



Highlights of [GAO-08-661](#), a report to Congressional Committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

Since 2002, the United States has worked to develop the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The Department of Defense (Defense), through its Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), directs U.S. efforts to develop the Afghan National Army (ANA) and, in conjunction with the Department of State (State), the Afghan National Police (ANP).

To follow up on recommendations from GAO's 2005 report on the ANSF, GAO analyzed the extent to which U.S. plans for the ANSF contain criteria we recommended. GAO also examined progress made and challenges faced in developing the ANA and ANP. To address these objectives, GAO reviewed Defense, State, and contractor documents and met with cognizant officials. GAO has prepared this report under the Comptroller General's authority to conduct evaluations on his own initiative.

## What GAO Recommends

To ensure action on GAO's 2005 recommendation and a 2008 Defense Authorization Act mandate, Congress should consider conditioning a portion of future appropriations on completion of a coordinated, detailed plan for the ANSF, including a sustainment strategy. State expressed concerns about conditioning future funding, and Defense disagreed, stating that current guidance is sufficient. GAO maintains that a coordinated, detailed plan is essential to accountability of U.S. efforts to develop the ANSF.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-661](#). For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr. at (202) 512-7331 or [johnsoncm@gao.gov](mailto:johnsoncm@gao.gov).

# AFGHANISTAN SECURITY

## Further Congressional Action May Be Needed to Ensure Completion of a Detailed Plan to Develop and Sustain Capable Afghan National Security Forces

### What GAO Found

In 2005, GAO recommended that Defense and State develop detailed plans for completing and sustaining the ANSF. In 2007, Defense provided a document in response to this recommendation. This 5-page document lacks sufficient detail for effective interagency planning and oversight. For example, while the document includes some broad objectives and performance measures, it identifies few long-term milestones and no intermediate milestones for assessing progress, and it lacks a sustainability strategy. Although Defense and State are partners in police training, the document does not include State's input or describe State's role. Further, State has not completed a plan of its own. In January 2008, CSTC-A completed a field-level plan to develop the ANSF that includes force goals, objectives, and performance measures. While this is an improvement over prior field-level planning, it is not a substitute for a coordinated, detailed Defense and State plan with near- and long-term resource requirements. In 2008, Congress mandated that the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, provide a long-term strategy and budget for strengthening the ANSF, and a long-term detailed plan for sustaining the ANSF. These have not been provided. Without a detailed plan, it is difficult to assess progress and conduct oversight of the cost of developing the ANSF. This is particularly important given the limited capacity of the Afghan government to fund the estimated \$2 billion per year ANSF sustainment costs for years into the future.

The United States has invested over \$10 billion to develop the ANA since 2002. However, only 2 of 105 army units are assessed as being fully capable of conducting their primary mission and efforts to develop the army continue to face challenges. First, while the army has grown to approximately 58,000 of an authorized force structure of 80,000, it has experienced difficulties finding qualified candidates for leadership positions and retaining personnel. Second, while trainers or mentors are present in every ANA combat unit, shortfalls exist in the number deployed to the field. Finally, ANA combat units report significant shortages in about 40 percent of equipment items Defense defines as critical, including vehicles, weapons, and radios. Some of these challenges are due in part to competing U.S. global priorities. Without resolving these challenges, the ability of the ANA to reach full capability may be delayed.

Although the ANP has reportedly grown in number since 2005, after an investment of over \$6 billion, no police unit is fully capable and several challenges impede U.S. efforts to develop the police. First, less than one-quarter of the police have mentors present to provide training in the field and verify that police are on duty. Second, police units continue to face shortages in equipment items that Defense considers critical, such as vehicles, radios, and body armor. In addition, Afghanistan's weak judicial system hinders effective policing and rule of law, and the ANP consistently experiences problems with pay, corruption, and attacks from insurgents. Defense began a new effort in November 2007 to address these challenges, but the continuing shortfall in police mentors may put this effort at risk.