

# **BUILDING SECURITY AND STATE IN AFGHANISTAN: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT**

**Woodrow Wilson School**

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## **Conference Summary**

### Security

Although much has been done to further the security and stability of Afghanistan, Afghans continue to stress security as their chief concern. Warlords/regional commanders are now potentially a greater threat due to the diffusion of non-democratic power. While greater PRT activity is welcomed, PRTs possess limited ability to provide security in the short term.

- One size does not fit all in PRT planning, as different regions of Afghanistan present distinct needs. Creative approaches, which do not always lie in numbers or arms, are required to address these needs. Also, the concept behind PRTs is more than the mere presence of soldiers providing security. The PRTs are also there to help build civil society and government institutions.
- Some minimal coordination mechanism should be established to increase cooperation among the different security mechanisms (an expanded ISAF, DDR, and PRTs) and emerging Afghan institutions.
- Training of diplomatic personnel must continue – some participants suggested training officials in Islamabad as an effective method to build security and cooperation between the two nations. (Should move this, and maybe take out Islamabad part.)
- Some participants suggested that security forces should focus on “dewarlordizing” the warlords/regional commanders. In this process, the security forces should differentiate between warlords and power-holders with a legitimate popular power-base, and support the latter against the former
- While signs of increasing cooperation with Pakistan on border security are emerging, in particular through Tripartite Commission, more needs to be done.
- The security situation in the southeastern areas of Afghanistan and the increased dangers faced by NGOs working in this region was discussed at length. While NGOs recognize that they are working in an insecure environment, the Afghan government and international community recognize that the work the NGOs do in these areas and the programs they deliver are essential to provide some measure of social welfare and a positive presence of the central government and international community, thereby providing hope for livelihood alternatives that do not include working with the Taliban.

### Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

- It is important to recognize the link between a successful DDR process and establishing and reforming the security institutions.

- Great recognition is needed of the fact that the reintegration part of DDR is the most important, because without it you will not get successful disarmament and demobilization. The DDR focus should therefore be on reintegration programs.
- When not fighting, many regional commanders find their troops a burden rather than an asset. If mechanisms could be found to integrate regional commanders into the economy, then they could better provide jobs for their supporters.
- The DDR process also needs to focus on Kabul. The Bonn Agreements called for disarming militia groups in Kabul right away – yet this has still not taken place, with many militia groups still present in the capital.

### Framework of Government and Drafting the Constitution

- Ethnic participation in the future framework, guaranteed by the constitution, must be diverse. A new image of Afghan politics must be fostered to emerge with significant Pashtun and non- Pashtun involvement. Some participants suggested that a proportional representation system is the best way to achieve this goal.
- Several participants suggested that Afghanistan needs consociational democracy, arguing that a centralized presidential system does not take historical realities into account and is a recipe for long-term instability.
- Stability and democracy sometimes work against each other. There needs to be a clearer policy in Afghanistan and by donors that reflects the challenges that Afghans face in doing both. This tension must be reflected and provided for in the Constitution.
- The planned Ministerial consolidation should be expedited. There are several ministries that are performing the same functions and are operating without a clear mandate or work program. The creation of a Ministry of Economy is essential and needed immediately.
- Some participants suggested that a new framework for international cooperation and government structure is needed, perhaps through another Bonn-type process. The participants recommended that the new framework have a formal process to ensure transparency, provide better information to the people, and promote consultation with the public.
- An international conference should be organized to develop a post-Bonn agenda for the next five years. Such planning should ensure that ISAF expansion is harmonized with the political agenda outlined in Bonn. Immediate establishment of an achievable calendar for coordinating security benchmarks with the reconstruction efforts (Bonn with Tokyo) is encouraged.

### Election Process and Timetable

Concerns regarding the ramifications of postponement need to be worked out with the Afghan government and international partners. In doing so, the risks of failure to meet election expectations need to be weighed against factors of security, political developments that may prohibit a free and fair process and the ramifications of an election that is unfair and/or does not yield the desired outcomes.

- Some participants expressed concern that the June 2004 timeline does not allow enough time to ensure diversity among political players. The new political parties law needs time

and support to be implemented. Many Afghans currently understand political parties as synonymous with warlordism. If new political elements do not develop, the current power base will likely win.

- Other participants argued that ordinary Afghans are expecting elections, and postponement will lead to further loss of trust in the current government. In addition, these participants emphasized that the upcoming election is merely one of many future elections, and the process is expected to improve over time.
- A more robust public information campaign is needed to increase understanding of democracy and the electoral process, as well as to emphasize that the international community is here to support the peace process.
- The role of various security forces during the preparation for and during the elections needs to be clarified to preclude corruption in the process.
- Adequate financing of elections preparation are also urgent. Elections are scheduled in 8 months, but the financing shortfall in programs such as voter registration is nearly 80 percent. If the international community is really committed to having anything close to free and fair elections in Afghanistan, they need to *immediately* fund these programs.

### Economy

Effective reconstruction of Afghanistan requires a more coherent economic plan and a change in the business environment. A poor business climate, combined with insecurity, has prevented foreign investment, even by those inclined to invest.

- A comprehensive plan for economic development must be developed. Some participants suggested that a Ministry of the Economy/Commerce is needed to guide and implement this process.
- Since investment is a key component to development, the government must prioritize promotion of a favorable business climate: better infrastructure, intellectual property security, and controls on corruption and red tape. The government must take steps to limit government control of the economy.
- International organizations must make better use of the private sector as a development engine. This approach could also better attract diaspora.
- Some participants cautioned that bringing in international markets could create uneven development and distribution problems, and this situation would need to be monitored carefully.
- Others argued that psychological reconstruction should be strengthened through employment for people, addressing issues of income and standard of living, and stimulating the move to labor intensive economy.

### Drug Production and Trafficking

Efforts to control drug trafficking need to be prioritized, as poppy production has the potential to impede the establishment of political stability in Afghanistan. Solutions to this problem lie in building a stronger Afghan state and economy, addressing the international demand side, and creating a regional mechanism/apparatus to create oversight.

- Afghanistan's opium production is a function of a poor economy in addition to demand dynamics. Creating viable economic alternatives to poppy production is an important component of eliminating drug production.
- Some participants suggested that a regional coordination office for anti-narcotic programs should be established. Current programming lacks funds to effectively combat large-scale drug trafficking.
- It is important to politicize the effect of increasing drug use on Afghans, and use this understanding to build a public movement against drugs.
- A number of participants remarked that a concerted multilateral effort is required to tackle the growing, mutually reinforcing relationship between the "narco-mafia" and existing terrorist networks. This cannot be solved by a single country - a sustained effort involving key governments is desirable.
- A mechanism to coordinate regional efforts is needed. Iran recently developed 25 border centers with well-paid counter-narcotic police to control the drug trade. This approach, which has had an impact on drug trade in the West of the country, contrasts with that of Tajikistan.

### Civil Service and Police Reform

The salary structure in civilian administration must be reformed. A livable salary must be paid in a timely fashion to the police and civilian administrators. Avoiding corruption, the delivery of basic services and security hinge on appropriate incentives provided for competent administration.

General reform of civil service, which has started, should be strengthened and supported by the international community. A competent civil service is fundamental to a stable and independent Afghanistan.

- Establish a public administration academy to provide basic training to civil servants of all levels, particularly for fiscal administration capacity with incentives and merit-based exams.
- The administration must provide, and be seen to provide, basic services in the districts. Infrastructure must be provided quickly to do this with communications and technological support. Government must be able to communicate effectively.
- Improve revenue collection efforts. In order to guarantee livable and regular salaries, a consistent revenue base must be established. There is revenue available, especially in border trade, and this revenue should be secured.
- Police training centers in PRT AORs are an important development and need to be expedited. Germany is willing to provide these funds immediately for provincial training centers to start.
- In general, more funds are needed now to accelerate training of police and civil servants. The more are trained now, the quicker the Afghans can take control of policing and managing governance and administration of their country.

## Regional Interests and the International Community

- Many participants expressed concern that Iraq has become the forefront concern in Washington, and Afghanistan is in danger of falling off the radar. However, other participants suggested that not only are the two very different cases receiving different attention, but that in fact the US experience in Iraq has brought the attention back to Afghanistan.
- While a number of participants expressed concern about the influence of Afghanistan's neighboring countries, others suggested that a stable Afghanistan is in the interest of these neighbors. However, this does not mean that these governments or elements within the countries are not doing things that have destabilizing effects.