

PEACE AND STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN:
U.S. GOALS CHALLENGED BY SECURITY GAP

Expanded ISAF Could Bridge Gap Until National Afghan Security Forces In Place

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Overview

U.S. goals in Afghanistan are broad and clear: root out al Qaeda and the Taliban forces, prevent their return, support self-governance, and ensure security, stability and reconstruction.¹ To accomplish these goals, the United States and the international community are undertaking two major campaigns simultaneously. The first is a military effort to repel terrorist forces from Afghanistan; the second is a political effort to build a viable and secure state. Each campaign depends on the other's success. Without an end to the war, reconstruction and governance will fail. If reconstruction and governance fail, the resulting power vacuum could allow return of al Qaeda and terrorist factions.

While the military campaign appears well in hand, the campaign to help Afghanistan rebuild a government and create a secure environment is not assured. Consider:

- **For most of Afghanistan, there is no official security sector** (police, judges, border control, courts, air force, army), leaving local control to those who wrest such power, including warlords and militias.
- **Current U.S. and international forces prosecuting the military campaign do not and cannot provide security** to many regions of Afghanistan.
- The 5,000-strong International Security Assistance Force (**ISAF**) **troops provide security only in and around Kabul**, Afghanistan's capital, home to roughly 10 percent of the country's population.²
- The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (**UNAMA**), a political mission established in the eight largest Afghan cities, **has no force to support it outside of Kabul**.
- U.S. and European efforts to train an Afghan military, police and border forces are under way, but will take **two to eight years to meet targeted levels for creating an Afghan security sector**.

In areas of Afghanistan without security forces, challenges from regional warlords, militias, rivals, bandits, and lack of governance foster criminality, hinder reconstruction, prevent safe return of displaced persons and refugees, slow rule of law, and undermine the Bonn Process (e.g., eight candidates were murdered before the June *Loya Jirga*).³ Insecurity also creates an environment receptive to renewed al Qaeda and terrorist activities.

This paper looks at the major challenge to U.S. goals – the security gap in Afghanistan – and the need to bridge that gap until an Afghan security sector is built. It reviews U.S. goals, covers reports of insecurity hindering efforts in Afghanistan, looks at the security providers, and identifies the gap between current security and the effort to build an Afghan security sector. **A companion analysis by Stimson colleague William J. Durch offers options to bridge this security gap, including expansion of ISAF by 13,500 personnel** (www.stimson.org).⁴ For the short-term, Durch proposes expanding ISAF to 18,000 troops, deployed to major cities, along prime routes and at key border points.

These and additional materials looking at ISAF, UNAMA and U.S. policy toward Afghanistan are available through the Future of Peace Operations project and its website (www.stimson.org/fopo/).

U.S. Goals & Policy

The Military Campaign: Ridding Afghanistan of al Qaeda and the Taliban. In the aftermath of September 11th, the United States has led a comprehensive multinational military and diplomatic campaign to root out al Qaeda and Taliban forces from Afghanistan and elsewhere. The U.S. has declared its determination to fight terrorism and prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a training ground for global terror. *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF), the U.S.-led force, is prosecuting the military campaign against the Taliban and al Qaeda. Supported internationally, as well as by Hamid Karzai, former Chairman of the Afghan Interim Authority and now head of the Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan, this American-run campaign is well supplied and executed.

Vice President Dick Cheney affirmed the link between the military campaign and the broader effort in Afghanistan: “Rebuild it, put it back together again, whatever phrase you want. We cannot allow Afghanistan to move to a situation where once again it’s a sanctuary for terrorists.”⁵

The Political and Reconstruction Campaign. President Bush has made it clear that “We will help the new Afghan government provide the security that is the foundation for peace.”⁶ The President stood alongside Chairman Karzai in January 2002, and released a comprehensive statement on the “new partnership” between Afghanistan and the United States. Included was a commitment to build “a lasting partnership for the 21st century, determined to fight terrorism, and ensure security, stability and reconstruction for Afghanistan, and foster representative and accountable government for all Afghan women and men.”⁷ The U.S. pledged to help stand up and train a national military and police, as well as address Afghanistan’s “short-term security needs, including through demining assistance.” Moreover, as Vice President Cheney stated in March: “We’re there to back up the ISAF international peacekeeping force. We’re there to work with the Karzai interim authority and, hopefully, a new government, once it is stood up. We are prepared to train the new Afghan national army, which they badly need.”⁸

As part of this effort, the U.S. supports a wide range of assistance and international efforts, and provides diplomatic and political support. The Administration supports funding for the Afghan transitional administration, salaries for the Afghan military, and Turkey as lead nation of ISAF,⁹ as well as for various aid programs. The **Bonn Process**, resulting from the U.N.-brokered Bonn Agreement in December 2001, supports development of a new government through the convening of the *Emergency Loya Jirga*, creation of a transitional administration, development of a constitution, and holding of elections to move Afghanistan into self-governance (a two-plus year effort). The **U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan** is deployed to Kabul and seven other Afghan cities to move this process forward, as well as to help run a census and lay groundwork for elections. More broadly, the international community has pledged assistance to bolster Afghan reconstruction.

The Security Gap: Reports From the Field

As Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has stated, “There is no question but that very little is possible in a country if there is not reasonable security.”¹⁰ Despite major U.S. and international investment – including direct U.S. military and political engagement, deployment of the 5,000-strong ISAF, pledges to help build an Afghan security sector, support for the Bonn Agreement,¹¹ creation of UNAMA, and international relief and humanitarian efforts – gaps in security are reported throughout Afghanistan.

NGO Reports. Even with ISAF forces in Kabul and the presence of U.S. and other forces in *Operation Enduring Freedom*, numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Afghanistan have publicized their concerns, which include:¹²

- Unchecked regional rivalries for power;
- Regular human rights abuses (e.g., beatings, executions of Pashtuns in the north and west);
- Imbalance of political-military power, including in Kabul favoring the Northern Alliance;

- Too many arms, and not enough demobilization of fighters;
- Insufficient security for reconstruction, and for refugees and internally displaced people to return and resettle safely;
- Remaining landmines and unexploded ordnance; and
- Direct threats and attacks on aid workers.

In short, NGOs report two areas of concern. *Immediate concerns* include daily problems, such as refugee returns, lack of human rights protections, slowed food deliveries, and arms flows. *Longer-term fears* include failure to deal with real and perceived imbalances of political power, in Kabul and elsewhere, which may convey legitimacy to those who undermine the Bonn peace process and challenge the authority of the transitional administration. In areas outside the capital, militia leaders and warlords may have a *de facto* blessing from the transitional administration or work with the consent of *Operation Enduring Freedom*.¹³ Security concerns are also cited as causing the lag in reconstruction funding: of \$4.5 billion pledged in Tokyo in January 2002, only \$100 million has been given.¹⁴

International Leaders. International and Afghan leaders have identified gaps in security as hurting efforts to move Afghanistan away from war. UN Special Representative **Lakhdar Brahimi**, the diplomat who skillfully led the Bonn conference and now heads UNAMA, as well as **Hamid Karzai** and **Pakistani President Musharraf**, have called for greater international forces in the country to provide security.¹⁵ On March 18, the **United Nations** reported on the situation, expressing concern about al Qaeda and Taliban “pockets of resistance,” factional clashes, and banditry. The UN report called for bringing Afghan leaders into the political process, investigating human rights abuses, rapidly equipping and training the Afghan forces, and bridging the security gap until Afghan forces were effective:

“Risks to peace remain...speed is of the essence in security assistance and aid in building the Afghan military and civilian police forces... [UNAMA] will not be able to carry out its functions unless the security situation is addressed immediately with assistance of those countries who have the means to do so.”¹⁶

Prior to Security Council approval of UNAMA on March 28, debate in the Council included concern about security on the ground. British Ambassador Stewart Eldon suggested that ISAF should be extended and supported its expansion over a wider area.¹⁷

Despite welcome progress in June with the *Loya Jirga*, insecurity continued to hinder reconstruction efforts. On June 16, **Brahimi** raised the issue in a letter to Karzai, noting an alarming increase in violence in the North, including armed attacks, robberies, and beatings carried out against international assistance organizations, and a gang rape of a female aid worker.¹⁸ On June 21, **U.N. Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs Kieran Prendergast** warned that if “countervailing pressure” was not applied, aid operations in the North might be cut. He noted the Afghan government’s inability to exert control and suggested reconsideration of a limited expansion of ISAF outside of Kabul.¹⁹

Looking at the Security Providers

The problems due to insecurity are naturally reported from areas without international or local forces. To understand the “gaps” in security in Afghanistan, it is worth looking at the missions and deployment areas of current security providers, including:

The U.S.-led Military Campaign/ Operation Enduring Freedom. The U.S.-led multinational military campaign, *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF), has roughly 10,000 troops inside Afghanistan, as well as air support and logistics elements outside of it.²⁰ Nations including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Norway have provided troops and support. The role of the OEF, however, is to root out al Qaeda and Taliban forces, not to provide security within Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the presence of these troops provides some residual local security.

ISAF: Securing Kabul and Environs. On December 20, 2001, the Security Council authorized the International Security Assistance Force to assist the Afghan Interim Authority in creating security in Afghanistan.²¹ Approved unanimously, Security Council Resolution 1386 provided for ISAF deployment to Kabul, Afghanistan and the surrounding areas for six months (through June 15).²² The United Kingdom offered to organize and lead ISAF; 19 nations currently provide personnel, equipment and resources.²³ The U.S. military did not offer troops to ISAF, but expressed its willingness to provide transportation, logistics and communications support, as well as to rescue ISAF troops if needed.

On May 23, the Security Council (with Resolution 1413) extended ISAF through December 2002, but neither increased its area of deployment or force size. ISAF remains only in and around Kabul, the capital city, Afghanistan's largest (roughly 1.8 million people, in a nation of about 27 million.)²⁴ As was expected, Turkey took over leadership of ISAF from Great Britain on June 20th.²⁵

Afghan Security Forces & Build Rate. The national Afghan government has little power or authority of its own. The U.S. has pushed strongly for training of a national Afghan security sector, including police, military and border control forces. Recognizing the need to help the national Afghan government, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld noted the difficulty of having multiple armies in different sectors of Afghanistan:

“Afghans are well armed. And we know there’s a lot of soldiers.... one would think that at some point, we may be fortunate enough that they’ll decide that it’s in their interests to have a national army and military and border and police circumstance, rather than simply various provinces having their own military forces.”²⁶

On April 3, the U.S. and other nations met in Geneva to discuss requirements and funding for training of national Afghan security forces. The U.S. pledged to train the Afghan military and border security service; Great Britain volunteered to lead the counter-narcotics effort; Germany agreed to train the Afghan police force; and Italy offered to run a rule of law program. The following goals were agreed upon to create a national force loyal to the transitional administration:

SECURITY SECTOR	GOAL	LEAD NATION	RATE
Army	60,000 troops	United States	7,200/year ²⁷
Air Force	8,000 troops	United States	n/a
Border Control Security Force	12,000 personnel	United States	2,400/year ²⁸
Police Force	70,000 personnel	Germany	n/a
Rule of Law System	n/a	Italy	n/a
Counter-narcotics	n/a	Great Britain	n/a
Demobilization	70,000	United Nations	n/a

The United Nations is tasked with dealing with demobilization of soldiers, roughly 70,000, as well as with former combatants, estimated at 100,000.²⁹ Funding for these efforts comes from a variety of bilateral and multilateral pledges coordinated by the United Nations.

The pledging conference did not set timelines to meet these goals. At projected rates, the U.S. will train roughly 7,200 troops per year for the national Afghan army and another 2,400 for the border security troops. Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on June 26, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz confirmed this schedule, testifying that the U.S. will train roughly 14,400 forces over the next 18 months. **At this pace, Afghanistan will not have even a quarter of its projected army by the end of the transitional period (mid-2004).**³⁰ **Under this plan, training 60,000 Army troops will take over eight years.** Training rates for the police and border control are not clear. Furthermore, it is not known if newly trained forces will be deployed beyond Kabul to help provide security throughout Afghanistan.

Bridging the Security Gap

Even with the missions and resources of *Operation Enduring Freedom*, of ISAF, and of the training program for an Afghan military and police, a security gap exists in Afghanistan. **Many options to provide added security are imaginable:** expansion of the current ISAF force beyond Kabul, creation of a U.N. peacekeeping force, diversion of *Operation Enduring Freedom* or U.S. forces to provide security, and expedited training of the Afghan security sector.

The Bush Administration has not supported expansion of ISAF or other means of bridging the security gap. While the Administration recognizes the need for an Afghan police, military and rule of law system and is leading the multi-year training effort, the U.S. has not acknowledged the security gap or addressed the need to bridge it while that sector is developed. Early in 2002, some State Department officials reportedly favored enlarging ISAF. Pentagon officials have opposed expansion, citing potential interference between ISAF troops and the U.S.-led military campaign, additional costs, and the reluctance of ISAF contributing countries, including Turkey, to expand the deployment area. More recently, in response to critics, Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary Wolfowitz have argued that the U.S. does not oppose ISAF expansion; rather, they do not support U.S. participation.³¹

While the U.S.-led military efforts appear on course to defeat al Qaeda and Taliban forces, maintaining that achievement relies on the political and reconstruction campaign. That campaign must help channel violent conflict in Afghanistan into political expression – and create an environment hostile to the return of terrorist and al Qaeda forces. Success depends on many international and Afghan efforts, including the Bonn Process, the transitional administration, the UNAMA mission, and establishment of a security sector, as well as the work of relief, development, medical and refugee organizations to help create a stable environment. Yet each of these efforts needs security to function. **The United States must recognize and help bridge the current security gap in Afghanistan, or risk failure in meeting its basic goals. Only with security can Afghanistan have a foundation for peace.**

ONE SECURITY OPTION: EXPAND ISAF BY 13,500 TROOPS AND DEPLOY BEYOND KABUL

To fill the security gap, Stimson's William J. Durch proposes increasing ISAF to 18,000 troops as a complement to current forces. This proposal would distribute 4,500 infantry forces and 2,500 combat engineers to seven other Afghan cities, with another 6,500 troops for road and border security at major points. Presuming continuation of current U.S. and allied troop deployments, and continued support for the Bonn Process and reconstruction by major powers, an increased ISAF could:

- Deploy troops to defined areas of responsibility (AORs) in and around major cities and airports.
- Patrol major road links between these major AORs and cities.
- Secure major border crossings.
- Provide companies of engineering troops to manage workforces of demobilized fighters, a visibly effective way to help Afghanistan with reconstruction (and demobilization.)

The force could help deter banditry and criminality, allow reopening of major roads, and provide a basis for customs revenue for the national government. This added security could assist refugees and IDP movement and lay the groundwork for voluntary demobilization of former combatants. The engineering units could assist in mine clearance, and repair of roads, bridges and irrigation systems. Initial costs for such a force depend on contributing nations. A European-based force could cost roughly \$2.2 to \$2.4 billion for one year. An all U.S. force would cost closer to \$4 billion per year.

For full analysis and discussion, see:

“Security and Peace Support in Afghanistan: Analysis and Short- to Medium-Term Options,”

by William J. Durch, Senior Associate, *Future of Peace Operations* project, Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, DC: June 2002 (revised), www.stimson.org/fopo/.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See statements of U.S. government officials in “Views on Security in Afghanistan: Selected Quotes and Statements by U.S. and International Leaders,” *Future of Peace Operations* factsheet, May 2002, Henry L. Stimson Center, www.stimson.org/fopo/.
- ² In April 2002, UNHCR estimated that 1.8 million people lived in Kabul, many newly arrived as refugees and internally displaced people (“Refugees’ return creates ‘emergency of hope,’” Mark Memmott, *USA Today*, 22 April 2002). Estimates of Afghanistan’s total population vary; the 2001 CIA factbook lists the total population at 27 million people.
- ³ “So much done, so far to go,” *The Economist*, 8 June 2002.
- ⁴ For full analysis and discussion, see “Security and Peace Support in Afghanistan: Analysis and Short- to Medium-Term Options,” by William J. Durch, Senior Associate, Project on the Future of Peace Operations, Henry L. Stimson Center, Washington, DC: June 2002 (revised), www.stimson.org/fopo/.
- ⁵ Vice President Richard Cheney, quoted in “Bombers Sent to Afghan Air Base,” by Joyce Howard Price, *The Washington Times*, March 25, 2002. See also *Future of Peace Operations* factsheet, “Views on Security in Afghanistan: Selected Quotes and Statements by U.S. and International Leaders,” May 2002, the Henry L. Stimson Center (www.stimson.org/fopo/).
- ⁶ “U.S. Vows Training, Aid for Afghans,” by Lawrence McQuillan, *USA Today*, 29 January 2002.
- ⁷ “Joint Statement on New Partnership Between U.S. and Afghanistan,” White House press release, 28 January 2002. This statement is substantial, and includes a commitment to support ISAF, the Bonn agreement, training of a national military and police, and short-term security needs, including demining assistance.
- ⁸ Vice President Richard Cheney, quoted in “Bombers Sent to Afghan Air Base,” by Joyce Howard Price, *The Washington Times*, 25 March 2002. See also *Future of Peace Operations* factsheet, “Views on Security in Afghanistan: Selected Quotes and Statements by U.S. and International Leaders,” May 2002, Henry L. Stimson Center (www.stimson.org/fopo/).
- ⁹ As part of its March emergency fiscal year 2002 request, the Administration requested \$228 million in support for Turkey (\$200 million as Economic Support Funds, \$28 million as Foreign Military Financing); \$80 million for the Afghan Interim Administration, support of the Loya Jirga and demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants (Economic Support Funds); \$20 million for salaries of the Afghan military (Voluntary Peacekeeping Operations), \$60 million as support for counter-narcotics, police training and justice programming (International Counter-narcotics and Law Enforcement). These funds are part of the State Department’s budget. As of 26 June 2002, Congress had not completed action on these funding requests – a conference on the differing House and Senate versions of the Supplemental was still underway.
- ¹⁰ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Defense Department Operational Update Briefing, 28 March 2002.
- ¹¹ The Afghan Interim Authority and the United Nations signed the Bonn Agreement on 5 December 2001.
- ¹² Including Human Rights Watch, Mercy Corps International, International Republican Institute, Refugees International, International Crisis Group, UNHCR, International Rescue Committee, Physicians for Human Rights, IFES, and the United Nations.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, Schmitt.
- ¹⁴ “Groups Seek Afghan Peace Expansion,” by Tini Tran, *Associated Press*, 22 June 2002.
- ¹⁵ For specific quotes, see *Future of Peace Operations* factsheet, “Views on Security in Afghanistan: Selected Quotes and Statements by U.S. and International Leaders,” May 2002, Henry L. Stimson Center (www.stimson.org/fopo/).
- ¹⁶ The United Nations, “*The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security*,” Report of the U.N. Secretary General, A/56/875-S02002/278, 18 March 2002.
- ¹⁷ “Security Council expresses overwhelming support for proposed UN assistance mission in Afghanistan: Proposals to extend mandate, theatre of operations of international security force met with more cautious approval – Part 2 of 3,” *M2 Presswire*, 27 March 2002.
- ¹⁸ “U.N. Envoy Raises Concerns About Insecurity in Northern Afghanistan,” U.N. News Service, 17 June 2002.
- ¹⁹ “U.N. Official: Security Council Should Consider Expanding Force in Kabul to Deal with Afghan Security Problems,” Edith Lederer, *Associated Press*, 21 June 2002; also U.N. Press Release SC/7429, 21 June 2002.
- ²⁰ Schmitt, Eric and Thom Shanker, “U.S. Sees Hunts for Al Qaeda in Pakistan Lasting into Fall,” *The New York Times*, 6 May 2002.
- ²¹ See also *Background* on the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), June 2002, *Future of Peace Operations* project, Henry L. Stimson Center. Available at www.stimson.org/fopo/.
- ²² While authorized by the U.N. Security Council and resolution 1386, ISAF is not a U.N. peacekeeping operation and is not organized, staffed or funded by the United Nations. Most of the nations contributing to ISAF signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding in London on 10 January 2002 to formalize their contributions to ISAF.
- ²³ As of June 2002, contributing countries include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK.
- ²⁴ See footnote number 2 for data.
- ²⁵ Both Turkey and Great Britain were quoted earlier this year as opposing expansion of ISAF outside of Kabul.
- ²⁶ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers, Defense Department Operational Update Briefing, 25 March 2002.
- ²⁷ Department of Defense sources.
- ²⁸ Department of Defense sources.
- ²⁹ U.S. State Department Transcript, “Afghan security needs discussed by donors in Geneva,” 4 April 2002.
- ³⁰ Eric Schmitt, “A New Afghan Army Takes Shape, with GI’s as Trainers,” *The New York Times*, 15 May 2002.
- ³¹ Most recently, see testimony by Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz, before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 26 June 2002.