohammad Noor, the Governor of Balkh Province, has a large following in the ANSF. Mohammad Mohaqui, a leader of the Hazaras, which are Shiites, many Hazaras in the force follow him. Isma'il Khan, a Tajik from the West, he is now Energy Minister. Still, many people loyal to him. And the Karzai family that basically runs Kandahar, many in the force, Pashtuns, are loyal to them.

Mr. WITTMAN. Dr. Katzman, thank you. We will make sure your testimony gets entered in its entirety into the record. We appreciate that.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Katzman can be found in the Appendix on page 61.]

Mr. WITTMAN. We will go to questions.

Mr. Cooper, I will go to you first.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Felbab-Brown, you have studied corruption and problems in many tough areas of the world. Are the Afghan problems particularly bad or are they pretty much par for the course from Mexico, Colombia, countries you have studied?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. In my view, they are particularly bad. Although, of course, the region, Afghan and more broadly the part of South Asia and Central Asia, is very corrupt, what is striking about Afghanistan is the extent to which corruption undermines any basic legitimacy the population feels toward the existing political system.

What is also very disturbing about the nature of corruption in Afghanistan is the patronage networks have been shrinking and becoming increasingly exclusionary. In my view, it is very difficult to imagine how the regime could continue operating beyond 2014, even if President Karzai does not remain in power and in fact does not run for reelection and does not seek to change the constitution, without some effort to make the system more legitimate.

What is also disturbing about corruption in Afghanistan is, of course, it is overlapped with the ethnic and tribal rifts, and the

ability of the Taliban insurgency to emphasize corruption as a key motivating mechanism for the population to tolerate if not outright support the Taliban.

Mr. COOPER. Would it make sense to just go ahead and de facto allow the warlord system to continue? Because as Dr. Katzman mentioned, these ethnic differences seem to be so great that Tajiks support Tajiks, Hazaras support Hazaras, Pashtuns support Pashtuns.

Woodrow Wilson had a policy of ethnic self-determination.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. However, what is, of course, difficult in the case of Afghanistan, is the way in which these different allegiances overlap. There are many rifts even within the ethnic communities. There are different power brokers within the same ethnic communities. And increasingly the population really does not see the power brokers or the warlords as legitimate. In fact, from my interactions with ordinary Afghans during repeated trips to Afghanistan, I am struck by the craving for a state that could be legitimate, that could deliver justice, and that would allow people to break out of the clasp in which the warlords have them. But to the extent that the security situation is difficult and there is more and more identification of the basis of narrow patronage as the only mechanism of access to security, the more difficult, of course, it is to break out from these warlords. But I hear repeatedly how much people really dislike the mafia rule or the patronage, the nepotism. So I don't feel it is a viable path for a stable Afghanistan.

Mr. COOPER. Your recommendation to go ahead and disband the ALP is startling. It is very much counter to the U.S. military point of view.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. I am aware. I also do not believe that it is likely that we are going to move quickly to disbanding the ALP. But I think one of the biggest burdens we can saddle, whatever Afghan government there is, it is an open-ended bag in which these militias, ALP being one of them, exist. But there is no clear path to dismantle them because they have the huge potential of triggering insecurity in local areas and fundamentally in the short term as well as in the long term they are one of the most difficult aspects of governance, to the point that they even prevent or complicate the rule of the warlords, should it ever come to that.

Mr. COOPER. I thank the chairman. In view of the shortness of time, I will yield the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

We will go now to Mr. Coffman.

Mr. COFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Felbab-Brown, so you are referring to the ALP as part of that village stabilization program, am I correct in that?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. Yes.

Mr. COFFMAN. So it is your concern that that merely feeds the sort of factionalism and militia content?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. Often that is the case. I would emphasize there is a need to look at the ALP in local context and that in fact Afghanistan is an extremely diverse and varied place. But of communities are not homogenous; if they are rift by ethnic and tribal divisions, militias, including the ALP, is yet another trigger of con-

flict, competition over land, resources, and a trigger of security dilemma.

Mr. COFFMAN. Let me just refer to the whole panel in terms of if you were to make one recommendation as to how we can counter corruption and better account for U.S. taxpayer dollars as well as those from our coalition allies in the international community, what recommendation would that be? General.

General DUBIK. Well, sir, it would be the recommendation that I made in my opening remarks. On the military side, a robust, independent inspector general criminal investigation, and on the Ministry of Interior and police side and internal affairs. To get those systems going, however weak they might be at the beginning, but to keep moving them forward and expanding their strength and their semi-independence as internal mechanism to look at the defense and interior forces.

Mr. COFFMAN. That is incredibly challenging.

General DUBIK. It is incredibly challenging.

Mr. COFFMAN. I think this committee had looked at the situation with Dawood Hospital and the corruption that occurred there and with military medical supplies that were sold and the fact that soldiers and police, their families, had to pay the requisite bribes to the hospital personnel before they were treated or fed. And so the commanding general that was in charge of the hospital was merely laterally moved, was never disciplined, to our knowledge, for that.

General DUBIK. I can just say that with my experience in Iraq, the Minister of Interior's Internal Affairs had 12 assassination attempts in the 15 months that I was there. This was a gruesome but very telling metric that his system was at least having some effect.

Given the political situation, sometimes lateral moves are a satisfactory solution. It may not always be the case that a person is fired or tried or jailed. Merely eliminating might be good enough for now. And until the system gets more robust and stronger and better outcomes can occur, you might have to just say lateral moves are okay.

Mr. COFFMAN. Dr. Katzman.

Dr. KATZMAN. Thank you. I think there is really no magic bullet for corruption in Afghanistan. I think we have repeatedly thought that by creating anticorruption institutions and getting Karzai to make statements—and he just issued a huge administrative decree last week with all sorts of anticorruption provisions—we feel we are going to make progress. And we never do.

Not to paraphrase former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, but we have to deal with the Afghanistan we have. It is very difficult. Every Afghan feels the regime may collapse and he is going to have to run quickly and he wants as much money as possible. So it is very difficult to grapple with.

Mr. COFFMAN. Let me put this question forward and if you all could answer briefly because my time is very limited, and that is: Is it that the Afghans don't have confidence that the regime is going to hold and so they are looking out for themselves in terms of their own economic security or financial security and lining their pockets as much as they can, while they can? Or, is it something so such a part of their culture that even if they felt the regime was

going to last forever and the United States was going to be physically there forever, that there would still be the same level of corruption as there is today?

Who would like to answer that?

General DUBIK. Well, I will take a shot, sir; a very short shot. I think it is a combination. People are people. And some cases of corruption are just that, unsurety of the future. I have no retirement. I have no future. I have to protect myself. That is one face of corruption. Power and intimidation is another face of corruption. And mere greed and nefarious character is another face of corruption. It is not a single-source activity.

Mr. WITTMAN. We are going to at this point recess. We have a series of votes that we have to get to the floor to. I will ask the indulgence of the witnesses to return. We should be returning here by about 5 o'clock. We would like to pick up questioning from there. From there, we will also have an opportunity to go through a second round of questioning for the members that are here now.

So we will recess and we will reconvene when we come back from votes approximately 5 o'clock.

[Recess.]

Mr. WITTMAN. Panelists, thank you so much. We appreciate your patience. It was an interesting time across the street.

We are back here to get back to our line of questioning. I will go ahead and begin. And we have several other members that are in line to ask questions. We will make sure that they get to ask theirs when they come back.

I wanted to ask Lieutenant General Dubik a question. Some Afghans believe that the U.S. and its allies aren't really serious about fighting corruption, and the reason being is because we have had alliances with different power brokers there and leaders that have been associated with corruption and trying to achieve certain things. So I think the Afghans look at us and say, If you are going to deal with leaders that are corrupt, how then are we supposed to battle corruption if you are going to essentially try to secure gains through those particular efforts?

How do you feel, first of all, that the Afghans view that? Is it something that creates credibility on our behalf when we try to advise them about how to avoid corruption and when we have been dealing with leaders that have been associated with corruption? I just wanted to get your thoughts on that and really to what extent should we tolerate corruption as we try to navigate our way through the current position that we are in, in the transfer of power and making sure that there is some level of stability there in the country?

General DUBIK. Going back to my Iraq experience, I guess if I was only allowed to deal with people who I knew were absolutely clean, it would be talking to myself in the mirror. So as a matter of working with people that you have to work with to move something forward and trying at the same time to reduce their involvement in corrupt activities, that is, unfortunately, the situation in which many of the senior leaders find themselves in.

But there is a line beyond which we shouldn't cross; that there are some kinds of levels of corruption that are so nefarious that they erode our own credibility and therefore erode our risk to the

mission itself. And in those kind of situations, when they come up, it is hard to say that person has to go, we can't deal with that person anymore, because who is going to be the replacement. It really is a physical conundrum if there ever was one.

Mr. WITTMAN. Dr. Felbab-Brown, I wanted to maybe elaborate a little bit on that. Mr. Cooper spoke about the system of working with warlords that the U.S. pursued initially and then said, No, we actually need to go to a different system. But is there a utility or a need to deal with those different factions here? And we talked about how the country ethnically is broken up. Is there a need to actually do that? And we know that there is some corruption within that warlord system. Is there a need or an association with our success and being able to deal with those folks? Even though we know that there is corruption there, we know the problems that we deal with from an ethical standpoint in doing that and what that means in the long term for the country.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. Mr. Chairman, it would be unrealistic and perhaps naive to believe that we can completely do away with the power brokers or completely not deal with them. It would be equally naive that we can combat all of corruption. I think where we have run into real difficulties is that we have systematically been unable to bypass even the most pernicious power brokers that undermine institutions that we have been trying to build. So today, really, we have very few institutions. We have structures that revolve around personalities, often personalities that are profoundly illegitimate from the perspective of Afghans that have participated in land theft, murder, systematic tribal discriminations, all of which are fodders for the Taliban insurgency and for mobilization against the government.

So the question is really not do we deal with power brokers. The question is: What are the redlines that we draw for power brokers, how visibly we embrace them. I am very concerned when I see us embracing Afghan commanders that perhaps are effective on the battlefield but have a record of mass murder. If we embrace them publicly and if you allow them to perpetuate behaviors, that drives entire communities into the hands of the Taliban.

I am equally, however, concerned when I see us setting redlines that we then do not have the wherewithal to uphold. I think that extremely hurts the mission. So we need to be very careful to assess what behavior absolutely undermines the very fundamentals of what we are trying to achieve—any chance of a stable government—but then really be prepared to impose some punishment for those who violate the redlines.

Unfortunately, I see us being stuck in situations where we publicly say we are determined to combat corruption, and corruption defined very broadly, including things like land theft, systematic discrimination, and say no, that is intolerable. You cannot steal the votes, you cannot beat up this village, and then when it happens say, Oh well, next time we really mean it; you cannot do it.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good. Thank you.

Mr. COOPER.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to believe that the average Afghan that you have described wants a better system and wants to be clean, but so often it seems like they just want

to take the place of the dictator or the kleptocrat. Can you identify a completely clean noncorrupt Afghan leader?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. I think I can identify individuals, many of whom are not in positions of power, where one would say they are completely not corrupt. And we need to, I think, understand the systems of corruptions is indeed system, not simply individual vices. The reality is that to become a leader in Afghanistan, one needs to conduct a lot of compromises and a lot of engaging in very brutal politics, power politics.

I would, again, go back to what kind of corruption can be lived with and what kind of corruption is tolerable to the Afghans. So the issue is not so much that you have to pay an extra fee, a bribe to get a license for something. The issue becomes where you systematically cannot get a contract or cannot bid for a contract because you are member of a different tribe. That is the level of corruption that is intolerable to Afghans and that is the kind of corruption, that is the kind of power abuse we should be focusing on, even if we cannot say absolutely no one is corrupt. And, unfortunately, what has often happened is we have embraced local leaders, we exalted them, and later on we discover how extremely problematic they were and how much they were involved in criminal activities or even siding with the Taliban. So that is not the base that we should say. That is not the baseline that we should set. It should be about what levels of corruption and abuse systematically undermines the effort.

What I fear increasingly is that the very impressive, very committed young Afghans—often young Afghans—that I think have a great commitment to their country are increasingly finding themselves squeezed out of the political system and having less opportunity to participate. The more insecure the country will feel after 2014 and heading up to 2014, the less space for them will be to push for any changes.

Mr. COOPER. My able military aide, Major Ray Windmiller, had these questions he wanted to ask. How is the transition going in the Tranche 3 areas? Anybody has a response to that?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. If I may start on that, I think Tranche 3 is very important. It is the first time that the Afghan National Security Forces are encountering difficult environments. The difficulty will be Tranche 4 and Tranche 5, but it is the first time that Tranche 3 includes some districts where there is deep military concentration and very problematic governance.

I think the verdict is still out. I think there are concerns. But the good thing about Tranche 3 is that it is still opportunity for backup, which there might not be in the same extent in Tranche 4 and Tranche 5, which will be even more difficult environments.

What concerns me about transition and the tranche concept is that more and more it is simply a one-way street. There is really very little opportunity for ISAF forces to come back to aid us that have gone problematically. And that is worrisome. And it is given by the drawdown schedule, by the timeline schedule.

Mr. COOPER. When you talk about anticorruption efforts, could you give us a specific example of what might work? You talk about how they don't like land theft or murder and then that forces them into the arms of the Taliban. And the Taliban is known for murder.

They have prompt justice, but is it fair justice? It is—your choice is between evils, isn't it?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. Yes, you are absolutely right the Taliban is, of course, brutal, and in many ways it is a choice between evils. What I find in many settings, including Afghanistan, is that what is most difficult for people to adjust to and develop coping mechanisms is unpredictable abuse, unpredictable delivery of power or delivery of rules. And, unfortunately, the Taliban is capable of delivering a brutal order but nonetheless a predictable order. Indeed, very many of my Afghan interlocutors constantly draw on the comparisons to the Taliban era and they will say it was very brutal, we disliked the Taliban, we hated the Taliban, but there was predictability. We could adjust. There was no crime. You could travel between Tarin Kot and Kandahar and no one would draw a buzz and we could have a million rupees. At the time, it was rupees. Now we will have to pay to the Taliban, we will have to pay the police, we will have to pay to the ANA, whoever has a checkpoint. You will have to pay to the power broker.

So the most difficult thing for them is just the cause of the situation and the unpredictability. One of the major weaknesses of our campaign is the lack of focus that we devote to crime. The Afghan National Police is all focused as either counterterrorism force or light counterinsurgency force. It has close to no capacity for dealing with any form of crime. And of course the Taliban is not bound by the same burdens of proof. It can simply designate this is the victim or this is the perpetrator of the crime, here is the victim, here is the punishment. And people gravitate to it. I see the Taliban all the time outcompeting us in the delivery of "justice." And it is, of course, tragic, given how abusive and terrible they are. But I all the time hear from my Afghan interlocutors that the Taliban fares far better than the Afghan government in delivering justice.

Mr. COOPER. I see that my time has expired. Thank you.

Mr. WITTMAN. Go ahead, Dr. Katzman.

Dr. KATZMAN. If I can just add to that. In my talks there is not public popular support for the Taliban. In some cases, they are winning through intimidation. People do go to the justice system that the Taliban run mainly because it is accessible. To get to formal justice system, you may have to drive far distances and you may not trust the outcome. But primarily the Taliban justice system may be right there in a community you know. It may be Duranni Pashtuns. There is a few types of Pashtuns. Duranni Pashtuns would rather use a Duranni Taliban informal justice than a Ghilzai Pashtun formal justice. So there are some affiliations there that we don't really quite understand that well. But these are factors, too. But I would say that there is not popular support for the Taliban. When they came in in 1996, they were welcomed. People welcomed them into the communities. That is not happening now. They fight their way in, they intimidate their way in, but they are not welcomed. So I think the lion's share of Afghans still want the government to succeed. The problem is we are not seeing the level of success that we would hope for.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good. Thank you. I want to pose this question to all the panel members. A media outlet recently reported that an Afghan general felt like he had to halt missions because

his target had influence or was influential in the Taliban government. I wanted to ask your perception on that. Do you believe that that is happening? And if it is, how does it affect the operational success of the ANSF, obviously both in the short term, but in the long term also.

General DUBIK. I don't know specifically whether that was true or false. There are times in an insurgency where you go after targets without any political influence. But there are also times where you have a target, but for political reasons you don't go after them right now, where the damage done by succeeding diminishes the overall positive effort. So I can conceive of cases. I did picture a few in my head where person X was eminently killable but we said, Let's not kill him right now. Let's not capture him right now.

So I don't see that as inconsistent with the way you might wage a counterinsurgency campaign, or a counterterrorist campaign, for that matter.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. I also do not know the specific context of the statement, but certainly one of the manifestations of the ethnic tensions in the Afghan National Army, and more broadly ANSF, is a constant complaint from the Tajiks that the Durrani Pashtuns, Kandahari Pashtun factions are preventing them from going after targets they would like to go after. What one hears from the Pashtun side of the Afghan National Forces is that many of the targets that the NDS [National Directorate of Security] and Tajiks are designating as targets are perhaps personal targets and being unfairly labeled as the Taliban.

I think it is critical that ISAF very much focuses on trying to understand the patterns of behavior and patterns of interest that are emerging for the different factions of the ANSF. What worries me about the future ahead is that increasingly the ISAF is going to be dependent on Afghan interlocutors for developing good local intelligence pictures, and particularly intelligence pictures with respect to targeting patterns and with respect to designation of who is the Taliban, who is the enemy, and that can in itself become a trigger of violence and further intensify pressures for the fracturing of the ANSF.

Dr. KATZMAN. I would add that it is not only the Afghan side that we are seeing this, there have been some reports in the press that have come out that actually the U.S. military has been doing what is called selective releases of certain Taliban commanders from Bagram, where they have been imprisoned at Bagram Air Base, for the purpose of ingratiating with certain Taliban factions. And it is U.S. policy to try to promote a reconciliation between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

So I think we are going to see more of this, pulling our punches, not going after certain targets, selective releases of certain Taliban who are perceived as perhaps having the ear of Mullah Omar, the Quetta Shura, maybe even the Haqqani Network. So I would say it is not a surprise that we are seeing these type of things.

Mr. WITTMAN. Dr. Felbab-Brown, let me ask you this. In some previous testimony witnesses have stated that they believe the U.S. should pick a winner in the next Afghan election. What is your opinion? What do you think of that proposition?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. I do not believe this would be a good policy, for a variety of reasons. One, I don't believe the U.S. record in picking winners is very good in either Afghanistan—of course, we haven't picked, but we clearly supported the leader that turned out to be problematic as time went on, but more broadly in other contexts.

I am also not persuaded that we have the capacity to really enforce the winner to either take place and win the elections or, if necessary, to support the leader beyond. And ultimately I do not believe it would enhance the legitimacy of that leader, and perhaps it could be a kiss of death for him—it will likely be him. There is very little chance it would be a woman.

So I do not believe it is a good suggestion, a good policy. I, however, believe that in fact we should go in the opposite direction. We should try to enable whatever procedural legitimacy that can be built for the elections as well as help the Afghans very quickly draw up security plans for the election, should the elections take place. Clearly, the elections will be extremely problematic, extremely contested. Elite consensus has collapsed. I think the vitriolic level that we saw in 2009, 2010 after elections is nothing to what we are heading for with 2014. So it will be a political earthquake for Afghanistan. An extremely fragile period.

Mr. WITTMAN. Dr. Katzman.

Dr. KATZMAN. If I can add to that, an interesting example is actually in 2009 President Karzai believes the U.S. did try to pick a winner, which was against him, Ashraf Ghani, who reconciled subsequently with Karzai and is now working for him as the transition director. And what it led to was Karzai subsequently basically tried to freeze out Ambassador Holbrooke. And it caused a tremendous rift with the SRAP [Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan] office. So it has proved problematic in the past.

Mr. WITTMAN. Lieutenant General Dubik.

General DUBIK. I didn't want to—I don't have the expertise to answer the political question, but I did want to talk about 2014. Because the conjunction of events in 2014—the election, our downsizing, and the potential beginning of the downsizing of the Afghan forces—is really an unholy mix of activities. And the timing of these activities is really important. We saw in Iraq, for example, the second Maliki government taking a year to form, and in that year not very many decisions, and led to a period where we couldn't even make good decisions between the two governments. So the timing of such a transition is important.

And with respect to the ANSF, the beginning of any thought of reducing them in size at a time that is going to be politically difficult and at a time when we are reducing ISAF forces and ISAF funding and U.S. forces and U.S. funding would be very problematic with respect to the confidence of the ANSF.

Mr. WITTMAN. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Cooper.

Mr. COOPER. Thank you.

Does it make any sense to respect the Durand Line?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. Respect for, or disrespect for what purpose? I think the—

Mr. COOPER. Well, we don't want to anger the Pakistanis.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. I understand. And what I was——

Mr. COOPER. There is not much difference between the Federally Administered Tribal Area and that part of Afghanistan, and it is an arbitrary line on a map drawn by the Brits. And we spend, what, you know, enormous amounts of money enforcing British lines on a map, not just there but Iraq, the Middle East.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. Understood. And I think we need to be very conscious of carefully calculating what benefits we would get out of more aggressive, more visible actions on the Pakistani side with respect to the Afghan environment, with what kind of precipitating triggers in Pakistan that could generate.

And I am well aware of the game that Pakistan constantly plays with us. That is, if you push too aggressively, we are too fragile and we will collapse, and so we feel a great deal of restraint. I am well aware of the game.

At the same time, Pakistan is extremely fragile. There are very few trends that are going right in the country. It is a country in a meltdown, or slow meltdown, if you would like, crumbling. And, of course, the consequences of a more fundamental crumbling in Pakistan beyond FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Area], but in Punjab, would be extraordinarily bad for the region and for the United States. So, unfortunately, we are stuck with treading very carefully across the Durand Line and more broadly in Pakistan.

Mr. COOPER. It is so terribly frustrating when, you know, we won't even change our textile policies to encourage more jobs or manufacturing in what is now the sixth-largest country in the world, or maybe the fifth.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. I understand.

Mr. COOPER. And, you know, we seem unable to coordinate our policy very well. And we always seem surprised when there is corruption. And it could well be that, you know, the natural state of human beings is corrupt, not innocent, you know, and I wonder if we have ever tried that as a foreign policy premise. Because there are some U.S. States that aren't very clean, you know. If you look at a map of world corruption, most of the world is red, the United States is pink, Canada and Australia I think are pretty white. But that is not something to brag on.

But, you know, certainly from a military standpoint, the first rule of war is to understand the nature of the enemy. And do we train our troops to expect massive wholesale corruption, you know, when they go into these places?

General DUBIK. Well, I can say I have never participated in a training or education session of acceptance of corruption. But——

Mr. COOPER. But if that is the state of the world and that is the nature of the enemy——

General DUBIK. No, but——

Mr. COOPER [continuing]. Then deal with it.

General DUBIK. And that was why I reacted to the chairman's question as I did. If you go into any country—and I have invaded several—and you are only going to deal with noncorrupt individuals, you are not going to deal with very many people. So the issue is how to deal with it in such a way that it doesn't undermine the accomplishment of the mission and how to deal with individuals

and attempt to limit the corruption to types that are going to go on anyway.

Mr. COOPER. I had an unusual discussion with the Ambassador, U.S. Ambassador to Yemen, who told me that he was not allowed to attend any function at which Khat was chewed, which eliminated all functions in Yemen, so weddings, funerals, meetings. So he was, by U.S. law, unable to be an Ambassador, but yet he was—it is like, hello? You know, so we are not meshing Western views very well with these cultures. And we are not going to change the cultures, even after 10 years of intense U.S. involvement. So why are we there?

And, you know, the U.S. taxpayer does not want us to be the world's policeman. So when you fault us for not conducting more police activities inside Afghanistan, that is not what the U.S. taxpayer is for.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. If I can answer, sir, I agree, the U.S. should not be the world's policeman. Nonetheless, the United States made the decision to go to Afghanistan, and the U.S. has a vital interest to see a stable government, not democratic, not Valhalla, but a stable government in Afghanistan. And if crime undermines the very sustainability of the government, I think it is important that the international community focuses on developing local Afghan capacities to fight crime to the extent that it enables the sustainability of the government.

I also agree that it is very difficult to change cultures. And there are many both cultural and institutional reasons for corruption. And I am not concerned with corruption that would be tolerable to Afghans. I am very concerned with corruption that is intolerable to Afghans, that they find is out of proportion, out of the context, that is corruption with abuse that makes their lives difficult to the extent that they do not want to exist under the current political dispensation.

Dr. KATZMAN. I would just add that our—and I cover the Persian Gulf region for CRS [Congressional Research Service] also, and our entire Persian Gulf defense strategy hinges on dealing with governments, the Gulf Cooperation Council governments, that are perhaps not quite as corrupt as Afghanistan, but corruption is rampant in the Persian Gulf. I think we have to accept that in that region, where institutions are weak and personalities are strong, that this is just the cost of doing business.

And certainly we could put standards on the Gulf countries, on human rights, corruption, democracy, and probably they would not meet those standards at any time in the foreseeable future. But if we had that standard, our Gulf defense strategy would collapse.

Mr. COOPER. Well, just under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, all these U.S. entities are liable unless they have some exemption that I am unaware of. But it is so routine, as you suggest, that they are all in legal jeopardy under our own laws, because we just don't want to cope with the nature of the enemy or the culture.

I see that my time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Cooper.

Dr. Katzman, let me ask this: Do you believe that the U.S. has a clear policy as it relates to reducing corruption in Afghanistan, improving Afghan governance? Is there a structure or an organiza-

tion to it that includes something like, you know, goals, methods, timetables, that sort of thing?

And if there is, if there is a plain effort to do that, do you think that it is effective not only in how it might have been implemented to this point, but is it effective in what the structure projects to go forward?

Dr. KATZMAN. Yes, I think so. And a lot of these metrics have been laid out. Generally, they get laid out at these big conferences we have had. We have had conferences in Kabul, we had the Bonn conference in December, we had the Tokyo donors' conference just 3 or 4 weeks ago. And that is when the Afghan Government usually recommits to pledges it has already made at the previous conference and did not accomplish.

Now, as a consequence of the Tokyo conference, there were clear penalties. There will be reductions in donor assistance, presumably, if the Karzai government does not meet certain criteria. That prompted Karzai to issue the administrative reforms that I referred to earlier in my testimony.

Now, again, Karzai's administrative reforms are largely, if one goes through them—and I have gone through them—a recommitment to what has already been promised. Most of the laws that they promised to pass by now have not been passed. The institutions we have set up, like the High Office of Oversight, the Anticorruption Tribunal, the Office of the Attorney General, the Special Investigative Unit, all of these institutions Karzai has pledged to cooperate with, he has allowed us to set them up, but then when the rubber hits the road and it is time to really prosecute people close to Karzai or who he supports, who support him, it tends to fall apart. And we tend to see him go after people who do not support him, or he is trying to marginalize.

So corruption becomes a political issue, in many ways. It is pure politics in Afghanistan.

Mr. WITTMAN. Dr. Felbab-Brown.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. If I can add to that, and, indeed, anticorruption efforts are politically manipulated not just by President Karzai but by many other people in the position of power. And I think we have to be careful not to embrace officials that claim to be doing anticorruption while they are really appointing to the cleared positions their friends and their clients.

I am not as persuaded as Ken that we have a clear policy on corruption. I see U.S. policy over the decade oscillating between ignoring corruption because of its sheer size, because focus has been far more on the military side than on the political aspect of the effort, and then embracing goals that are unrealistic, ambitious goals, "We are going to wipe out corruption."

That is why I think it is critical that we set goals that are realistic, the most egregious corruption that is clearly contributing to conflict dynamics. But then we need to have the wherewithal to exercise our leverage and punish those who violate these minimal standards. And I frequently see us not being able to deliver, folding at the last minute. And, of course, that just sends the signal that we truly don't see the message.

I also believe that we need to be realistic that the only, or the principal mechanism of power and influence that President Karzai

has is appointments. He has weak control with the military and is very much dependent on outside control. He has very weak control of the purse. So his principal way of assuring support for himself is political appointments. So we cannot tell him that anyone who is a bad governor or bad official will not be tolerable; we have to be concerned to his cause, to his political cause. But we need to be sure that the ones that are truly intolerable to us and are truly intolerable to Afghans, we will work with him to get rid of them. And I don't see that we are taking this more nuanced approach. I see us oscillating between everything or nothing and being all the time frustrated.

Mr. WITTMAN. I think that is a good point. In fact, that was going to lead to my next question. It seems like, to me, that there are many different levels of corruption. You know, there are very obtrusive forms of corruption, where somebody does something that is looked at as unethical in exchange for money or something that benefits them personally. But it seems like, too, that there is also a level of corruption there that obviously we define as corruption but maybe is more societal there, and that is influence-peddling; you know, I do something for you, you do something for me, you protect me, you insulate me, you provide that utility to me. Although it may not be a direct benefit, it is an indirect benefit in being able to preserve one's power or being able to preserve oneself in that particular environment.

Along that range, is there an acceptable area that the U.S. should say, officials that operate within this realm, while maybe not acceptable in the United States, should be acceptable there in Afghanistan as far as how that government develops and how we look at corruption? Because there are many, many different levels of that, and if we cast off this blanket definition of corruption, the question is, can we ever attain that?

And Mr. Cooper brought up a great point, in that there are some limitations of U.S. law in how we deal with folks there. But is there an acceptable level of what we would define as corruption but what there is really a matter of maybe self-preservation or even being able to maintain power? Is there a level there that you think is acceptable?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. Yes. Realistically, not just Afghanistan but the region very much operates on the basis of nepotism and patronage. It is something that Afghans are used to. What I would say is that the level that should not be acceptable to us is the level that is not acceptable to the Afghans. So, realistically, we will not be able to do without patronage network and have truly simply a process of promotions and job appointments based on merit. That is not going to happen anytime soon.

However, we should be very concerned when patronage networks are becoming more and more exclusionary and less and less people have the ability to participate in these networks. So one of our objectives should be, well, how can you expand the networks of patronage? That is not ideal; it is problematic. I wish that was not the case, but it is probably the only mechanism that we might have available in some circumstances.

What concerns me is that I do not see us exercise even these levels of leverage, that I do not see us even be concerned about pa-

tronage, nepotism, exclusionary corruption, contract wars. There are literally contract wars of shooting up the opposition, where they are clearly alienating people and communities so profoundly from the government that they are easy prey, easy mobilization target for the Taliban.

And so I think we really need to have far more consultations with ordinary Afghans, as well as power brokers in Afghanistan, about what level of political arrangement they believe can be sustainable. And from my conversations with Afghans over the many years, including recently, there are very few people in Afghanistan right now who believe that the current political dispensation is sustainable.

Mr. WITTMAN. Dr. Katzman.

Dr. KATZMAN. No, I mean, I think that is a very good point. When the Taliban fell, the international community set up a very high standard: that we are going to remake Afghanistan into a Western-style democracy with Western-style standards of human rights, anticorruption. And then that was doomed to fail. Had the standard been set more realistically from the beginning, we could have accomplished that and built these institutions.

The problem we have had is, each time we have pushed on corruption, Karzai has pushed back. When Karzai has had his outbursts of, "I am going to join the Taliban," or, "You are putting too much pressure," it has been over this corruption issue. Every time we have pushed, that is when he has had his moments, let's say.

So it has been a very difficult issue. It is not going to be solved anytime soon. I think the issue is to stay engaged after 2014, let the society keep evolving, as it is. Civil society is much broader than it was in 2001. You have groups that are advocating for all types of things in Afghanistan that never existed before. Let the society mature, and that will help, I believe, reduce the problem over a long period of time.

Mr. WITTMAN. Let me ask this: Do you agree with Dr. Felbab-Brown's assertion that what the Afghans define as acceptable or unacceptable in the corruption realm should become our metric in how we deal with corruption or don't deal with corruption?

Dr. KATZMAN. It is a way to approach the issue. I happen to think that most Afghans, what they complain about most are the shakedowns, where the police are demanding—their own interaction with first responders, with the Afghan Government, where that meets the road.

I think the Afghans tend to be less concerned with the Kabul bank scandal and Karzai's brothers. That tends to get interest here in the United States, but I think most Afghans probably accept that this is what happens in the region, and it is not as much. But when they themselves are forced to take from their paltry amount of money to pay a bribe, I think that is what has undermined the legitimacy the most.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good.

Lieutenant General Dubik.

General DUBIK. And could I say, Mr. Chairman, that is something that staying engaged can improve. Walking away after 2014 or diminishing, sort of de facto walking away after 2014, won't improve any of that. So staying engaged with the Afghan National Se-

curity Forces and their ministries in the proper partnership way from ministerial to selected units has the greatest probability of improving that kind of corrupt predatory practices and I think raises the credibility of the government, would raise the credibility of the government, at least some degree.

Mr. WITTMAN. Dr. Felbab-Brown, any additional comments?

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. Yes. I agree with Ken that it is particularly problematic when government officials are very abusive. So police ask for bribes, often bribes at the level that it makes no sense to bring legal products to market because nothing is left of profits, so exorbitant tolls, exorbitant bribes that really liquidate the productive capacity of the population.

But I would also add that, apart from shakedowns, there is an increasing tendency on the part of power brokers, including government officials, to engage in land theft, murder, extortion at gunpoint, tactics that one associates with mafias. And Afghans are extraordinarily concerned and upset about the utter lack of prosecution and punishment, the utter impunity that government officials are capable of enjoying.

I would also add to the comments that we promised something that we were not able to deliver that, of course, the problems with the early promises was that we really have not tried to deliver them. We frequently were speaking in very ambitious terms about democracy, equality, yet at the same time we were embracing some of the most bloody and most problematic power brokers. And so Afghans have lived with these contradictions about what we raised as their aspirations and, ultimately, the very little that we have been able to deliver.

I have a book on Afghanistan coming out later in the fall, and the title of the book is "Afghan Aspirations and American Ambivalence." And the choice is precisely because we raised their aspirations to perhaps levels they themselves would not aspire to, but nonetheless we raised them, but then we delivered so little. And, in fact, we kept constantly contradicting the promises and proclamations that we have made, that Afghans are profoundly disappointed with the political system and dispensation they are living with.

Mr. WITTMAN. Uh-huh.

Dr. KATZMAN. If I can just add, on this issue of what I call "faction leaders"—and Karzai hates the term "warlords"—the problem is, these faction leaders have constituencies. There are communities in Afghanistan who look to these leaders to protect their interests. This is why they stay afloat. Karzai has tried to marginalize Isma'il Khan, he has tried to marginalize Abdul Rashid Dostam, he has tried to marginalize Mohammad Mohaqiq. We have tried; Ambassador Khalilzad when he was there. It never works, because they have constituencies that are keeping them afloat.

Until we solve that problem, which I would argue is probably not ever going to be solved, these guys are going to stay influential, they are going to keep committing the abuses and getting away with it.

Mr. WITTMAN. Let me ask this, then, in closing. And I am assuming in what I have heard from your testimony that you all look at

the process of our efforts in Afghanistan along a continuum. And we know today we have people that say, let's get out immediately, let's cut our losses, let's go. You have others that say, listen, still pretty challenging times here, we have done a lot, we have to continue past 2014 if we hope to preserve any hope of any kind of success there, regardless of the definition, or that we would preserve the efforts that have been put forth there, both in the money that we have spent, the lives that have been given there, and the future for Afghanistan.

I just wanted to get you all in a closing comment to let me know, where do you think we ought to be on that continuum? Is the 2014, should that be shut the door and let's get out? Should we continue past 2014? If we do, what do you think the nature of that should be past 2014?

So I just want to get you all, your ideas about that as we close.

General DUBIK. Well, I am not in the 2014-equals-index boat. My wife is, but I am not, so we have all kind of interesting conversations at home.

But I do believe that if we maintain a sufficiently large and sufficiently aggressive military and nonmilitary presence up to 2014, we have the conditions to set so that our military presence beyond 2014 can be much smaller than it is.

It should be sufficient, though, to make sure that the Afghans' force remains large enough, capable enough, and confident enough to take up the slack. The slack will be significant. The threat will not have gone away, even if we reduce it. And the elements that will give the Afghans the confidence and the capability are mostly the fact that we are still there. And we don't have to be in large numbers to do this, but it has to be greater than zero, and it has to be significant from their perspective.

On the diplomatic side, many of the problems that we see in the Government I think have been the result of vacillating policies, at least up to 2009. And the consistency of policies on the nonmilitary side will also help over time to mitigate some of these problems.

None of the problems, security or nonsecurity, Government or economic, are going to be easily solved. They are all going to be developmentable over time, emerging, improving slowly. And our engagement and our assistance, NATO and U.S., is part of the solution. Withdrawal is not part of the solution.

Dr. FELBAB-BROWN. I strongly believe that if 2014 is the end, what Afghans, most Afghans, fear, a civil war, a localized civil war, is the most likely outcome. Obviously, this would be terribly detrimental to U.S. national interests.

I am not sure, and I don't think anyone can be sure at this point, that staying beyond 2014 can reverse the trends, but it gives a chance. Nonetheless, how we stay beyond 2014, how we continue to be engaged is critical. In my view, it means to stay engaged militarily, with as much support, combat support for the Afghan National Security Forces as we can generate, certainly with respect to critical enablers but hopefully beyond critical enablers.

The mission needs to be defined as more broadly stability and counterinsurgency than simply NATO counterterrorism. If it is defined simply as NATO counterterrorism, the value of our presence diminishes rapidly and our leverage diminishes rapidly.

And I also believe that we need to push on governance far more determinedly than we have had—selectively, critically. It cannot be we ask for everything, but, nonetheless, far more determinedly than we have done. I believe it is extremely difficult to imagine how stability can be achieved, even the improvements on the security situation, without some greater legitimacy of the government.

So I think the excruciating dilemma for U.S. foreign policy is that continuing, even wisely continuing, doesn't guarantee success, yet abruptly leaving and shutting the door spells failure.

Dr. KATZMAN. I completely concur with my fellow panelists. The more we stay engaged after 2014, the better result we are going to achieve. I think a lot of it is, to be honest, probably up to the U.S. taxpayers and their elected representatives. We are probably going to be looking at, I would say, \$25 billion a year after 2014, assuming there is 15,000 to 20,000 U.S. forces, plus the ANSF fund, which is \$2 billion, plus economic aid, somewhere in that. Now, that is a lot less than \$100 billion a year, but it is still \$25 billion or so. So those are considerations.

But, clearly, the more we stay engaged, and not just with military training and special forces but with governance programs, State Department-led, AID [Agency for International Development]-led civil society programs, democracy and governance programs, economic development programs, we can preserve the progress and not witness a backsliding.

If we leave entirely, all the guys I mentioned—Dostam, Mohaqiq, Isma'il—these guys are all going to become exponentially more powerful, because all the Afghans are going to look to them to protect them if we leave.

Mr. WITTMAN. Sure.

Dr. KATZMAN. If we stay engaged, I think the government stays together and we continue to work on what we have worked on with them.

Mr. WITTMAN. Very good.

Panelists, thank you all so much for joining us. Thanks for your patience as we went back over to vote. And I appreciate you spending some time with us afterwards to make sure we could complete our line of questioning.

So, again, thank you.

And this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 6:15 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

AUGUST 2, 2012

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

AUGUST 2, 2012

Statement of Hon. Rob Wittman
Chairman, House Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations
Hearing on
Afghan National Security Forces: Afghan Corruption
and the Development of an Effective Fighting Force
August 2, 2012

Today the Oversight and Investigations subcommittee convenes the fifth and final hearing in our series related to the Afghan National Security Forces.

This afternoon we have before us a panel of experts to provide testimony about how corruption in Afghanistan might impede the development of that nation's security forces.

Corruption could prevent army and police units from successfully assuming responsibility for securing Afghanistan from internal and external threats after 2014. Corruption also potentially reduces the operational effectiveness of security forces and jeopardizes their legitimacy with the population.

In order for the United States to achieve its strategic goal of denying terrorists safe haven in Afghanistan, it is essential that Afghan forces be capable of maintaining security and stability after transition is complete in 2014. Our purpose today is not to undertake a comprehensive assessment of corruption in the region, but instead to narrowly focus on how corruption affects the development of an effective Afghan army and police.

Our panel today includes:

- Retired Lieutenant General James M. Dubik, Senior Fellow at the Institute for the Study of War;
- Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown, a Foreign Policy Studies Fellow at the Brookings Institution; and
- Dr. Kenneth Katzman, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs at the Congressional Research Service.

Thank you for your participation. We look forward to your testimony.

James M. Dubik

Lieutenant General

U.S. Army, Retired

Senior Fellow, the Institute for the Study of War

31 July 2012

Development of the Afghan National Security Forces

Developing security forces, military and police, during an active insurgency where the outcome remains unclear and government proficiency and legitimacy are still emerging is no simple task—harder still in the face of strategic deadlines. Yet the task is not impossible. During my tenure as the Commanding General of Multi-National Security Transition Command and NATO Training Mission, Iraq, we did accelerate the growth of the Iraqi Security Forces in size, capability, and confidence and improve the capacity of the Ministries of Defense and Interior as well as the Headquarters of the Iraqi Joint Force such that when the counteroffensive of 2007 and 2008 ended, the Iraqi forces were large enough, capable enough, and confident enough for Coalition combat forces to first withdraw from the cities, then all together. I tried to capture our approach to accelerating this growth in an August 2009 publication, “Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity, Iraq as a Primer.”

I recognize that Afghanistan’s situation has several significant relevant differences from Iraq. That said, however, some of the lessons from Iraq do apply to Afghanistan. I explained some of what I thought was applicable from Iraq to Afghanistan in a December 2009 publication, “Accelerating Combat Power in Afghanistan” and an October 2012 publication, “Creating Police and Law Enforcement Systems.” Below is a summary of four of the key lessons:

1. **The goal must be a sufficiently large, capable, and confident set of security forces—military and police.** Numbers matter. The U.S. offsets size with the highest quality leadership, recruits, training, and equipment. Nations like Iraq and Afghanistan use size to offset poorer leadership, recruits, training, and equipment. Size is also a function of threat; the parts of the country where the threat is less require fewer ANSF. Certainly size is also related to Afghanistan's ability to sustain its forces, but too small of a force puts too much at risk. Finally, an often overlooked aspect of security force size is related to the social function of a nation's security forces. Right now one of the highest improvement rates in literacy is within the Afghan National Security Forces. Improved literacy is hugely important to the long term development of Afghanistan. Because of the "social function," the ANSF may be larger than the nation's immediate security needs.

Capability, combat power, is a function of fighting skill and supporting systems. Fighting skill is the easiest to develop. It involves leadership plus the skill to return accurate fire and the will to maneuver against the enemy. The systems that support a soldier or policeman—intelligence, indirect fires (ground and air-based), logistics (supply, transport, medical, maintenance, and personnel and equipment replacement), and command/control—are as important as fighting skill. The better the skill in returning accurate fires (direct and indirect) and supporting systems, the better the will to maneuver against the enemy.

Confidence comes in three varieties. First, the ANSF's confidence in itself. The security force's confidence is a function of capability. Second, the people's confidence in their security forces. The people's confidence is a function of success in *imposing* security (a job of the military and paramilitary police) and fairness in *enforcing* security

(a job of the military, paramilitary and local police) once imposed. Last, the government's confidence to use their security forces. The government's confidence is a function of reliability and "replace-ability."

2. **Three types of partnerships are key to accelerated development.**

- a. Partners in Training. Initially the training base contains an imbalance of foreign trainers. Over time the imbalance should shift to more indigenous trainers. The shifting imbalance, however, is uneven: faster in basic-type training; slower in leadership, staff, and larger unit collective training.
- b. Embedded Partners. The "trainer/advisers" who live and work with their Afghan units are bridges. Their presence provides an indigenous force a kind of "instant" capability and confidence. The embedded trainers/advisers presence offsets fledgling leadership **and** weak supporting systems. The number of embeds and their placement shifts over time: first becoming less necessary at the lower levels, then less necessary "up the chain of command" as units become more capable and confident and as their area of responsibility become less hostile. Improved indigenous supporting system capability also drives embed requirement down.
- c. Unit Partnerships. All units require two types of training—one type from the training base; the other, on the job. Unit partnering focuses on the latter. The unit partnership requirement also shifts over time. With less proficient and confident units (like those newly created), a 1:1 ratio is often required—foreign battalion-to-indigenous battalion, for example. The ratio grows as indigenous capacity and confidence grows. As an illustrative example, perhaps 1:1 to 1:3, then 1:6, then only at the senior headquarters.

One final note on partnership, the relationship between ISAF forces or NATO Training Mission, Afghanistan and their Afghan partners must be one that is very open. The project of developing security force is primarily an Afghan project in which ISAF and NATO play important parts. But we cannot grow their force. Helping another nation grow its security forces is an exercise in collaboration, and quite often, compromise. (NOTE: I could have included “Ministerial and Senior Headquarters Partnerships” as a fourth type, but choose to address the institutional aspects in the next section.)

3. **A self sustaining Afghan National Security Force requires more than just money.**

Four aspects of self-sustainability are important:

- a. The human element: leadership and recruiting. Darwin has a way of identifying good tactical leaders. Beyond that, developing leaders is a function of selection, training/education, and promotion. Selection and promotion must become more merit-based and apolitical. Training/education must become progressive. Sufficient numbers of leaders are important, but sufficiency is the key. A sufficient number of satisfactory leaders are more important than a full complement of bad leaders. And with respect to recruits, Afghanistan must be able to refill the ranks of its security forces to the standards it sets.
- b. The equipment element. Afghanistan must be able to re-equipment its forces’ battle losses and extend the life of its equipment by proper maintenance.
- c. The funding element. The cost of sustaining the ANSF must reduce over time. That reduction will not go to zero any time in the foreseeable future. First, Afghanistan must drive down the costs of foreign sustainment requirements.

They can do this by way of the several shifts mentioned above—slowly increasing the number of Afghans training themselves, slowly reducing the need for embedded trainers and partners, and better maintenance of the equipment they receive. Second, Afghanistan may be able to contribute more to its security budget. Even small improvements will help. I am merely suggesting that increased percentage of Afghan money to its security might be more easily offset by other nation's contributing to Afghanistan's non-security budget needs. Third and I think importantly, ISAF and NATO Training Mission, Afghanistan should develop, and then apply, *AFGHAN Cost Factors* in determining sustaining costs.

d. The institutional element—ministries and selected senior ANSF headquarters.

Unit supporting systems at the tactical and operational levels ultimately have their roots at the strategic level, in ministerial and senior headquarter capacity to execute basic functions: force management, acquisition, training, developing, distributing, sustaining, separating, programming and budgeting, and leading/managing. Developing indigenous capacity in these functions takes the longest of all. Without such development, however, and success at the tactical levels is short-term and fleeting. (I have described the relationship among the tactical, operational, and strategic levels in a recent publication, "Operational Art in Counterinsurgency, A View From the Inside.")

4. **Literacy and corruption are conditions that cannot be ignored, but need not impede progress toward security force development.**

In Afghanistan, insufficient literacy is a national condition, not an obstacle to security force development. Growing the literacy rate will be a multi generational activity. The

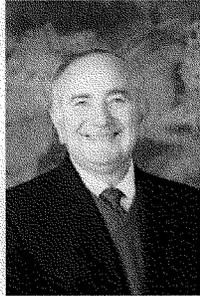
ANSF can play—and I would say in the last two-to-three years has played—a huge part in improving this national problem. As I suggested earlier, improving literacy—something that over time will play a very important part in the kind of nation Afghanistan becomes—may be a reason that parts of the ANSF are really larger than the security threat demands. That said, illiteracy rates do affect growth rates in both leadership and technical skills. Therefore, aggressive literacy training for recruits, as part of advanced skill training, and as a key element of leader training and education will have to continue for some time.

Corruption, also a national condition, is not going away any time soon. But an Afghan/U.S. alliance requires anti-corruption organizations, systems, and actions. For the ANSF this means, for the military, a robust Inspector General and sufficiently independent Criminal Investigations Divisions. For the police it means sufficiently independent Internal Affairs organizations from the ministerial to the district level. We cannot expect these kinds of anti-corruption measure to be immediately effective. There will not “quick turn around,” but we can expect that they exist, that their “case loads” expand, and that cases are closed with some sort of satisfactory action.

I have addressed the development of the Afghan National Security Forces as if such development was an independent activity. It is not. Rather it is very much a dependent activity. First, success depends upon a sense that the Government of Afghanistan will prevail over the Taliban. Prevail does not mean complete defeat and annihilation. We did not do that in Iraq, and we need not do it in Afghanistan. Second, and related to the first, the capability of any security force is always relative to the enemy it is fighting. The ISAF requirement, therefore, is to drive down the capacity of the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and others to a level that the

Afghan National Security Forces can, in fact, handle. Finally, success depends upon continued US and NATO commitment. Afghanistan will need help after 2014. Withdrawal of conventional combat forces does not equate to mission success. It equates to change of mission only, and part of that changed mission will include continued tactical, operational, and strategic civil-military partnership with the Afghan National Security Forces *and* their associated ministries and senior headquarters.

LTG JAMES M. DUBIK, U.S. ARMY (RET.)



Position:

Senior Fellow

LTG James M. Dubik (U.S. Army, Ret.), a Senior Fellow at ISW, currently conducts research, writes, and briefs on behalf of the Institute. His areas of focus include MNSTC-I and the Iraqi Security Forces, the ways to improve U.S. and allied training of indigenous security forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and counterinsurgency doctrine. LTG Dubik assumed command of Multi National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) on June 10, 2007. During this final command, he oversaw the generation and training of the Iraqi Security Forces. Previously, he was the Commanding General of I Corps at Ft. Lewis and the Deputy Commanding General for Transformation, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. He also served as the Commanding General of the 25th Infantry Division.

Dubik has authored numerous publications including [Choices and Consequences](#), [The U.S. Role in Iraq Beyond 2011](#), [Iraq's Lessons for Transition In Afghanistan](#), [Afghanistan: It's Not Over](#), [Accelerating Combat Power in Afghanistan](#), and [Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer](#). He has also appeared on major news networks such as BBC and NPR. He has been published in *The New York Times*. Dubik testified before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia during a hearing entitled "[Halting the Descent: U.S. Policy toward the Deteriorating Situation in Iraq](#)."

Dubik has held numerous leadership and command positions with airborne, ranger, light and mechanized infantry units around the world. He was commissioned a second lieutenant of infantry from Gannon University as a Distinguished Military Graduate in 1971, and he retired from service on September 1, 2008. He holds a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Philosophy from Gannon University, a Master's of Arts degree in Philosophy from Johns Hopkins University and a Master of Military Arts and Sciences Degree from the United States Army Command and General Staff College. His awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, four awards of the Legion of Merit, five awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, and numerous Army Commendation and Achievement Medals. Dubik is ranger, airborne and air assault qualified, and he holds the expert infantryman's badge and the master parachutist badge, as well as the Army Staff Identification Badge.

In February 2012, Dubik was named the next General Omar N. Bradley Chair in Strategic Leadership, shared by the Army War College, Dickinson College, and Penn State University's Dickinson School of Law and School of International Affairs. General Dubik was honored as a [2012 inductee](#) into the U.S. Army Association Ranger Hall of Fame.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 112th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee.

Witness name: James M. Dubik

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

Individual

Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented:

While the opinions that I will express will be my own, I am a Senior Fellow at the Institute for the Study of War in Washington, D.C.

I have been a Senior Fellow at this Institute since January 2009. I have not received any federal grants whatsoever as a Senior Fellow or as an individual since retiring from active military service in September of 2008.

FISCAL YEAR 2011

| federal grant(s)/ contracts | federal agency | dollar value | subject(s) of contract or grant |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| None | | | |
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FISCAL YEAR 2010

| federal grant(s)/ contracts | federal agency | dollar value | subject(s) of contract or grant |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| None | | | |
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FISCAL YEAR 2009

| Federal grant(s)/ contracts | federal agency | dollar value | subject(s) of contract or grant |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| None | | | |
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Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____ None _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____ None _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____ None _____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____ NA _____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011): _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____ NA _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____ NA _____.

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____ None _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____ None _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____ None _____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____ NA _____.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011): _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____ NA _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____ NA _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____ NA _____.

**Vanda Felbab-Brown
Fellow
The Brookings Institution**

**Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Of the
House Armed Services Committee**

**Thursday, August 2, 2012
2118 Rayburn HOB
3:00 p.m.**

**“Afghan National Security Forces: Afghan Corruption and
the Development of an Effective Fighting Force”**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am honored to have this opportunity to address the Subcommittee on the critical issues of the development of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and corruption in Afghanistan. The widespread corruption in Afghanistan and its vast detrimental effects on governance, the legitimacy of the political system in Afghanistan, and hence also the counterinsurgency effort are the subject of my forthcoming book, *Afghan Aspirations, American Ambivalence: Strategies and Realities of Counterinsurgency and Statebuilding* (forthcoming winter 2012). I have conducted fieldwork on these issues in Afghanistan numerous times, traveling across Afghanistan and interviewing both ordinary Afghans as well as ISAF and Afghan government officials, most recently in April 2012.

A Quick Review of the Battlefield as of August 2012

The lynchpin of the transition strategy in Afghanistan and its most developed element is the gradual transfer of responsibility for Afghanistan's security and for fighting the still-entrenched Taliban from NATO's International Security Assistance Force to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). However, in handing over the responsibility to the Afghans, the United States and ISAF are handing over a stalemated war.

The McChrystal plan endorsed by the White House in December 2009, albeit with fewer forces than General McChrystal requested, assumed that by the time of the transfer ISAF would have secured large parts of Afghanistan. Four years later, some real progress had been achieved – such as in central Helmand and Kandahar, both of which used to be either intense battle-zones or strongly under the Taliban's sway. *But the territory cleared by August 2012 that is being handed over to the Afghans is much smaller than had been projected.* Progress in central parts of the south is real, but how robust remains to be seen. Other parts of the south, as well as parts of the west remain under the control of the Taliban. The east continues to be intensely contested, and ISAF and ANSF are essentially in a stalemate there with the insurgents. In the north, the increase of ISAF and ANSF forces did improve security in a narrow corridor along the major roads in Kunduz and Baghlan, but ethnic tensions are simmering and poor governance permits the continuation of the conflict and tensions. Other parts of the north, as well as large parts of Afghanistan's west, are among the most stable and peaceful in Afghanistan. But there, such as in Herat, attacks, while still highly sporadic, appear to be intensifying.

The Poor Governance in Afghanistan

Despite the substantial improvements of Afghan security forces, *few Afghans believe that a better future is on the horizon after 2014.* Although NATO and U.S. officials remain optimistic about the success of the counterinsurgency and stabilization campaign, many fear there will be a renewed outbreak of civil war after 2014 when the NATO presence is much reduced. This prospect of civil war and ethnic infighting after 2014 was foremost on the minds of most Afghans with whom I spoke on my last trip - in April 2012. The success of ANSF's response to the April attacks notwithstanding, most were deeply skeptical that the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) would be able to fill the security void created by the drawing down of ISAF forces and their far smaller and circumscribed presence after 2014.

Worse yet, Afghans have become disconnected and alienated from the national government and the country's other power arrangements. They are profoundly dissatisfied with Kabul's inability and unwillingness to provide basic public services and with the widespread

corruption of the power elites. Afghan citizens intensely resent the abuse of power, impunity, and lack of justice that have become entrenched over the past decade. During that period of the initial post-Taliban hope and promise, *governance in Afghanistan became defined by weakly functioning state institutions unable and unwilling to uniformly enforce laws and policies.* Official and unofficial powerbrokers have issued exceptions from law enforcement to their networks of clients, who have thus been able to reap high economic benefits, and can get away even with major crimes. *Murder, extortion, and land theft have gone unpunished, often perpetrated by those in the government. At the same time, access to jobs, promotions, and economic rents has depended on being on good terms with the local strongman, instead of merit and hard work.*

Yet as the decade comes to a close, the political patronage networks too have been shrinking and becoming more exclusionary. Local government officials have had only a limited capacity and motivation to redress the broader governance deficiencies. The level of inter-elite infighting, much of it along ethnic and regional lines, is at a peak. *The result is pervasive hedging on the part of key powerbrokers, including their resurrection of semi-clandestine or officially-sanctioned militias.* Hedging against a precariously uncertain future is equally pervasive on the part of ordinary Afghans. Especially in the Pashtun areas that constitute the Taliban heartland, they will often send one son to join the ANA, and another to join the Taliban, and possibly a third son to join the local strongman's militia, to maximize the chances of being on the winning side, whoever will control the area where they live after 2014.

The Military Transition and Its Challenges

Putting aside for the moment the question of the Afghan Local Police (ALP) to which I shall return, *the standing up of the ANSF has been one of the brightest spots of the transition process of improving Afghan capabilities to provide for their own security and governance. But it is also a big unknown.* The size of the ANSF has been expanding rapidly, and the quality of military skills of the Afghan forces has also been growing. The current target strength to which the ANSF is scheduled to be expanded by October 2012 is 352,000. However, at the price tag of several billion dollars per year, such a force is unaffordable for the Afghan government for years to come. Thus, in addition to agreeing to continue footing the ANSF bill, participants at the May NATO Chicago Summit agreed to maintain the 352,000-strong ANSF until 2017, but undertake a "gradual managed force reduction ... to a sustainable level," with a working target of 228,500.¹

The force reduction has implications beyond both ANSF's military capabilities against the insurgent networks. The ANSF is one of the largest sources of employment in Afghanistan. Even if the 130,000 ANSF force reduction is gradual and even if the already-high attrition rate considerably reduces the number of those dismissed, the downsizing will still leave a lot of young men, recently trained and issued weapons, without a job. Afghanistan's unemployment is already running high, and it is precisely the salary that induced many to sign up for the ANSF. The more military men are laid off without being able to find alternative unemployment, the greater the chances for political disquiet, criminality, and outright conflict. Yet peacefully integrating those young men into Afghanistan's society will be no smaller a challenge than effectively integrating demobilized Taliban fighters.

¹ Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan issued by the Heads of State and the Government of Afghanistan and Nations contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), May 21, 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87595.htm.

At the same time if the Afghan government seeks to compensate by reducing the quality of equipment, training, and benefits in order to keep more men on the roster with fewer financial resources, that too could have negative implications for the fighting capacity of the force. Afghan soldiers need not live in air-conditioned barracks; but it would be a serious problem if they were issued faulty arms and lacked ammunition (as has periodically happened with the various auxiliary paramilitary forces). When it comes to the impact on Afghan security, much will depend on to what extent reductions in the ANSF are driven merely by affordability and to what extent they are determined by the strength of the insurgents.

For many years yet, certainly well beyond 2014, the ANSF will continue be challenged in some critical domains. These include command, control, and intelligence; air support, and medical evacuation and other specialty enablers. There are still two years to grow these ANSF capacities, and the expectation is that the international community will continue providing such critical assets after 2014. However, that will depend on how the role of U.S. and partner forces after 2014 is defined: if the definition of U.S. mission then is only very narrow counterterrorism for its own contingents and on-base counterinsurgency training for the ANSF, the United States may be severely constrained in providing crucial and necessary resources to the ANSF.

The Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) are being increasingly battle-tested, but much is yet unknown about their capacity to stand primarily on their own. The NATO Lisbon Summit in November 2010 established that ANSF would be gradually placed in charge of security in Afghanistan place by place, in a series of five segments covering Afghanistan's territory, referred to as "tranches." In a tranche handed over to ANSF, ANSF is to be the dominant security provider and ISAF is to be only in the background, deployed only when called upon by ANSF. So far, out of the five-tranche transition, two tranches have been completed, and a third began in May 2012. It includes 122 districts as well as all remaining provincial capitals.

How the ANSF handles especially the third tranche will be an important test of its capacities because the previous two tranches consisted mainly of stable or secured areas. There have been some tough places among them, such as the capital of Lashkar Gah, Marja, Nawa, and Nad-e-Ali districts of the Helmand province, which although cleared by ISAF before and registering major security improvements nonetheless are the heartland of the Taliban insurgency and historically difficult security environments. But it was only in the third tranche that the ANSF was to take over areas still violently contested and with poor governance. How ANSF performs during the third tranche will be the most telling indicator so far of its likely performance after 2014.

Especially in eastern Afghanistan, which did not receive the same level of ISAF "surge" reinforcements as Afghanistan's south and was still mostly left for Tranche 4 and 5, the fighting can get very tough. And even the significant security improvements in the south are fragile. The Taliban will have every incentive to bloody the nose of the ANSF there to show that the transition strategy is not working and that ANSF cannot stand up to them once the internationals' presence is reduced. If the ANSF can respond robustly to an intense Taliban military campaign there, that will be an important sign that it can hold its own after 2014. At the same time, an absence of Taliban attacks in the south would not necessarily mean that the Taliban has been greatly weakened. It may be just waiting it out until after 2014 before expanding significant efforts and resources to resurrect control and intimidate government structures and the population into submission.

One of the major deficiencies of the military part of the transition strategy is its one-way direction. The NATO Lisbon Summit set the transition process as conditions-based – and to an extent it is. ISAF’s recommendations of which districts are selected for handover to Afghan responsibility are based on a rather comprehensive assessment of the security situation, quality of governance, and strategic significance of the areas. But ultimately, the transfer decisions lie with President Hamid Karzai and his principal advisor for transition, Ashraf Ghani. Complex political considerations, including of ethnic balancing and satisfying local powerbrokers, at times will influence the transfer decisions, despite ISAF’s advice.

More worrisome, there is very little scope in the handover strategy for NATO forces to go robustly back into an area that was handed over to the Afghans, if the original assessment of handover readiness proves incorrect and if ANSF performs poorly. Under an ideal scenario, the shift from “unit partnering” to an ISAF advisory role on the ground would be a gradual process, rather than an on-and-off switch, with ISAF having the ability to “let Afghan units fail” to some extent but to retain a sufficiently robust capacity to come back with combat forces to recover any losses. However, squeezed by the timelines set by the international community, such as the U.S. military drawdown schedule, the transition process has become essentially a one-way street: Once handed over to the Afghans, the territory belongs to the Afghans and there is little stepping back. Neither the foreign capitals nor the Afghan government have appetites for anything but scaling back the international military presence. Thus the May 2012 NATO Chicago Summit added a new milestone -- namely, that all parts of Afghanistan would begin the transition process and that the Afghans would be in the lead everywhere by mid-2013. Still, what “lead” means is not yet fully defined. U.S. senior military officials, however, have stressed that at least until 2014, U.S. forces would remain “combat-capable.”

Nor is the level and type of U.S. and ISAF military support for the ANSF after 2014 exactly determined as yet either. Decisions still have to be made as to the number of U.S. and other international troops and the character of their mission. At the signing of the U.S.-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement, President Barack Obama spoke of “steady military reductions” in U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan after the end of 2012. That phrasing seems to suggest that the United States will not maintain the 68,000 troops in Afghanistan in 2013 that the U.S. military leadership appears to prefer. ***Yet too fast a reduction in U.S. military presence will critically undermine the military transition in Afghanistan, inhibit the growth and much-needed improvement of the ANSF, and risk undermining whatever military successes have been achieved since the surge of U.S. troops in 2009.*** The President also stated that the U.S. military forces remaining in Afghanistan after 2014, pending the signing of a U.S.-Afghan Bilateral Security Agreement, would focus on only “two narrow security missions” – counterterrorism and training of ANSF.²

Ideally, ISAF will embed advisors within Afghan units, which is necessary both for mentoring the units and for integrating U.S.-provided air support. The 2009 McChrystal review indeed stressed “unit partnering” between U.S. and Afghan military units, and much of the pre-2014 transition is about the gradual shift in ISAF’s mission from “combat to support.” Such support, including with intelligence, command and control, air support, medical evacuation, and specialty advisors, will be necessary beyond 2014. But if the post-2014 mission of international (including U.S.) troops is defined very narrowly as only counterterrorism anti-al-Qaeda/ anti-global-jihad operations, the mentoring capacity will be severely undermined. Nor will the

² President Obama, “Address to the Nation from Afghanistan,” May 1, 2012, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/05/01/remarks-president-address-nation-afghanistan>.

Afghans be reassured overall or continue to welcome such a foreign presence if it does little to satisfy their need of much more broadly-defined security and improved state-building while exposing them to the risk of terrorist retaliation.

Moreover, when ISAF forces are thinning out they will become more and more dependent on ANSF for ground-level intelligence, particularly for developing and maintaining a good understanding of the broader dynamics in Afghanistan, such as the nature and quality of governance in particular locales, and possibly even for narrow counterterrorism missions. Already, U.S. and ISAF forces are beginning to feel challenged in this intelligence requirement. ISAF's access to and participation in the processes of interrogating and locally-reintegrating insurgents seeking to come out of the cold must at times be negotiated with the local ANP and ANP commander, and is not always forthcoming. Such trends are likely to intensify from now on: some Afghan interlocutors, for example, could try to manipulate intelligence in order to eliminate rivals by labeling them the Haqqanis, and the delicate intricacies of the interaction between poor governance in a district and Taliban mobilization grow. Similarly, if the government of Afghanistan decides to relegate the international military forces to their bases and rarely calls upon them for assistance, such as for night raids, the less effective any continuing international military training can be. The faster ISAF forces depart before 2014 and the more limited in size and scope their missions are after 2014, the more any improvements in Afghan military and police capacities will be jeopardized and chances for stability in the country undermined.

A disturbing big unknown is whether the ANA will be able to withstand the ethnic and patronage factionalization that is already to some extent fracturing the institution. ISAF has done a great job in reducing the Tajik domination of command posts in the ANA, a fact widely resented by Pashtuns. In 2008, approximately 70% of Afghan *kandak* (battalion) commanders likely were Tajiks. As of summer 2012, that number has been reduced to 40%. For several years, the ANA has been nominally ethnically balanced, but it managed to recruit disproportionately low numbers of southern Pashtuns. Most of the Pashtuns recruited for the ANA had come from central and northern Afghanistan. The recruitment of Pashtuns from the south, although still low, has also been increasing.

However, at this point, the problem goes deeper, with ethnic fissures and patronage networks running through the military. Unless such tendencies are rolled back, such as by rewarding commanders who operate even-handedly across the ethnic groups within the ANA and do not seek to cultivate a circle of ethnic friends, the ANA may ethnically fracture after 2014, only intensifying the likelihood of civil war.

The ANA appears to be increasingly weakened by corruption. This development is not new, but it may be intensifying. In some of the best *kandaks*, excellent soldiers are not being promoted because they do not have influential friends. Conversely, many extra positions, at the level of colonel, for example, are being created so that commanders can give payoffs to their loyal supporters. Soldiers from marginalized groups, without powerful patrons, or simply those who cannot afford to pay a bribe, are being repeatedly posted to tough environments whereas their better-positioned compatriots get cushier postings. Clamping down on such corruption is as important as increasing the ANA numbers.

The ANP has of course been notorious both for such intense ethnic factionalization, as well as for corruption. It is important that the international community continue to demand credible progress against both vices and carefully assesses whether personnel shifts are indeed

motivated by efforts to reduce corruption or mask further ethnic rifts and the firing of one's ethnic rivals.

The ANP's anti-terrorism capacity, such as its ability to detect bombs and respond to spectacular Taliban and Haqqani attacks, has increased dramatically. Its performance in responding to the April 2012 attack on the Afghan Parliament and June 2012 attack on the Spozhmai Hotel near Kabul were considerably better than its response to the attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul in June 2011. In later cases, the ANP and other ANSF forces were able to handle the situation largely on their own, both in terms of the tactical operations and command and control, with essentially a limited ISAF backup. In the earlier case, the terrorists could not be defeated until the ISAF joined in. Indeed, when the ANSF, including the ANP perform well, their legitimacy with Afghans grows. Thus the successful response of the Afghan commandos to the April 15 Kabul attack stimulated a spontaneous support-your-troops campaign throughout Afghanistan. Public appreciation in turn motivates the troops risk their lives and not themselves engage in abusive behavior toward the citizenry.

But the ANP critically continues to lack an anti-crime capacity, and the anti-crime training it receives is minimal. Instead, the ANP is being configured as a light counterinsurgency and SWAT-like counterterrorism force. Yet, crime -- murders, robberies, and extortion -- are the bane of many Afghans' daily existence. The inability of the Afghan government to respond to such crimes allows the Taliban to impose its own brutal forms of order and justice and to develop a foothold in Afghan communities. ***Worse yet, the ANP remains notorious for being the perpetrator of many crimes.***

Among the most controversial aspects of the transition strategy in Afghanistan are various efforts to stand up self-defense forces around the country. These Afghan "militias" are supposed to increase security in areas where ANA, ANP, and ISAF presence are highly limited. With ISAF denying that the various programs amount to a militia effort (calling the units everything but militias and insisting that they are based on Afghan traditions, such as *arbakai*), ***the most visible version of these efforts right now is the Afghan Local Police (ALP).*** By May 2012, the ALP numbered somewhere between 6,000 and 13,000 members³ and was slated to grow to at least 30,000 by the end of 2014.

When compared with the other self-defense programs, the ALP has by far the strongest oversight mechanisms, and the U.S. military officials are quick to note that the ALP program is far more sophisticated and far better than the Soviet militia program. Even so, the oversight mechanisms and controls are hardly sufficient.

The ALP is supervised and trained by U.S. Special Operations Forces (SoFs) who are to embed with the ALP in the village or area where the ALP operates. Embedding may imply a variety of things -- from living in the village for six weeks to visiting the village once a week. Training mostly consists of teaching the recruits how to handle small firearms (which they either have and already know how to handle, or are issued), medical training, and communicating with the SoFs.

Those recruited are to be vouched for by three *maliks* and/or a village *shura*. The *maliks* or *shura* are relied on to determine that the ALP recruits will not secretly work for the Taliban or other anti-government elements, turn on their U.S. advisors, or abuse the local community. This

³ My interviews with ISAF officials in Kabul and in western and northern Afghanistan produced this wide range in the estimated number of units in existence at the time. The range may be indicative of ISAF's difficulties in tracking the growth and membership of the ALP units.

control mechanism is believed to be adequate since the *maliks* are assumed to know the men they are recommending. The problem with this *malik*-based control mechanism is that not infrequently a powerbroker controls the village elders, dictating his preferences in a way that may escape outsiders' scrutiny. A second control mechanism of the ALP program is that the district police chief is to supervise the ALP units. The problem with this mechanism is that the post of district police chief has often been associated with some of the greatest and most consistent corruption in Afghanistan. The greatest weakness in the ALP effort, and its many predecessors and concurrent programs, is that there are no established mechanisms for disarming an ALP unit that has gone rogue and predated on its own or rival communities.

The local context in Afghanistan varies greatly and the decision to stand up ALP and other militia forces may well be highly problematic. The structure, composition, history, and insider-outsider relations of a community all significantly influence how well-behaved a local self-defense unit will be.

If a community is homogenous, and particularly if it is also isolated, but subject to outside Taliban extortion and abuse, it may well enthusiastically welcome the creation of the ALP and even volunteer it. Or it may on its own, even without the umbrella of the ALP or another official self-defense program, rise up against the Taliban, and later be simply anointed as ALP. Under such circumstances, the ALP may significantly improve security and the life of the community. Although communities abused by Taliban outsiders could generate a force on their own to fight the Taliban, the benefit of the ALP structure is that it can relieve some of the logistical problems that an independently operating self-defense group may have.

ALP presence in a community can also have a political impact. If the community has been systematically disfranchised from power in an area -- for example, Ghilzai Pashtuns in Uruzgan do not have representation in a local district government and in the local police forces -- establishing ALP units in such a community does empower it. This empowerment, however, can be vis-à-vis the district Afghan government as much as against the Taliban.

Under the best of circumstances, the ALP can increase security against anti-government forces, such as the Taliban, in communities previously left to suffer, open up roads to villages previously-deemed too dangerous to travel and hence boost economic activity in the area, and even reduce local crime, extortion, and land theft. The ALP units in the Arghandab district of Kandahar, operating under tight supervision of the U.S. SOFs, are purported to have achieved such excellent results.

Difficulties and complexities in many forms, however, tend to arise quickly when a community or an area is not homogenous and when the Taliban or Hezb-i-Islami or other anti-government elements are not simply thuggish outsiders in the area. ***In highly contested communities plagued by ethnic and tribal rifts, there is substantial risk that ALP and other self-defense forces will begin preying on host or neighboring communities, serious abuses of human rights will take place, and the basic security of such communities will be undermined.*** In very heterogeneous, polarized, and fractured communities, the establishment of ALP units often critically augments the security dilemma among the communities and triggers an armament spiral.

Even when security improves as a result of the creation of a local ALP outfit, the robustness of that improvement may be far less than meets the eye. Sometimes security in an area improves simply because a community typically hedges its bets and pays part of its income, including what it gets through the ALP salary payments, to the Taliban.

While the effects of establishing ALP units are highly contingent on local contexts, cumulatively the ALP phenomenon transcends the local context and can, through contagion, as it were, generate a widespread and complex security predicament for the whole country. Even though the ALP are physically not to travel and operate outside of their villages (of course, they violate the rule), their reputation regardless travels among widespread communities. Instead, rival communities, observing that their antagonists are being armed, seek to do the same.

To many of these serious challenges of the ANSF, there are no easy solutions. But one thing is clear: *The faster the international community leaves Afghanistan and the more it reduces its presence, particularly its military presence, the more the negative dynamics in the still very-problematical Afghan security environment will be intensified and the fewer means and lesser leverage the internationals will have to combat them.* What the Afghanistan battlefield looks like in 2015 still remains very much open. The disposition of forces throughout the country at the time is likely to be highly dependent on the political and governance situation in Kabul and the public support is stimulated or deters in the Western capitals. Clearly, Western presence will be much reduced in size and much more greatly circumscribed in the scope of the mission of U.S. and Western soldiers will be tasked with – but how exactly remains yet to be determined. The military situation may also have been affected by any serious negotiations with the Taliban that get underway between now and then. But of course these political variables are themselves part of the feedback process wherein what has happened on the battlefield is highly determinative of who wins the political power-plays and who sits and prevails at the negotiating tables. Indeed, it is the iron grip of these feedback loops on events that makes the analysis here of the prospects for transition from mostly U.S.-control to Afghan control also central to the overall assessment of U.S. policy.

The Need to Prioritize Efforts to Fight Corruption

Without major improvements in governance, it is difficult to see how lasting stability after 2014 could be achieved, whatever the balance of remaining military forces on the ground.

President Hamid Karzai has recently indicated a new willingness to focus on combating corruption, issuing, for example, an order to government officials not to interfere with anti-corruption efforts. It yet remains to be seen how strong President Karzai's new desire and determination to improve governance in Afghanistan is and to what extent their announcement is predominantly focused on the Western audience.

The political and governance system in Afghanistan is, in fact, so pervasively corrupt and so deeply and intricately linked to key structures of power and networks of influence, that some prioritization of anti-corruption focus is required. After 2014, the international community is likely to continue to lack the capacity to fully break with all problematic powerbrokers. Nonetheless, Washington and the internationals can try to urgently mitigate at least the most egregious power abuses and the types of corruption that are most detrimental to long-term stability in Afghanistan.

Anti-corruption efforts should focus on limiting tribal or ethnic discrimination in access to jobs, especially in the ANA and ANP, and on expanding access to markets and contracts. A corollary to limiting ethnic discrimination within the security services is to make sure that particular ethnic groups or people from particular regions who do not have access to influential powerbrokers in the higher-level commands are not selectively posted to very violent areas for too long without being rotated out; also that command levels are not dominated by a

particular ethnic group, such as the Tajiks; and salaries and leaves are equally distributed by superiors.

Additionally, *it is critical to focus on the corruption that seriously undermines the emergence of the already fragile markets in Afghanistan*. Such severely detrimental corruption includes the proliferating unofficial checkpoints and the ever-escalating bribes to be paid at the checkpoints, major corruption in the banking sector, and corruption in line ministries wherein a bribe is paid and yet the service is still not delivered and the bribe has to be paid several times over.

Finally, *efforts to undermine effective local officials should not be tolerated*. The international community should use problematic powerbrokers as little as possible and only as last resort. The damage such powerbrokers can inflict on the international community's efforts may well necessitate "having them in the tent rather than trying to pull the stakes off the tent on the outside," as an ISAF official put it to me.⁴ But if the powerbrokers bring down the tent from the inside by their rapacious behavior, the state-building effort will be equally ineffective.

There is a real cost to prioritizing the anti-corruption campaign as opposed to combating corruption of any sort in a blanket way. The prioritized approach requires an intelligence picture that the international community does not have and may struggle ever more to develop. Prioritization can further expose the international community to the risk of being seen as inconsistent, hypocritical, and meek. But with the continuing dependence on problematic interlocutors, such a prioritized focus is perhaps the maximum the internationals can currently hope to accomplish. Emphasizing all corruption equally will likely run up against the political dependencies of the current Afghan government and motivate it to do little on corruption, even as it promises much to the international community. But equally, giving up on corruption spells failure of the stabilization effort.

Paradoxically, a chance to push through such governance reforms will be augmented if the international community finds a way to work through President Karzai rather than against him. The Obama Administration's early confrontation with Karzai over corruption left him deeply suspicious of and outright antagonistic toward Washington without making him improve governance or tackle corruption. Many aspects of the transition strategy will be hampered if the relationship between Kabul and Washington deteriorates further. President Karzai has remained resistant to focusing on corruption. However, the international community needs to continue stressing to him, and to whomever his successor post 2014 is (if he in fact does not remain in power), that he is likely to lose much more political and economic power and physical security from a collapse of governing authority in Afghanistan than he will lose by transitioning his system of coopt-and-close-your-eyes toward greater accountability and lesser impunity.

Reigning in the Warlords

The United States and the international community have shown little willingness to break with problematic warlords; instead, many have been embraced for reasons of short-term effectiveness on the battlefield. In the case of others, the international community simply could not figure out how to have them removed or neutralized. The smaller the international presence in Afghanistan, the less wherewithal and capacity there will be on the part of the internationals to finally sever dependence on the powerbrokers and effectively encourage their removal from official and unofficial positions of power.

⁴ Interview with a U.S. Embassy official, Kabul, Fall 2010.

But that does not mean that the international community should not be looking for such opportunities even as its presence diminishes. Whenever possible, efforts should be undertaken to neutralize the warlords. Lesser presence in some areas may permit greater pressure on Kabul to hold them accountable (even with reduced leverage to accomplish such a removal). Washington and the international community should not be beguiled by arguments that the more security in Afghanistan disintegrates, the more it will be dependent on the warlords, so they cannot be antagonized in advance. Neither the tribes, nor the warlords, nor the ALP can keep security and stability across the length and breadth of the country. At best, they may be able to keep pockets of security in particular areas. But if the situation in Afghanistan becomes more atomized after 2014, there will be opportunities to selectively resurrect relationships with some of the warlords with whom they have been dropped. For the warlords will not be loyal to the cause of the United States and international community anyway, all the more so if it is just a narrow anti-al-Qaeda mission, and they will simply cooperate with anyone who pays them more or increases their power – be it the Taliban or the international community. The Northern Alliance commanders will be far less likely to ever be coopted by the Taliban, but they will ultimately also seek to cultivate as many international friends as they can and play them off against one another.

Until such dire necessity truly arises in a future post-2014 meltdown, however, *the international community should seek to neutralize the influence of problematic powerbrokers as much as possible*. It needs to demand accountability and punishment for serious crimes perpetrated by the powerbrokers, such as land theft, rape, kidnapping, and murder. As much as possible, it should encourage merit-based appointments in the government. *With whatever limited leverage and choices are left to the international community, it should seek to interact with, encourage, and reward well-performing government officials.*

Whatever redlines the United States and the international community sets for the powerbrokers, the internationals need to be prepared to uphold these redlines and take punitive actions if the powerbrokers and the Afghan government violate them. Thus, conditionality should not be vague, and the redlines the international community sets should only be those that Washington and the international community have the will and capacity to enforce. A consistent failure to act against behavior designated as intolerable only undermines the reputation and effectiveness of the international community. This means not suggesting that military aid to the ANSF is conditional unless the internationals are truly prepared to cut it and risk an intensification of conflict and deterioration of the ANSF. This is not to say that if governance continues to disintegrate further and corruption and impunity intensify even more, the international community should not cut military aid. But it is to say that if one declares such a policy, one needs to be prepared to live up to it.

Reigning in the ALP

ISAF needs to resist the siren song of the ALP shortcut. If the vetting process becomes more rushed and less reliable than it is already, serious human rights abuses, security dilemmas, ethnic tensions, and other local conflicts will only grow. Ideally, the program would be scaled up. *At minimum, any initiation or expansion of the program in a locality needs to be based on a comprehensive and credible assessment of local conditions, with long-term governance ramifications factored in as strongly as short-term battlefield exigencies.* In highly heterogenous areas with preexisting conflicts among communities or with discriminatory governance, the ALP and other militias should not be stood up.

Credible and robust mechanisms should be developed right away to roll back rogue ALP units already in existence. As the June 2012 Kunduz experience demonstrates once again, the current rollback mechanisms are not adequate. ***Stronger accountability mechanisms than the current ones need to be put in place, and accusations of crime, abuse, and ethnic and tribal discrimination need to be investigated and prosecuted far more diligently and robustly than they have been.*** ISAF needs to commit itself to and involve itself in such accountability and procedures and not simply wait for the Afghan Ministry of Interior and Justice to undertake them. Or it may have to wait forever in many cases.

Now is also the time to start developing a serious program to disarm and demobilize the ALP at the end of 2014. The United States and the international community should commit themselves to carry out that disarmament and to establish a credible program with procedures for diverting the decommissioned ALP from future predation and ethnic infighting. Such a stand-down program will be credible only if other militias, whether under the aegis of the United States or belonging to Afghan warlords, are also incorporated in it. For if they are not, the various militia units, even if they do shed their uniforms, are unlikely to give up their weapons or to feel particularly constrained in their behavior.

The Diminishing, but Still Crucial Western Influence in Afghanistan

Persevering with whatever capacities and resolve can still be gathered in the West and emphasizing good governance does not guarantee success; many of the larger and deeper trends there may now be outside of the control and beyond the leverage of the international community. But going out fast, defining the post-2014 mission in very narrow counterterrorism terms, and writing off governance only spells failure.

Despite the many negative developments and problematic trends in Afghanistan, despite the deep anxiety with which many Afghans look at the 2014 transition, a failure of the international effort to leave Afghanistan with a stable government is not preordained. Afghanistan is a complex place, where local realities are often highly diverse. There are glimmers of hope. Security has improved in parts of the country. Afghan security forces exhibit growing capabilities, even as they continued to be challenged by many deep problems. And a new generation of Afghans is rising that is motivated to take on the problematic powerbrokers, rise above ethnic cliques, and bring in a rule of law to Afghanistan.

The United States and the international community still can – and should - attempt to empower those Afghans who are determined to privilege the broader interests of the people over narrow power and profit maximization. The United States and its international partners in Afghanistan are exhausted and focused on getting out of there. But the faster United States scales back its efforts in Afghanistan and the more rapidly ISAF forces reduce their presence before 2014, the more the leverage of the international community will be diminished as well; and the more any improvements in Afghan military and police capacities will be jeopardized and increases in security undermined.

BROOKINGS

QUALITY. INDEPENDENCE. IMPACT.

Vanda Felbab-Brown

Vanda Felbab-Brown is an expert on illicit economies and international and internal conflicts and their management, including counterinsurgency. She focuses particularly on South Asia, Burma, the Andean region, Mexico and Somalia. She is a fellow in Foreign Policy at the Brookings Institution, in the 21st Century Defense Initiative and the Latin America Initiative.



Felbab-Brown is the author of *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Brookings Institution Press, 2009) which examines military conflict and illegal economies in Colombia, Peru, Afghanistan, Burma, Northern Ireland, India and Turkey. She has conducted fieldwork in some of the most dangerous parts of the world, including in Afghanistan, Burma, Colombia and Mexico. A frequent commentator in U.S. and international media, Felbab-Brown regularly provides congressional testimony on these issues. She received her Ph.D. in political science from MIT and her B.A. from Harvard University.

Felbab-Brown is also the author of numerous policy reports, academic articles and opinion pieces, including *Deterring Nuclear and Radiological Attacks by Terrorist Groups* (Brookings, forthcoming); *Calderón's Calderon: Lessons from Mexico's Battle Against Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, and Michoacán* (Brookings, 2011); *Afghanistan Ten Years after 9/11: Counterterrorism Accomplishments while a Civil War Is Lurking?* (Brookings, 2011) *Not as Easy as Falling off a Log: The Illegal Timber Trade in the Asia-Pacific Region and Possible Mitigation Strategies* (Brookings, 2011); *The Disappearing Act: The Illicit Trade in Wildlife in Asia* (Brookings, 2011); *Deterring Non-state Actors in U.S. Nuclear and Extended Deterrence: Consideration and Challenges* (Brookings, 2010); *Why Legalization in Mexico is not a Panacea for Reducing Violence and Suppressing Organized Crime* (Brookings, 2010); *Negotiations and Reconciliation with the Taliban: Key Policy Issues and Dilemmas* (Brookings, 2010); *The Political Economy of Illegal Domains in India and China* (*International Lawyer*, Winter 2009); *The Drug Economy in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Security in the Region* (The National Bureau of Asian Research, December 2009); *It's All or Nothing in Afghanistan* (*The Daily Beast*, October 12, 2009); *Narco-belligerents Across the Globe: Lessons from Colombia for Afghanistan?* (Real Instituto Elcano, October 2009); *The Obama Administration's New Counternarcotics Policy in Afghanistan: Its Promises and Potential Pitfalls* (Brookings, 2009); *Afghanistan's Elections and Accountable Governance* (*The Los Angeles Times*, August 19, 2009); *Assessment of the Implementation of the United States Government's Support for Plan Colombia's Illicit Crops Reduction Components* (USAID, 2009) (co-authored); *Strengthen Human Security*, a chapter from *The Fifth Summit of the Americas: Recommendations for Action* (Brookings Institution Press, April 2009); and *The Violent Drug Market in Mexico and Lessons from Colombia* (Brookings, March 2009).

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 112th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee.

Witness name: Vanda Felbab-Brown

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

Individual

Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented:

FISCAL YEAR 2011

| federal grant(s) / contracts | federal agency | dollar value | subject(s) of contract or grant |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| NONE | | | |
| | | | |
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FISCAL YEAR 2010

| federal grant(s) / contracts | federal agency | dollar value | subject(s) of contract or grant |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| NONE | | | |
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FISCAL YEAR 2009

| Federal grant(s) / | federal agency | dollar value | subject(s) of contract or grant |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | |

| contracts | | | |
|---|-------|---|-----------------------------|
| I was subcontracted via MSI International | USAID | I do not recall the exact amount but it was approximately \$8000. | Evaluation of Plan Colombia |
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Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): 0 _____;

Fiscal year 2010: 0 _____;

Fiscal year 2009: 1 _____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): none _____;

Fiscal year 2010: none _____;

Fiscal year 2009: USAID via MSI International, which was the entity that hired me _____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011): ___none_____;

Fiscal year 2010: ___none_____;

Fiscal year 2009: ___Evaluation of Plan Colombia_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011): ___none_____;

Fiscal year 2010: ___none_____;

Fiscal year 2009: ___I do not recall the exact amount, but it was about \$8000._____.

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2011): _____;

Fiscal year 2010: _____;

Fiscal year 2009: _____.

**MEMORANDUM**

July 31, 2012

To: House Armed Services Committee/Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

From: Kenneth Katzman, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs, 7-7612

Subject: Testimony of Kenneth Katzman

Testimony of Kenneth Katzman, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs, Congressional Research Service

House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee

“Afghan National Security Forces: Afghan Corruption and the Development of an Effective Fighting Force”

August 2, 2012

I would like to thank the Sub-Committee, Chairman Wittman, Ranking Member Cooper, for asking the Congressional Research Service for my testimony today. I will summarize my testimony and ask that the full text be included in the record, and I look forward to your questions.

This testimony is based primarily on the many conversations on this issue that I’ve had since 2001 with U.S. officials, Afghan officials, allied government officials, journalists, U.S. military personnel, and academics, including conversations in the course of several visits there since 2004.

Definition of the Issue

One problem that analysts, policymakers, diplomats, and military leaders have had in assessing corruption within the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) is that the term “corruption” is often used to describe many different behaviors – most of which are illicit or illegal. Some behaviors that are commonly termed “corruption” include cultural or political factors that do not directly violate any Afghan laws or regulations, or are unlikely to prompt any enforcement or punishment efforts. In addition to what analysts assess as classic forms of corruption - the misuse of power and position for private gain - the ANSF is influenced by several related but distinct factors, such as ethnic, political, and regional factionalism. I will address all these different factors with respect to the ANSF because, collectively, they have the potential to undermine the effectiveness of the ANSF, if not fracture it outright.

Background to the Creation of the ANSF¹

The ANSF is subject to the adverse influences of corruption and factionalism in part because it is a newly-created force. It is not an established institution with a long history and well-honed traditions of professionalism. ANSF elements, as part of the Afghan population, are aware of all the uncertainties surrounding the reduction of international forces and transition to Afghan security leadership by the end of 2014. Successive Afghan regimes have fallen since 1973, each time displacing families and leaving many bereft of savings and economic livelihood. Many observers say that current Afghan officials and members of the ANSF insist they will not suffer a similar fate if the Afghan government does not hold together after 2014.

With the exception of some Afghan Air Force elements based at Bagram Air Base, no professional army survived the 1992-1996 civil war between mujahedin factions or the Taliban regime of 1996-2001. The Afghan military that existed during the time of the Soviet occupation, and the Communist regime that lasted until 1992, had completely disintegrated.

During the 1992-1996 civil war, there was a Defense Ministry headed by legendary mujahedin commander Ahmad Shah Masoud, but the rolls of the ministry were filled out with "Northern Alliance" (northern minority Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara) fighters and virtually no ethnic Pashtuns whatsoever. The Taliban - which is Pashtun and which was opposed bitterly by the Northern Alliance - stopped paying these fighters when it took over in Kabul in September 1996. The only military organization in place during Taliban rule was the Taliban militia force. After the Taliban regime fell in 2001, the Northern Alliance fighters were put back on the Defense Ministry payroll, and the Ministry took over the few tanks and artillery pieces that survived the 2001 U.S. bombing campaign that ousted the Taliban. There were no working fixed wing combat aircraft that survived U.S. bombing during the 2001 war, but some Russian-made helicopters did survive and were placed under Ministry control.

Dismantling Militias and Building a New Force

After the Taliban regime fell, the international community decided to create a relatively strong central government that would possess a monopoly of armed force. To do so, the international community concluded that the armed *mujahedin* groups - overwhelmingly non-Pashtun - that had helped overthrow the Taliban would have to be disarmed. This decision was opposed by - and is still criticized to this day by - the Northern Alliance that had hoped to dominate the post-Taliban political landscape through its predominance of armed force. On the other hand, the decision signaled to the Pashtuns - which are a plurality of the Afghan population (about 42%) - that they would not be subjugated by the superior arms of the Northern Alliance. In addition, the Taliban consists almost entirely of Pashtuns, and alienating the Pashtuns could have led to a large movement of Pashtun support back to the ousted Taliban movement.

The main program to disarm mujahedin fighters was run by the U.N. Assistance Mission - Afghanistan (UNAMA). It was called the "DDR" program—Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration. It began in late 2003 and formally concluded on June 30, 2006. The program got off to a slow start because the Afghan Defense Ministry was slow to reduce the percentage of Tajiks in senior positions by a July 1, 2003, target date for the program to begin in earnest. The international community judged that, in order to form a credible and cohesive new force that Pashtuns would readily join, the Defense Ministry and post-Taliban security forces being formed needed to reflect the ethnic proportions of the population. UNAMA demanded that the Tajik dominance of these institutions be reduced before the DDR program could begin. In September 2003, Karzai replaced 22 senior Tajiks in the Defense Ministry officials with Pashtuns,

¹ Information in this section is derived from the witnesses' conversations with aides to President Karzai and close observers of military issues in Afghanistan. November 2001- February 2002.

Uzbeks, and Hazaras. This paved the way for the DDR to proceed. The major donor for the program was Japan, which contributed about \$140 million.

The DDR program was initially expected to demobilize 100,000 fighters, although, after more exhaustive study and analysis, that figure was later reduced to about 60,000. Of the approximately 59,000 fighters demobilized under the program, 55,800 former fighters exercised reintegration options provided by the program: starting small businesses, farming, and other options. U.N. officials say at least 25% of these found long-term, sustainable jobs. Some studies criticized the DDR program for failing to prevent a certain amount of rearmament of militiamen or stockpiling of weapons and for the rehiring of some militiamen.²

Part of the DDR program was the collection and cantonment of militia weapons, but generally only poor-quality weapons were collected. As one example, Muhammad Fahim, the main military leader of the Northern Alliance faction, refused to turn heavy weapons over to U.N. and Afghan forces (including four Scud missiles). This reflected his dual role as a Northern Alliance partisan, even though he served as the first post-Taliban Defense Minister and is currently Karzai's first Vice President.

Despite the earlier demobilization, which affected many of the northern minorities, there are indications that some faction leaders may be seeking to revive disbanded militias. UNAMA and other institutions fear that the Northern Alliance and other factions have retained caches of weapons, including some heavy weapons, in case there is civil conflict after the 2014 transition. The minorities communities may also fear increased Taliban influence as a result of the Karzai efforts to reconcile with the Taliban. The minorities want to be sure they could combat any Taliban abuses that might result if the Taliban achieves a share of power.

Since June 11, 2005, the militia disarmament effort has emphasized another program called "DIAG"—Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups. It was run by the Afghan Disarmament and Reintegration Commission, headed by second Vice President Karim Khalili. This program involved fighters who were never formally placed on Defense Ministry rolls, and thus are characterized as "illegal armed groups."

Under the DIAG, no payments are available to fighters, and the program depends on persuasion rather than use of force against the illegal groups. DIAG has not been as well funded as was DDR: it has received only about \$15 million in operating funds. As an incentive for compliance, Japan and other donors have made available \$35 million for development projects where illegal groups have disbanded. These incentives were intended to accomplish the disarmament of a pool of as many as 150,000 members of 1,800 different illegal armed groups. However, these goals were not met by the December 2007 target date in part because armed groups in the south said they need to retain their weaponry to defend against a continuing threat from the Taliban insurgency. The program remains in place, but with little evident activity or progress in recent years.

Governmental Corruption in Afghanistan

Corruption in the 350,000 person Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) is a subset of the broader and highly vexing problem of corruption in the Afghan government. The corruption in Afghanistan's governing and security institutions has caused many Afghans to view the central government as "predatory," and many Afghans and international donors to lose faith in President Hamid Karzai's leadership. The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime estimated in 2010 that about \$2.5 billion in total bribes—about 23% of Afghanistan's gross domestic product—were paid by Afghans that year.³ Reducing

² For an analysis of the DDR program, see Christian Denny, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Rearmament?*, June 6, 2005, <http://www.jca.apc.org/~jann/Documents/Disarmament%20demobilization%20rearmament.pdf>.

³ <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/january/corruption-widespread-in-afghanistan-unodc-survey-says.html>; (continued...)

corruption in government was a major focus of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, issued at the end of a major donor's conference on July 8, 2012, which requires Afghanistan to "Enact and enforce the legal framework for fighting corruption" and, for the first time, specifically conditions international aid on progress toward that end.⁴

President Hamid Karzai has not denied that corruption is pervasive in his government; he has repeatedly acknowledged that corruption is a major problem in Afghanistan. In a June 21, 2012 speech to Afghan parliamentarians, he said his government has a responsibility to step up the fight against governmental corruption. On July 26, 2012, Karzai appeared to try to meet his pledges to the Tokyo conference and in other settings by issuing a "decree on administrative reforms" – a 23-page document of policies and directives to curb corruption. However, concerns about his leadership on this issue center on implementation and his apparent reluctance to prosecute officials for corruption – particular those related to him or aligned with him politically. This stands in contrast to his attempts to vigorously prosecute for corruption those politically opposed to him.

High-Level Governmental Corruption

U.S. officials have been concerned about Afghan governance, and particularly the corrosive effect that high-level corruption has on Afghan public support for the government. At the upper levels of government, some observers have asserted that Karzai deliberately tolerates officials or prominent relatives who are allegedly involved in illicit activity and supports their receipt of lucrative contracts from donor countries, in exchange for their political support. Karzai's brother, Mahmoud, has apparently grown wealthy through real estate and auto sales ventures in Qandahar and Kabul, purportedly by fostering the impression he can influence his brother. Mahmoud also received millions of dollars in loans on concessionary terms from the Kabul Bank – loans to him and other major shareholders, such as the brother of First Vice President Muhammad Fahim contributed to the Bank's virtual collapse in 2010. Many of these soft loans were used to buy luxury property in Dubai, and the real estate downturn there led to defaults totaling about \$925 million. In October 2010 it was reported that a Justice Department investigation of Mahmoud Karzai's dealings (he holds dual U.S.-Afghan citizenship) had begun, and reported grand jury consideration of charges (racketeering, tax evasion) against him began in mid-February 2011.

On the other hand, some cases of high-level corruption are, according to many observers, instigated more by political feuds rather than corruption per se. For example, in 2009, then Minister of Mines Mohammad Ibrahim Adel was accused of accepting a \$20 million bribe in exchange for choosing China Metallurgical Group's bid to develop a large copper mine at Aynak.⁵ Adel denied the allegations and the case was subsequently dropped, although Adel was replaced. The accusations could have been a result of some Afghan resentment of the terms of the bid, although many Afghan officials say the China Metallurgy bid was far superior to that of other firms and there would have been no need for bribery to win that contract.

Another example in which corruption allegations may be conflated with politics is that of former Central Bank governor Abdul Qadir Fitrat, who was accused by the Karzai government of failing to discover the Kabul Bank scandal at an early stage. He subsequently fled Afghanistan to the United States, believing

(...continued)

http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2010/07/30/petraeus_takes_on_afghan_corruption/

⁴ <http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/article/the-tokyo-declaration-partnership-for-self-reliance-in-afghanistan-from-transition-to-transf>

⁵ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/17/AR2009111704198.html>

Karzai intended to make him a scapegoat for the scandal – in which Mahmoud Karzai and the brother of first Vice President Fahim were central figures.

Another trend that has attracted notice among Afghans is that several high officials, despite very low official government salaries, have acquired ornate properties in west Kabul since 2002. They allegedly have appropriated to themselves government or private land for this purpose, as well as for business ventures such as housing projects. Some believe the appropriations have been mostly of government-owned land, not land believed to be owned by other Afghans.

Several Afghan officials have been accused by Afghans of using their position to enrich themselves. Afghan officials are said to have an “inside track” for their side enterprises to win contracts because of the contacts these officials have with donor organizations and non-governmental organizations. In the June 21, 2012 speech discussed above, Karzai called on international donors to cease awarding “construction, building, and commercial contracts to the government authorities and their relatives.”⁶

Some observers who have served in Afghanistan say that, in exchange for political support, Karzai has appointed some provincial governors to “reward them” – giving them an opportunity to use their positions to “prey” economically on the populations of that province. Implicit in these accusations is that provincial governors are able to use their powerful position to solicit bribes from their constituents, or are able to siphon off customs revenues at border crossings. The populations purportedly presume that the provincial governor will be shielded from any prosecution or disciplinary action by Karzai.

Lower-Level Corruption

U.S. officials are highly concerned that lower level corruption is eroding support for the Afghan government. Observers who follow the issue assert that most of the governmental corruption in Afghanistan – by transaction, if not by monetary value, does not take place in elite circles. It is this lower-level corruption that is perhaps more of a threat to government popularity than is high level corruption, because it is the lower-level forms of corruption that most directly confronts Afghans in the course of their interactions with the government. For example, many Afghans report needing to pay bribes to government officials or representatives to accomplish such mundane functions as processing of official documents such as passports and drivers’ licenses.⁷ By contrast, according to many observers, higher level corruption is, to a certain extent, “expected,” and involves figures (such as Mahmoud Karzai) who are little known to most Afghans. The bribery solicitations are in part caused by the fact that government workers receive very low salaries and count on such illicit payments to earn a living wage. The typical Afghan government bureaucrat earns about \$200 per month, as compared to the pay of typical contractors in Afghanistan that might pay as much as \$6,500 per month.

Other corruption is characterized by Afghan government officials’ siphoning off supplies and then selling the supplies to earn additional income. Such actions have caused consternation in the international community because, in most cases, the supplies stolen by government officials have been donated by governmental or non-governmental aid organizations.

Analyzing Corruption: Nepotism, Patronage, and Factionalism

Some practices in Afghanistan do not conform to accepted Western business and governmental practices, but fall short of constituting “corruption” in the sense of illegal or illicit behavior. Some of the practices

⁶ Joshua Partlow. “Karzai Calls on Afghans to Fight Corruption.” *Washington Post*, June 21, 2012.

⁷ Filkins, Dexter. “Bribes Corrode Afghan’s Trust in Government.” *New York Times*, January 2, 2009.

reflect cultural patterns and behaviors typical not only of Afghanistan but of many countries in the region and the developing world more broadly.

Among the widely noted practices are patronage, nepotism, and factionalism. Many observers say that it is a cultural norm that those Afghans who have achieved government positions will reward their relatives, ethnic kinsmen, and friends with favors and contracts. Karzai's previous comments about this practice notwithstanding, until the issuance of the decree on administrative reform, mentioned previously, on July 26, 2012, there had been no clear laws or regulations in Afghanistan that prevent government officials from hiring relatives or contracting with firms owned by their relatives or associates. His decree included a provision ordering "senior government officials to avoid intervening in the recruitment for the civil service, judiciary and universities."⁸ The Karzai decree is unlikely to be vigorously enforced or have significant effect: firstly, it applies only to "senior government officials." Second, this provision of the decree is inconsistent with Afghan cultural norms: an Afghan government official might be the only member of an extended family earning a full salary, and the official is expected by his familial and political associates to use his position to financially help them.

A related practice is factionalism, another behavior in no way unique to Afghanistan. This refers to a widely noted trend in which cabinet ministers, security chiefs, and other senior figures tend to bring in many members of their ethnic or political faction to work in their institution. Until the July 26 decree discussed earlier, no Afghan laws or regulations prevented officials from hiring trusted partisans as aides. It is not clear that the July 26 decree would even apply to this practice, because many of the top positions at a ministry are not civil service positions, and senior officials have discretion on whom to hire as their top aides. The political system in Afghanistan has tried to curb factionalism, to some degree, through the informal process of consensus building in Afghanistan. For example, there has been an unwritten understanding that when the head of a ministry or organization is a Pashtun, his top deputy will typically be a Tajik, and vice-versa. This understanding has been applied widely to preserve the fragile political consensus that has kept the Northern Alliance working relatively cooperatively within the Karzai government.

Corruption and the ANSF

Observers have noted that the practices discussed above are widespread within the ANSF and the Afghan ministries that oversee it – the Interior Ministry that oversees the Afghan National Police and the Defense Ministry that oversees the Afghan National Army. In part, corruption is fueled by the low salaries paid to ANSF members - they are paid an average of about \$250 per month. Among the behaviors and practices that have been reported by observers in recent years, many of which are practiced simultaneously:

Demands for Bribes. By all accounts, ANP officers continue to demand bribes from citizens in exchange for favorable treatment. Some of these bribes are solicited at ANP checkpoints, and others are paid to ward off ANP investigations such as searches of homes. Observers say that ANP and ANA officers have sometimes demanded extra payments from the U.S. or other militaries in Afghanistan to help guard their military equipment shipments.

Although the issue is under investigation, it is possible that solicitation of bribes might have been a common pattern in the mistreatment of patients at the Mohammad Daoud National Military Hospital in Kabul. Press reports say ANSF members died of malnutrition and lack of medical care because their families could not or did not pay bribes to the staff to ensure necessary care.⁹

⁸ Alissa Rubin, "Afghan President issues Reforms Aimed at Corruption." *New York Times*, July 27, 2012.

⁹ Susan Cornwell, "Pentagon Probing Alleged Abuse at Afghan Military Hospital." *Reuters*, June 20, 2012.

Selective Justice. Many observers agree that in Afghanistan, justice is based on who you are rather than what actions you did or did not take. There are numerous examples in which prison officials – and prison are under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry per a January 2012 Karzai decree - have released suspects from prison because of solicitations, personal appeals, offers of bribes, or threats, from the suspect's family or clan.

Revenue Siphoning/Embezzlement. There are widespread reports that border police (part of the ANP) and border officials have siphoned off customs revenues. Much of the Afghan budget is derived from customs duties collected at major border crossings, and the Karzai government has struggled since 2002 to ensure that all collected duties are turned over to the central government. In some cases, the provincial governors, such as Ghul Agha Sherzai of Nangarhar, have reputedly siphoned off customs revenues, asserting that their province is not receiving its fair share of national revenues. In these cases, the border police may be acting at the behest of the governor who seeks to impound that revenue.

Ghost Employees. There have been widespread reports in recent years that security commanders frequently place "ghost employees" on official payrolls in order to pocket their salaries. A variation has been to provide relatives and friend with "no show" security jobs in which a person is paid but does not report for duty, or reports only infrequently.

Salary Diversions. An illicit practice that receives extensive discussion among diplomats in Kabul is that in which security commanders, particularly those in the ANP, siphon off some of the salary payments to personnel under their command. This has been a function of the tradition in the ANSF in which a commander distributes salary payments, giving the commander the opportunity for misfeasance. In some cases, commanders refuse to tell their personnel what their exact salary is supposed to be, thereby facilitating the siphoning off of a portion of the payment. The United States and its partners have curbed this practice, to some extent, by paying ANP personnel directly through a mobile phone-based electronic account called E-Paisa, run by the Roshan cellphone company.

Misuse or Sale of Donated Equipment and Supplies. Several observers have reported cases in which ANSF personnel have sold U.S. or other donor-provided vehicles, fuel, and equipment. The proceeds of the sales are subsequently divided among the personnel of the unit selling the provisions. The intent of the activity is to supplement the low ANSF salaries. In other reported cases, ANSF units are said to have stripped schools or other buildings of their wood and used it to build fires during cold weather. This latter activity appears to be motivated by a deficit of fuel resources available to the particular unit.

Participation in Illicit Activity. There have been cases reported in which ANSF personnel, even whole units, have participated directly in illegal economic activity. For example, some observers have reported cases in which poppy crop - the precursor to opium – was being grown in local ANP headquarters. There have been numerous other reports in which ANSF personnel were said to be involved in narcotics trafficking or paid by the traffickers not to investigate their activities. In a prominent example, U.S. investigators are looking into allegations that Afghan Air Force officers have been using the force's assets to run drugs around Afghanistan.¹⁰

Absences Without Leave. In building up the ANSF, U.S. military commanders in Afghanistan have noted difficulties with retaining ANSF personnel. In many cases, however, what appear to be personnel desertions are often long absences-without-leave. It is typical in Afghanistan that security personnel serving outside their home villages will return to their family for extended periods of time, in part to deliver part of their salaries to their families, in cash. This results in long absences from their ANSF units. The U.S. military has sought to curb this behavior, reportedly with mixed success, by compelling ANSF

¹⁰ <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2012/03/afghan-air-force-suspected-of-drug-running-report/>

personnel to open bank accounts to facilitate money transfers to their families without having to deliver cash in person.

The Impact of Corruption and Related Practices on Effectiveness

These practices and patterns of behavior in the ANSF have had a significantly corrosive effect on the public perception and overall effectiveness of the ANSF, raising questions about how well the ANSF can secure the country after the 2014 security transition.

- The practices have eroded the legitimacy of the ANSF by causing many Afghans to question the dedication of the ANSF to its mission. There is a concern that, if much of the ANSF is concerned primarily with personal enrichment, its commitment to hold off the Taliban after 2014 is doubtful.
 - The practices discussed above have cost the ANSF – and the Afghan government – public support. Many in the Afghan public views the ANSF – particularly the ANP – as “predatory” because of the demand for bribes.
 - The lack of public trust in the ANP causes many local communities to avoid informing on the movements or activities of the Taliban or other insurgent groups.
 - The practices deprives the public of faith in the Afghan justice system. Many Afghans turn to informal mechanisms, such as local *shuras* (councils), local militias, or to extended family members, to resolve disputes or combat crime. Observers say many crimes go unreported.
 - The practices have caused an unrealistic assessment of the true number of forces available. Although the publicly stated size of the ANSF is about 350,000 personnel, the actual number serving is likely lower than that. This complicates U.S. and NATO planning for the post-2014 transition.
 - Those ANSF who are involved in illegal economic activity may be contributing directly to the insurgency because these activities are used by the Taliban to fund much of their activities. The Taliban might ultimately benefit financially whether or not the ANSF personnel are conducting actual transactions with Taliban.
 - The practices directly deprive the ANSF of some of the equipment and materiel provided by the international community, rendering some units unable to perform their missions. For example, the sale of their fuel provisions threatens to render ANSF units unable to conduct patrols or respond to insurgent activity.
 - The issue of diversion of salary payments has often caused frictions between commanders and their personnel – particularly in cases where personnel discover that their commanders have been skimming salary payments from them. This erodes unit cohesiveness and command authority and respect within the ANSF.
 - The practices discussed have, in some cases, caused ANSF recruits to become disillusioned and leave the force, by many accounts. Some recruits who are not aligned with a particular faction or do not have the backing of large clans have seen promotions go to others who may be less competent but are better connected.
 - The practices discussed above have, in some cases, directly deprived the Afghan government of revenues because some customs duties are being siphoned off.
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Ethnic Balance and Factionalism in the Security Sector

There is an analytic distinction between corruption and factionalism, as discussed, but factionalism is a key factor in assessing the effectiveness of the ANSF after the transition. Both factionalism and corruption relate to the overarching question of whether the ANSF is a professional force, loyal only to its mission and the Afghan nation. The existence of factionalism within the ANSF calls into question the cohesiveness of the ANSF if it is challenged militarily or politically.

The first question most analysts ask is how is the ANSF balanced by ethnicity. With about 41% Pashtuns, 34% Tajiks, 12% Hazaras, and 8% Uzbeks, the composition of the overall ANSF is roughly in line with the broad demographics of the country. However the ANP serves in the area where they join the force, and reflect the makeup of local communities to a greater degree than the ANA does, as discussed in the April 2012 Defense Department report on stability in Afghanistan and the Afghan security forces. However when aggregated at the national level, Tajiks are significantly overrepresented, Pashtuns are proportionately represented, and Hazaras, Uzbeks, and others are somewhat underrepresented.¹¹

U.S. commanders say that those Pashtuns who are in the ANA are disproportionately eastern Pashtuns (from the Ghilzai tribal confederations) rather than southern Pashtuns (Durrani tribal confederations). Defense Minister Wardak said in February 2011 that a greater proportion of southern Pashtuns are being recruited to redress that imbalance somewhat, and the October 2011 DOD report says a re-evaluation in 2011 shows that there are more southern Pashtuns in the ANP than previously thought. In addition, some observers assert that Tajiks continue to control many of the command ranks of the Afghan security institutions, giving Pashtuns only a veneer of control of these organizations. Others rebut such assertions, pointing out that not only is the Defense Minister, Abdul Rahim Wardak, and Pashtun, but the current chief of staff of the ANA (Lt. Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi) is a Pashtun as well.

Factionalism

Assessments of the overall ethnic balance do not adequately address the issue of factionalism within the ANSF. Factions exist in the ANSF because, since its inception in 2002, its key leaders and commanders have tended to hire their partisans and relatives to subordinate positions, sometimes as part of a deliberate strategy to enhance the political strength of their particular faction. However, the ANSF is not, on the whole, divided along ethnic lines. All ANSF units are integrated, and many ANSF personnel are loyal to the nation rather than a specific ethnic faction or faction leader. The vast majority of ANSF personnel, by most accounts, do not identify themselves as members of any particular ethnic or political faction.

Factionalism was more prominent in the early years of the ANSF than it is now. At the time the United States first began establishing the ANA, Northern Alliance figures who were then in key security positions weighted recruitment for the national army toward its Tajik ethnic base. Many Pashtuns, in reaction, refused recruitment or left the ANA program. The naming of a Pashtun, Abdul Rahim Wardak, as Defense Minister in December 2004 reduced desertions among Pashtuns (he remains in that position). U.S. officials in Afghanistan say this problem was further alleviated with better pay and more close involvement by U.S. forces, and, as noted above, the force has become ethnically balanced since then.

Still, concerns about factionalism within the ANSF have drawn particular attention from Afghans because every faction in Afghanistan fears any effort by rival factions to potentially use the security services to further their own political purposes. For the United States, a force that is highly factionalized has the

¹¹ Department of Defense. "Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan/United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces." April 2012.

potential to fracture, particularly if it is challenged extensively on the battlefield or if the fragile national political consensus among faction leaders breaks down.

As a prominent example of how sensitive the issue is in Kabul, the former chief of staff of the ANA, Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, a Tajik who is aligned with the Northern Alliance politically, was widely reported to have been trying to pack the ANA with Northern Alliance loyalists. Partly because of complaints from Pashtuns about this practice, Karzai reassigned Khan from the ANA to be Interior Minister in June 2010,¹² although he is said to be similarly favoring Northern Alliance loyalists for high appointments in that Ministry.

His re-assignment to the Interior Ministry represented an effort to preserve the tradition of ethnic balance in the security sector of government. He replaced Mohammad Hanif Atmar, a Pashtun (Rehmat Nabil), the same day (June 26, 2010) as another Tajik/Northern Alliance figure, Amrollah Saleh was fired as head of the National Directorate of Security (NDS, the intelligence agency). Saleh was replaced by a Pashtun as head of that service. The security ministries tend to have key deputies who are of a different ethnicity than the minister or top official.

Another example is that of Daoud Daoud, a Northern Alliance stalwart. A year before his assassination in May 2011, he was assigned to be ANP commander for virtually all of the northern provinces. He was assigned because of his reputation as a legendary mujahedin commander politically close to Ahmad Shah Masoud.¹³ Daoud's appointment in the north accomplished what was intended – it energized the mostly Tajik police forces that serve in northern Afghanistan at a time when the Taliban was making major inroads in areas of the north such as Konduz, Baghlan Province, and elsewhere in the north.

Key Armed Faction Leaders

The ANSF is said to have loyalists of almost every major political figure in Afghanistan. In some cases, these loyalists – particularly those that serve in areas of Afghanistan dominated by their faction – tend to take direction from their party chief rather than their line commander in the ANSF. For example, many Tajiks in the ANSF look to first Vice President Fahim for leadership and guidance. Many ANSF personnel serving in Qandahar are directed by the Karzai family, which hails from that province, rather than the ANSF command structure in Qandahar.

A number of major figures in Afghanistan have support within the ANSF, and continue to control small militia organizations informally. The figures discussed below would likely become even more politically powerful should the ANSF fracture.

- *Vice President Muhammad Fahim.* Karzai's choice of Northern Alliance figure Muhammad Fahim as his first vice presidential running mate in the August 2009 elections might have been a manifestation of Karzai's growing reliance on faction leaders, as well as his drive to divide the Northern Alliance. Fahim is a Tajik from the Panjshir Valley region who was named military chief of the Northern Alliance/UF faction after Ahmad Shah Masoud's death. The Fahim choice was criticized by human rights and other groups because of Fahim's long identity as a *mujahedin* commander/militia faction leader. Some allegations suggest he has engineered property confiscations and other benefits to feed his and his faction's business interests. During 2002-2007, he reportedly withheld turning over some heavy weapons to U.N. disarmament officials. He is said to have a considerable following among Tajiks within the ANSF. Fahim's brother, Abdul

¹² Dexter Filkins. "After America." *The New Yorker*, July 9, 2012.

¹³ Ray Rivera. "Taliban Bomber Infiltrates Afghan-NATO Meeting, Killing Police Official and Others." *New York Times*, May 28, 2011.

Hussain Fahim, was a beneficiary of concessionary loans from Kabul Bank, a major bank that has faced major losses due to its lending practices, as discussed below. The Fahim brother is also reportedly partnered with Mahmoud Karzai on coal mining and cement manufacturing ventures.

- *Uzbek Leader Abdul Rashid Dostam.* Some observers have cited Karzai's handling of prominent Uzbek leader Abdul Rashid Dostam – the longtime head of a party called Junbush Melli (National Front) as inconsistent. Dostam, generally aligned with the Tajiks and part of the Northern Alliance, commands numerous partisans in his redoubt in northern Afghanistan (Jowzjan, Faryab, Balkh, and Sar-i-Pol provinces). Uzbeks within the ANSF would be likely to gravitate to his leadership were the ANSF to fracture. During the Soviet and Taliban years, he was widely accused of human rights abuses of political opponents.¹⁴ On July 11, 2009, the *New York Times* reported that allegations that Dostam had caused the death of several hundred Taliban prisoners during the major combat phase of Operation Enduring Freedom in late 2001 were not investigated by the Bush Administration. In responding to assertions that there was no investigation of the “*Dasht-e-Laili*” massacre because Dostam was a U.S. ally,¹⁵ To try to separate him from his armed followers, in 2005 Karzai appointed him to the post of chief of staff of the armed forces. Dostam supported Karza's re-election in 2009 primarily to limit the influence of a strong rival figure in the north, Balkh Province Governor Atta Mohammad Noor. Noor is a Tajik but, under a 2005 compromise with Karzai, is in control of a province that is inhabited by many Uzbeks. However, Dostam has since re-aligned with his former Northern Alliance colleagues in opposition to Karzai. In June 2012, the Karzai government launched a prosecution of Dostan for allegedly insisting the China National Petroleum Co. (CNPC) hire Dostam loyalists to security and other jobs on their oil development project in northern Afghanistan. However, Dostam and those close to him alleged that the prosecution was a Karzai effort to favor his relatives' firm, Watan Group, which is the partner of CNPC on the project and which is therefore in line to provide security and other services to the development.
- *Atta Mohammad Noor.* Another Tajik figure in the Northern Alliance is Atta Mohammad Noor, who has been the governor of Balkh Province, which includes the commercially vibrant city of Mazar-e-Sharif, since 2005. He is a former *mujahedin* commander who openly endorsed Karzai's main opponent, Dr. Abdullah in the 2009 presidential election. However, Karzai has kept Noor in place because he has kept the province secure, allowing Mazar-e-Sharif to become a major trading hub, and because displacing him could cause ethnic unrest. Observers say that Noor exemplifies the local potentate, brokering local security and business arrangements that enrich Noor and his allies while ensuring stability and prosperity.¹⁶ Some reports say that he commands two private militias in the province that, in at least two districts (Chimtal and Charbolak), outnumber official Afghan police, and which prompt complaints of abuses (land seizures) by the province's Pashtuns.
- *Mohammad Mohaqiq.* Another faction leader is Mohammad Mohaqiq, a Hazara leader. During the war against the Soviet Union and then Taliban, Mohaqiq was a commander of Hazara fighters in and around Bamiyan Province, and a major figure in the Hazara Shiite Islamist party Hezb-e-Wahdat (Unity Party). The party was supported by Iran during

¹⁴ CRS e-mail conversation with a then National Security aide to President Karzai, December 2008.

¹⁵ This is the name of the area where the Taliban prisoners purportedly died and were buried in a mass grave.

¹⁶ Gall, Carlotta, “In Afghanistan's North, Ex-Warlord Offers Security.” *New York Times*, May 17, 2010.

those periods. Mohaqiq is widely perceived by observers to have substantial support among Hazaras within the ANSF. Currently, Mohaqiq is aligned with Dostam and hardline Tajik figures in an opposition grouping called the National Front of Afghanistan. In July 2012, Mohaqiq demanded Karzai fire the head of the Academy of Sciences for publishing a new national almanac that Mohaqiq said overstated the percentage of Pashtuns in Afghanistan at 60%. Karzai fired the Academy head and three others at that institution. Another major Hazara figure, Karim Khalili, tends to work with Karzai and has served as his second Vice President through Karzai's two terms as president.

- *Isma'il Khan*. Another Northern Alliance strongman that Karzai has sought to simultaneously engage and weaken is prominent Tajik political leader and former Herat Governor Ismail Khan. In 2006, Karzai appointed him minister of energy and water, taking him away from his political base in the west. However, Khan remains influential in the west, and maintaining ties to Khan helped Karzai win Tajik votes in Herat Province that might otherwise have gone to Dr. Abdullah. Still, Khan is said to have several opponents in Herat, and a bombing there on September 26, 2009, narrowly missed his car. Additional questions about Khan were raised in November 2010 when Afghan television broadcast audio files purporting to contain Khan insisting that election officials alter the results of the September 18, 2010, parliamentary elections.¹⁷ Khan is on the High Peace Council that is the main body overseeing the reconciliation process with Taliban leaders.
- *Sher Mohammad Akhundzadeh and Other Helmand Strongmen*. Karzai's relationship with a Pashtun strongman, Sher Mohammad Akhundzadeh, demonstrates the dilemmas facing Karzai in governing Afghanistan. Akhundzadeh was a close associate of Karzai when they were in exile in Quetta, Pakistan, during Taliban rule. Karzai appointed him governor of the overwhelming Pashtun-inhabited province of Helmand after the fall of the Taliban, but in 2005, Britain demanded he be removed for his abuses and reputed facilitation of drug trafficking, as a condition of Britain taking security control of Helmand. Karzai reportedly has, at times, suggested reappointing Akhundzadeh as Helmand governor because, Karzai has argued, he was more successful against militants in Helmand using his local militiamen than Britain has been with its more than 9,500 troops there. However, Britain and the United States have prevailed on Karzai not to remove the current governor, Ghulab Mangal, who has won wide praise for his successes establishing effective governance in Helmand and for reducing poppy cultivation there.
- An Akhundzadeh ally, Abdul Wali Khan (nicknamed "Koka"), was similarly removed by British pressure in 2006 as police chief of Musa Qala district of Helmand. However, Koka was reinstated in 2008 when that district was retaken from Taliban control. The Afghan government insisted on his reinstatement and his militia followers subsequently became the core of the 220-person police force in the district. Koka is mentioned in a congressional report as accepting payments from security contractors who are working under the U.S. Department of Defense's (DOD's) "Host National Trucking" contract that secures U.S. equipment convoys. Koka allegedly agreed to secure the convoys in exchange for the payments.¹⁸

¹⁷ Partlow, Joshua, "Audio Files Raise New Questions About Afghan Elections." *Washington Post*, November 11, 2010.

¹⁸ House of Representatives. Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. "Warlord, Inc.: Extortion and Corruption Along the U.S. Supply Chain in Afghanistan." Report of the Majority Staff, June 2010.

- *Karzai Family and Qandahar Province.* Governing Qandahar, a province of about 2 million, of whom about half live in Qandahar city, and the vast majority of which are Pashtun, is a sensitive issue in Kabul because of President Karzai's active political interest in his home province. Were the ANSF to fracture, it is highly likely that many Pashtuns within the force, particularly those from Qandahar, would group around President Karzai, others in his family, and other power brokers in the province. President Karzai's half brother, Ahmad Wali Karzai, was essentially running the province informally prior to his assassination in July 2011. With government services in the province weak or non-existent, many constituents and interest groups met him each day to request his interventions on their behalf. Numerous press stories have asserted that he protected narcotics trafficking in the province, and some press stories say he was also a paid informant and facilitator for CIA and Special Operations Forces in the province.¹⁹
- Before Ahmad Wali's assassination, U.S. officials had been trying to bolster the clout of the appointed Qandahar governor, Tooryalai Wesa. The international community expected that the death of Ahmad Wali would further empower Wesa. However, President Karzai quickly installed another of his brothers, Shah Wali Karzai, as head of the Popolzai clan and informal Qandahar power broker after Ahmad Wali's death. Shah Wali at first lacked the acumen and clout of Ahmad Wali but reports in mid-2012 say he has become highly influential, while also becoming involved in significant business dealings in the province that continue to cast aspersions on the motives and actions of the Karzai family.
- *Ghul Agha Shirzai.* A key gubernatorial appointment has been Ghul Agha Shirzai as governor of Nangarhar. He is a Pashtun from the powerful Barakzai clan based in Qandahar Province, previously serving as governor of that province, where he reportedly continued to exercise influence in competition with Ahmad Wali Karzai. Many Pashtuns from the Barakzai clan within the ANSF would likely look to Shirzai for leadership if the ANSF were to fracture. In Nangarhar, Shirzai is generally seen as an interloper. But, much as has Noor in Balkh, Shirzai has exercised effective leadership, particularly in curbing poppy cultivation there. At the same time, Shirzai is also widely accused of arbitrary action against political or other opponents, and he reportedly does not remit all the customs duties collected at the Khyber Pass/Torkham crossing to the central government. He purportedly uses the funds for the benefit of the province, not trusting that funds remitted to Kabul would be spent in the province. As noted above, Shirzai had considered running against Karzai in 2009 but then opted not to run as part of a reported "deal" that yielded unspecified political and other benefits for Shirzai.

Supplements to the National Police Create Potential for Abuses and Fracture

The potential for the fracturing of the security services has been increased by a trend instituted in 2008 to supplement the ANP with local police forces. Some refer to these forces as militias, and say the policy of building these forces counters the 2001-2 rationale that spawned the dismantling of the local militias. Until mid-2008, U.S. military commanders opposed assisting local militias anywhere in Afghanistan for fear of creating rivals to the central government and of re-creating militias that commit abuses and administer arbitrary justice.

However, the urgent security needs in Afghanistan - the need to stabilize the security situation and pave the way for a reduction in U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan - caused reconsideration of the

¹⁹ Filkins, Dexter, Mark Mazetti and James Risen, "Brother of Afghan Leader Is Said to be on C.I.A. Payroll," *New York Times*, October 28, 2009.

concept of empowering local security elements. During his command (2010-2011), top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan General David Petraeus expanded local security experiments, based on successful experiences in Iraq and after designing mechanisms to reassure Karzai that any local security organs would be firmly under Afghan government (mainly Ministry of Interior) control.

Among these initiatives are:

- *Village Stability Operations/Afghan Local Police (ALP)*. The Village Stability Operations concept began in February 2010 in Arghandab district of Qandahar Province. U.S. Special Operations Forces organized about 25 villagers into an armed neighborhood watch group, and the program was credited by U.S. commanders as bringing normal life back to the district. The pilot program was expanded and formalized into a joint Afghan-U.S. Special Operations effort in which 12 person teams from these forces live in communities to help improve governance, security, and development.
- An outgrowth of the Village Stability Operations is the Afghan Local Police (ALP) program in which the U.S. Special Operations Forces conducting the Village Stability Operations set up and train local security organs of about 300 members each. These local units are under the control of district police chiefs and each fighter is vetted by a local shura as well as Afghan intelligence. As of June 2012, there are about 13,000 ALP operating in 58 different districts. There are three ALP centers in Helmand province. A total of 99 districts have been approved for the program, each with about 300 fighters, which is expected to bring the target size of the program to about 30,000 by the end of 2014.
- The ALP initiative was also an adaptation of another program, begun in 2008, termed the “Afghan Provincial Protection Program” (APPP, commonly called “AP3”), funded with DOD (CERP) funds. The APPP got under way in Wardak Province (Jalrez district) in early 2009 and 100 local security personnel “graduated” in May 2009. It was subsequently expanded to 1,200 personnel. U.S. commanders said no U.S. weapons were supplied to the militias, but the Afghan government provided weapons (Kalashnikov rifles) to the recruits, possibly using U.S. funds. Participants in the program are given \$200 per month. General Petraeus showcased Wardak in August 2010 as an example of the success of the APPP and similar efforts.
- *Afghan Public Protection Force*. This force is growing, under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior, to guard development sites and organizations. The force was developed to implement Karzai’s August 17, 2010, decree (No. 62) that private security contractor forces be disbanded and their functions performed by official Afghan government forces by March 20, 2012. That deadline was extended because of the slow pace of standing up the new protection force, and some development organizations continue to use locally hired guard forces. Now at about 11,000 personnel, it is intended to grow to 30,000 personnel by March 2013. Embassies and other diplomatic entities can still use private security firms.

The performance and actions of some of these local forces have justified some of these concerns, in the form of widely noted human rights abuses and arbitrary administration of justice. The April 2012 DOD report on Afghan stability, cited above, said there have sometimes been clashes and disputes between ALP and ANSF units, particularly in cases where the units are of different ethnicities. These are the types of problems that prompted the earlier efforts to disarm rather than establish local militia forces. The local security programs were heavily criticized in the September 12, 2011, Human Rights Watch report.²⁰ That

²⁰ Human Rights Watch. “Just Don’t Call it a Militia.” September 12, 2011.

report documented wide-scale human rights abuses (killings, rapes, arbitrary detentions, and land grabs) committed by the recruits. The report triggered a U.S. military investigation of the ALP program, an investigation that substantiated many of the report's findings, although not the most serious of the allegations.²¹ In May 2012, Karzai ordered one ALP unit in Konduz disbanded because of its alleged involvement in a rape there.

The local security experiments to date resemble but technically are not *arbokai*, which are private tribal militias. Some believe that the *arbokai* concept should be revived as a means of securing Afghanistan, as the *arbokai* did during the reign of Zahir Shah and in prior pre-Communist eras. Reports persist that some tribal groupings have formed *arbokai* without specific authorization.

Conclusions and Prospects

Corruption, patronage, nepotism, and factionalism are cause for serious concern about the cohesiveness and performance of the ANSF after the completion of the security transition in 2014. It is ethnic and political factionalism that probably poses the greatest threat to the post-2014 prospects for the ANSF, particularly if the Taliban-led insurgency remains active and puts pressure on the ANSF militarily. It is possible that many Pashtuns in the ANSF could defect from the force, and that the northern and western minorities might leave the force and rejoin the militias and irregular forces formerly fielded by the political leaders of those minorities.

Another scenario that could cause the ANSF to fracture would be a major political rift between the Northern Alliance and Pashtun leaders in the event of a political settlement with the Taliban. Virtually all Taliban fighters are Pashtun, and Northern Alliance leaders fear that a settlement with the Taliban will bring additional Pashtuns into the political structure. That outcome would weaken the political influence of the Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara minorities. Some Northern Alliance leaders are said to be planning for a possible major rift, which could turn violent, in the event a settlement is reached that dilutes Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara political power.

On the other hand, it is likely that U.S. forces will remain in a training and advisory capacity after 2014 – a policy that would place U.S. forces and commanders in position to mitigate the fractious tendencies in the ANSF. U.S. and international forces present after 2014 could also continue the longstanding efforts to instill professionalism in the force and to try to reduce corruption and culturally-motivated behaviors within the force. And, perhaps most significantly, a continuing international presence would stiffen the ANSF so as to prevent major insurgent gains after 2014, and thereby prevent or reduce the potential for ANSF dissolution.

²¹ Ernesto Londono. "U.S. Cites Local Afghan Police Abuses." *Washington Post*, December 16, 2011. The Human Rights Watch report is entitled "Just Don't Call It a Militia." <http://www.hrw.org>, September 12, 2011.

Dr. KENNETH KATZMAN

**SPECIALIST IN MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS
CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE
(202) 707-7612**

As a specialist with the Congressional Research Service, Dr. Katzman serves as a senior Middle East analyst for the U.S. Congress, with special emphasis on Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf states, and terrorist groups operating in the Middle East and South Asia. He provides reports and briefings to Members of Congress and their staffs on U.S. policy on these countries and issues, and provides analysis of related legislative proposals. He has visited both Iraq and Afghanistan on several occasions since 2004, and has followed all the countries he covers since the mid 1980s. He also has written numerous articles in various outside publications, including a book entitled "The Warriors of Islam: Iran's Revolutionary Guard," and given many official presentations and briefings at conferences and in bilateral meetings throughout Europe, Asia, and the Islamic world. During 1996 and again during July 2001 - March 2002, he was assigned to the majority staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to work on Middle East issues, including hearings and legislation.

Among other major publications, during 1998, he wrote expert working papers on the ballistic missile capabilities of Iran and Iraq for the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States ("Rumsfeld Commission"). In late 1999, the Atlantic Council published his study, "U.S.-Iran Relations: An Analytic Compendium of U.S. Policies, Laws, and Regulations." Dr. Katzman is quoted frequently on the Persian Gulf in the U.S. press and he appears frequently on Middle Eastern news stations including Alam TV (Iran), Press TV (Iran), Al Hurra, Al Arabiyya, Al Jazeera, LBC, and Al Akhbariya. During 2004, he was a consultant to CBS News on Al Qaeda and related Islamic extremist groups, and he continues to participate in outside projects on a consulting basis.

EDUCATION

Doctorate of Philosophy, Political Science. New York University, 1991.
Dissertation entitled "Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps: Radical Ideology Despite Institutionalization in the Islamic Republic.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (May 1985-June 1989). Prepared written reports for U.S. Middle East policymakers on leadership dynamics in Iran, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf states. Analysis was often provided in the form of briefings for senior U.S. officials. Two years in the private defense consulting industry followed his tour at the CIA.