



SENTINELS OF AFGHAN DEMOCRACY: THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

Samuel Chan

*We can help train an army, we can help equip an army, we can help build facilities for the army, but only the Afghan people can breathe a soul into that army.*¹

—Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, U.S. Army

SINCE THE LAUNCH of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in 2001 and the subsequent fall of the Taliban, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has made great strides towards democracy: a written constitution, a popularly elected president, a representative parliament, a supreme court, and numerous nation-building institutions. However, many parts of the country remain restive, especially the southern and eastern provinces bordering Pakistan. Even as the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) tackles a determined and resurgent Taliban, the long-term stability of Afghanistan rests on the shoulders of its security apparatus—an integral component of which is the Afghan National Army (ANA)—in light of constant Taliban reminders that “the Americans may have all the wristwatches, but we have all the time.”²

The numerous articles and reports written on the Afghan army tend to focus on specific aspects of the organization and paint partial, skewed, sometimes negative or sometimes overly optimistic pictures of it. Even though former NATO Supreme Commander, General James L. Jones, testified that “the Afghan National Army is the most successful pillar of our reconstruction efforts to date,” it is clear that a tremendous amount of work remains to be done.³ This article offers a holistic picture of the army’s progress since its formation in November 2002. It looks at the history of national armies of the Afghan state and the Afghan army’s parameters (beginning and desired end state), provides a snapshot of the current Afghan “military balance,” and offers insight into the Afghan army’s training and operational performance.

The Past

The Afghan National Army is not Afghanistan’s first national army; one existed at the birth of the Afghan nation state in 1919. Unfortunately, its history has closely mirrored the volatile fortunes of the state. From independence to 1933, emirs and kings feared that an efficient army would attract “ambitious contenders for power to subvert sections of Afghanistan for their own political purposes” and deliberately neglected the national army. Consequently, it devolved into “little more than a collection of small infantry units

Samuel Chan was formerly the Jebesen Fellow at the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS) in Kabul, Afghanistan (2006), and an Associate Research Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore (2007–2008). He is currently a fellow at St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford.

PHOTO: Afghan National Army soldiers stand proud to the audience attending the commemoration of the 1st birthday of the 205th Afghan National Army Corps at Camp Shir Zai, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, 21 September 2005. (U.S. Army, PFC Leslie Angulo)

and, owing to the costs of horses and the upkeep, a declining number of cavalry units.⁴ The artillery pieces and ammunition were stored in Kabul as a precaution against misbehavior in tribal areas.

The neglect of the national army was to change after World War II. Afghanistan had acted as a buffer state between British East India and the Soviet Union, but British withdrawal from South Asia disturbed the geopolitical equilibrium. Afghan rulers modernized the armed forces in order to possess a credible deterrent force against the Soviet Union, to suppress tribal revolts, and to strengthen the central government's authority.⁵ The first hint of a modern national army came in 1937, when Afghanistan invited Turkey to reorganize Afghanistan's 60,000-strong conscript army. The Turks formed a command structure of divisions and brigades, augmenting each echelon headquarters with supporting staff. The officer corps was regularized to ensure professional leadership, and a military academy established to institutionalize the training and education of officers. A small air force also began to take shape.⁶

Turkey was soon followed by Germany and the United States, with the latter training Afghan army officers from 1956 to 1978.⁷ The Soviets first equipped the Afghans in 1956, and trained them in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia after 1961.⁸ By the early 1970s, ten times as many Afghan officers had been trained in the Soviet Union as in the United States.⁹ Until the eve of the Soviet occupation in 1979, the Soviets provided more than \$1 billion in military aid in tandem with \$1.25 billion in economic aid.¹⁰ The national army grew to 100,000 men, supported by a 10,000-man air force.¹¹

On paper, the national army in 1979 was a comparatively well-equipped army of conscripts, led by a professional officer corps and organized to modern standards. In many ways, the army was the most important modernizing institution of the country; however, the financial costs for this were high. The military budget took a lion's share of the annual budget, and this necessitated further reliance on Soviet support.¹² The performance of elite Afghan units impressed analysts, but the rest of the army was made up of illiterate and politically backward conscripts who were largely unwilling to serve, poorly trained, and suffering from low morale.¹³ An ethnic imbalance was evident. The professional officers

were "largely from prosperous Pashtun farming families, and also educated Tajiks," while the enlisted personnel were conscripts from poor (landless or peasant) classes of all ethnic groups, but frequently Hazaras and Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Turkmen.¹⁴

The 1979-1992 war saw Afghanistan's army gradually disintegrate, as deserting conscripts depleted its ranks, and it relied increasingly on Soviet forces. Afghan conscripts were hesitant to suppress kinsmen at the behest of a foreign occupier, and the merciless treatment of "traitors" at the hands of mujahideen (Afghan resistance) forces exacerbated this mindset.¹⁵ With the collapse of the Soviet-backed regime in 1992, the state disintegrated, a fate that soon consumed the once modern national army.

Parameters of the ANA

A decade later, in an attempt to rebuild a war-ravaged Afghanistan, the United States led the international effort to "establish a nationally respected, professional, ethnically balanced, Afghan National Army that is democratically accountable, organized, trained, and equipped to meet the security needs of the country."¹⁶ Although constant conflict, harsh terrain, and hardship have cultivated the Afghans' abilities to soldier, building the Afghan army was not an easy task for the U.S. and coalition partners. A large pool of combat veterans existed, but almost all were guerrilla fighters and most had never served in an organized, professional army loyal to the state. They had only fought for strongmen, religious parties, and ethnic or tribal groups. The Afghan civil war of the 1990s also meant that institutions that once provided regimentation, professional training, and education to the military were now defunct. Low literacy rates, the limited influence of the central government, ethnic rivalries, and provincial strongmen also made the task of building the army quite arduous.¹⁷

A former Afghan minister of interior with an intimate understanding of Afghanistan believes that "the major challenge is to create a military loyal to the state, a nationally oriented, ethnically balanced, morally disciplined, professionally skilled, and operationally coherent Afghan army."¹⁸ Recognizing this, Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan (CSTC-A), the headquarters "responsible for manning, equipping and training the Afghan

National Army,” defined the army’s end state as “a respected, multi-ethnic, affordable, sustainable, loyal, and competent ministry of defense, general staff, and sustaining institutions capable of directing, commanding, controlling, training and supporting operational forces that have the capability to conduct internal counterinsurgency operations with limited international assistance.”¹⁹

Afghanistan’s Military Balance

As of July 2008, the Afghan army had “63,000 troops in the field and another 9,000 in training,” halfway towards the recently revised goal of a 134,000-strong force, which would allow the Afghan government to assume the lead for security operations in the country.²⁰ The ethnically balanced force of 15 brigades is geographically distributed with the 201st Afghan National Army Corps headquartered in Kabul, the 203d in Gardez, the 205th in Kandahar, the 207th in Herat, and the 209th in Mazar-e-Sharif, with the balance assigned to the ANA Air Corps (ANAAC), the Afghan Ministry of Defense, and associated institutions.²¹ Even with these advances, the Afghan military apparatus and its sub-units are still very much a “work in progress.”

With a vision of 7,500 airmen and 125 fixed-wing and rotary aircraft stationed across Afghanistan, the air corps—in partnership with CSTC-A’s Combined Air Power Transition Force—has made valuable progress toward operational readiness. With a fleet of 27 aircraft (Mi-17s, Mi-35s, AN-32s, and AN-26s) and a core of 301 veteran pilots (who, on average, are 44 years old and have individually logged 2,500 flight hours) the air corps met significant milestones in 2007, including flying the inaugural presidential flight that May and conducting heliborne missions in support of joint ANA-ISAF patrols in June.²²

Now, the air corps flies about 800 sorties a month; is responsible for transporting 90 percent of the

army’s passenger load (compared to 10 percent in 2007); and has over 50 medical evacuation (medevac) missions under its belt. It is headquartered in Joint Aviation Facility One, a modern 57-aircraft capacity homebase.²³ Even so, the air corps is likely to rely on coalition air assets in the near future until more pilots are qualified, additional aircraft are acquired, logistic support bases are stocked and established, and training and doctrine institutionalized. While the corps is expected to reach operational readiness for mobility missions (medevac, general logistical support, and battlefield movement capabilities) with a 61-strong fleet in 2011, counterinsurgency capabilities like intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and ground attack are not expected until sometime beyond 2016.²⁴

As the Afghan army is primarily an infantry-centric force, the majority of its brigades consist of three light infantry kandaks (battalions), one combat support kandak, and one combat service support kandak. In certain designated quick reaction forces, the three infantry kandaks are replaced with commando (Ranger/light infantry), mechanized infantry, and armored kandaks. When anti-government elements wage a resurgent guerrilla campaign, the army requires specialized units trained in irregular warfare. The army’s chief of operations, a graduate of the U.S. Army Ranger and Special Forces schools, explained that “this is not a question of using a big force against this enemy . . . in fact, it is very important to use a smaller force, well-trained, professional for the special operations to deal with this enemy.”²⁵ To further enhance its strike capability, special combat veterans have been selected to form six 650-man commando kandaks which will be the best equipped and most highly trained in the army.²⁶ Mentored by U.S. Special Forces, four Commando kandaks have been attached to ANA Corps. There is a fifth Commando kandak in training, and the establishment of a commando brigade headquarters is in the works.²⁷

The army has taken on more responsibilities in major operations, including planning joint operations with coalition forces, but it still depends on coalition forces for combat and combat service support. In 2006, retired General Barry McCaffrey highlighted the plight of the army: “The Afghan Army is miserably under resourced. This is now a major morale factor for their soldiers . . . Army field

As of July 2008, the Afghan army had “63,000 troops in the field and another 9,000 in training”, halfway towards the recently revised goal of a 134,000-strong force...

The army has taken on more responsibilities..., but it still depends on coalition forces for combat and combat service support.

commanders told me that they try to seize weapons from the Taliban who they believe are much better armed. Many soldiers and police have little ammunition and few magazines, no body armor or blast glasses, no Kevlar helmets, no up-armored Humvees, or light armor tracked vehicles.”²⁸ McCaffrey estimated that for the army to truly become a “well equipped, disciplined, multi-ethnic, literate and trained . . . first-line counterinsurgency force,” and for America to be fully out of Afghanistan by the year 2020, it would cost about \$1.2 billion annually for 10 years.²⁹

Thus far, American assistance to Afghanistan from FY2001 to FY2008 totaled \$26.2 billion: \$17.2 billion (66 percent) for Afghan security forces; \$7.7 billion (29 percent) for economic and social development; and \$1.3 billion (5 percent) for governance, rule of law, and human rights.³⁰ In contrast, the budget for U.S. military operations for the corresponding period amounted to \$146.4 billion.³¹ Although Afghanistan has made modest economic progress, it will depend on foreign partners for financial support, especially when the Afghan security sector’s current model costs 17 percent of Afghanistan’s GDP (2004/2005), a figure unsustainable by even the richest countries, much less a developing one.³²

Despite \$822 million worth of donations from 46 coalition partners and another \$194 million pending approval, the Afghan army nonetheless “suffers from insufficient fire power, the lack of indigenous combat air support and the absence of a self-sustaining operational budget.”³³ Insufficient firepower and inadequate protection have resulted in increasing casualty rates among Afghan troops as the army takes on more responsibility. Some estimates claim that 40 to 60 Afghan soldiers perish for every coalition soldier killed in action.³⁴ The army’s reliance on foreign military support for the foreseeable future is apparent on the ground. The

commander of 205th Corps says, “I confess we can’t do it ourselves. We are a poor country.”³⁵

Recent escalations of violence in Iraq may have taken the spotlight away from Afghanistan, but a resurgent Taliban and internal friction among NATO members has once again drawn attention back to the impoverished state. At a congressional testimony in February 2007, Lieutenant General Karl Eikenberry, former commander of American forces in Afghanistan, testified that while NATO had made progress in Afghanistan, a lot of work remained and much needed improvements must be made. “NATO countries must do more to fulfill their commitments to provide sufficient forces and capabilities to the mission and increase their level of support to the training and equipping of the Afghan national security forces,” remarked Eikenberry.³⁶ Mary Beth Long, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for International Affairs, told the House Armed Services Committee, “Our focus in the out years will then shift to sustainment which we estimate at approximately \$2 billion annually.”³⁷

Although annual Afghan army recruitment numbers have doubled from monthly averages of 1,000 in 2004 to over 2,000 in 2008, the focus has been to ensure the quality and establish the quantity of an effective army.³⁸ Even so, Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak stressed that much work remained, as the enemy was emboldened with the belief “that if foreign troops suffered many more losses, the international community would leave Afghanistan.”³⁹ Wardak believes that for Afghanistan to defend itself against external and internal threats, “the minimum number we can survive on within this complex, strategic environment [is] 150,000 to 200,000 [troops], well-trained and equipped, with mobility and firepower and logistical and training institutions,” a sentiment that has been echoed by the army chief of staff, the deputy chief of staff, and the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament.⁴⁰

With the increase in recruitment numbers and a revised goal of a 134,000-strong (from the initial goal of 70,000) army, training “had to split off from [the] Kabul Military Training Center, where most of the basic training is going on, and two more basic training areas [added].”⁴¹ To assist with an Afghan government directive to recruit 2,000 Afghan soldiers per month, the number of U.S.



U.S. Navy, LCDR Steven Parks

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, center, walks with Afghan National Army Minister of Defense Abdul Raheem Wardak, left, and COL Thomas J. McGrath, after his arrival to a forward operating base in Western Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, 21 December 2007.

service personnel mentoring the Afghan army was to increase from 2,900 to 3,600 by April 2007.⁴² Military commitments worldwide and the additional task of building the Afghan National Police delayed the deployment of all the required U.S. trainers, so by March of 2008 only 1,062 out of 2,391 (44 percent) billets were filled.⁴³ As a result, ISAF partners, especially NATO members, were asked to take on more responsibility to help the Afghan army meet its recruitment goal. Strategically, NATO's Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer envisaged that Afghan security forces would gradually take control in the spring of 2008.⁴⁴ In August 2008, the Afghans did take responsibility for Kabul's security, but it was largely a symbolic move that did not alter the levels or operational requirements of ISAF troops in the capital.⁴⁵

Training the Afghan National Army

The training and mentoring of the Afghan army falls under the responsibility of CSTC-A, but it is not solely an American effort. Thirteen additional coalition partners—including Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Mongolia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom (UK)—operate under the

auspices of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix, where they “mentor the ANA in leadership, staff, and support functions, planning, assessing, supporting, and execution of operations and training doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures.”⁴⁶ Most formal training is in Kabul at the military training center, the *Bridmal* (battle buddy) NCO Academy, the National Military Academy of Afghanistan, and the Afghan Command and General Staff College, but learning does not stop there, as soldiers and units are continually monitored and mentored by American embedded training teams and 21 coalition operational mentoring liaison teams embedded in Afghan army kandaks, brigades, garrisons, and corps HQs.⁴⁷

A soldier begins his career at Kabul training center where he is assigned to a kandak for seven weeks of basic warrior training under the watchful eye of Afghan army instructors and U.S. mentors. Beyond instilling military skills and teamwork, basic training attempts to forge common bonds and break down barriers between the different ethnic groups. After initial entry training, recruits with leadership potential leave the kandak to attend a UK-led noncommissioned officers (NCO) course before joining the next kandak as section leaders, while the remaining recruits will either receive



Afghan National Army trainees at the Kabul Military Training Center, 24 February 2007.

advanced infantry training, undergo another military specialty course, or be posted to their newly assigned units.⁴⁸ At the conclusion of this initial phase of training, the recruits become Afghan soldiers and are joined by their NCOs and officers.

Because Afghan soldiers, NCOs, and officers are trained separately and by different nations, there is a need to consolidate their training so that they can perform as a cohesive *kandak*. Thus, Afghan army units undergo a validation process in the form of a two-week-long field exercise conducted by the Canadian Afghan National Training Center Detachment. This training exercise proves the tactical effectiveness of Afghan units as they conduct such scenarios as raids, ambushes, hasty attacks, hasty defenses, and even operations other than war.⁴⁹ In addition, newly minted *kandaks* will undergo a 60-day period of individual and collective training within their higher headquarters' (corps/brigade) area of operations before being rotated to combat operations.⁵⁰

The increased need for officers opened the door for 8,000 leaders—either former national army officers whose positions had once been declared redundant, or former mujahideen officers who had been disarmed after the departure of the Soviets—to join the army through competitive examinations held across the country.⁵¹ Interestingly, most Afghan officers now receive their training from the U.S. and Turkey, the same countries that first helped to modernize the national army in the 20th century.⁵²

“Throughout history, there has been a friendship between Afghanistan and Turkey,” said a former Turkish task force commander in Afghanistan. “Turkey has been providing training to the Afghan Army since the 1920s.”⁵³

The West Point-modeled, four-year-long military academy program provides both a university degree and a commission to highly qualified cadets, while the French Officer Academy provides an eight-week continuing education package for already commissioned officers with previous unit experience. Theoretically, the academy can commission up to 300 officers per year, but the Class of 2009, which started with 120 cadets, has only 91 remaining, and the Class of 2010, which started with 270, has shrunk to 239.⁵⁴ As for the French Officer Academy, some critics point out that it provides only “continuation training,” that it “did not produce consistent results,” and “was training the officers to control all the aspects of the company.”⁵⁵ As the burgeoning Afghan army requires a rapid expansion of its junior officer corps, a six-month-long officer cadet course for university graduates, based on the British Military Academy at Sandhurst, was also introduced.⁵⁶ This 23-week-long officer cadet course at Officer Cadet School (OCS) helps to quickly fill the army with much-needed junior officers.

India, neither an ISAF nor a NATO member, deployed a military team to Afghanistan in mid-2007 to conduct infantry training on weapons handling, map reading, and battalion-level staff work.⁵⁷

Formal education for senior commanders on a wide range of topics is catered through a Senior Command and Staff Course at the Afghan War College, which opened its doors on 28 October 2006.⁵⁸

At first, Afghan army officials were alarmed by the high disqualification rate among recruits during the initial screening process, attributing it to miscommunication over pay and training, bogus promises, and recruits being “forced to join under quotas imposed by local militia commanders.”⁵⁹ During the inaugural recruitment drive for the army’s first kandak, “more than 500 showed up, but nearly half of them dropped out due to misunderstandings, among which were the pay rate and the belief that trainees would be taken to the U.S. and taught to speak English and to read and write. Some of the recruits were under 18 years of age and most were illiterate. Recruits who only spoke Pashto had difficulties because instructions were given through interpreters who spoke Dari.”⁶⁰ Even OCS was not spared. “We began on day one at 0730 with 189 students, and by 1000 hours we were down to 111, give or take a few. The army decided that some of these university graduates were not up to the required education standard,” said British Army Captain Danny O’Connor, a former OCS instructor.⁶¹ Another trainer added that “connecting with the Afghans is not always easy, although they are cooperative.”⁶²

Ground realities indicate “Afghan commanders and soldiers complain of poor pay, faulty weapons, ammunition shortages and lack of protective gear. U.S. trainers, while praising Afghan soldiers for their bravery, complain of slovenly appearance, lack of discipline, petty theft, mistreated equipment and infiltration of the army by Taliban spies or soldiers who sell information.”⁶³ Despite the Afghan army’s stringent screening process, anti-government infiltrators were caught “trying to get information that was inappropriate for their job descriptions.”⁶⁴ To prevent undesirable elements infiltrating the army, more stringent security checks were implemented. Today, all prospective recruits require a tribal elder or mullah (religious teacher) to personally vouch for them.⁶⁵ Recruitment standards have also been tightened. “Previously, there was a need to produce large numbers of soldiers but now we focus on quality instead of quantity,” explained a Kabul Military Training Center commander.⁶⁶

Besides the initial screening problems faced by trainers, various other learning challenges included the requirement for training and familiarization on the plethora of Soviet-bloc weapons in the Afghan army inventory, such as the T-62 Main Battle Tank.⁶⁷ At other times, instructors were faced with decrepit training aids and incompatible and incomplete equipment. For example, aiming sights for the Russian SPG-9 recoilless gun were missing, and plotting boards and aiming circles for artillery targeting were lacking. Moreover, mortar tubes, though available, were from three different countries.⁶⁸ Such issues were not confined to early army units. By late 2005, newly minted units still lacked both the quality and quantity of equipment required, and in early 2008 only 82 of the 132 122mm D-30 howitzers utilized by artillery batteries were functional.⁶⁹ Even higher echelons had inferior equipment. An Afghan brigade commander said he spent \$250 of his \$400 monthly salary on phone cards because his personal cell phone was his only reliable means of communicating with his commanders.⁷⁰

The other issue that transcends all facets of the Afghan army is the officer-NCO divide. U.S. Army Captain Charles Di Leonardo, who mentored an Afghan army weapons company, remembers, “The NCOs in the company had no power, and the 1st sergeant was there for making chai [tea] and bringing it for the officers. There were also trust problems between the officers and the NCOs.”⁷¹ This divide was apparent during a field training session. In the mortar platoon, “the platoon leader was controlling all the soldiers and . . . the NCOs would just stand there looking around like overpaid privates.” In the anti-armor platoon, “except for the platoon sergeant, there was little NCO involvement.” And in the scout platoon, “soldiers took off their helmets, boots, and blouses and went to sleep” when the platoon leader was not in their immediate vicinity. However, when it came to physical training (PT),

...the platoon leader was controlling all the soldiers and... the NCOs would just stand there looking around like overpaid privates.

“not one officer showed up for PT.” However, this absence of officers at PT actually proved beneficial. The NCOs used this as an opportunity to move into leadership roles and slowly gain confidence in all facets of training.⁷²

The officer-NCO divide is due to “cultural and societal problems,” remarked Command Sergeant Major Daniel R. Wood. “Typically, NCOs didn’t get a lot of respect under the old regime. Lieutenants and captains made all the decisions at the unit level, and they had captains or majors doing what we would consider NCO work at higher levels.”⁷³ With such traditions seemingly immutable, “many officers remain reluctant to accept an expanded role for NCOs,” and the development of a professional NCO corps meets with initial scepticism.⁷⁴

A case in point is the appointment of Roshan Safi as the first Sergeant Major of the Afghan army, a move that was made “to please the Americans,” according to Command Sergeant Major Thomas Gills, formerly at CSTC-A. Since his appointment, Safi, who attended the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy and graduated as the best international student, has been “fixing issues that the corps commander hasn’t been able to fix.” Living up to his name (“roshan” means “light”), Sergeant Major Safi has been a beacon in the NCO development of the army and an invaluable adviser to General Bismullah Khan.⁷⁵

The individual soldier also faces problems with that most basic benefit taken for granted in First World militaries: his salary. An Afghan army company commander said that he was starting to see attrition among his forces. He said that because it was a volunteer army, the soldiers would occasionally leave, never to return, and that he was currently at about 70 percent strength. He also said that many of the soldiers were barely literate, and the reason many of the soldiers were leaving was that the pay was “extremely poor.”⁷⁶

Recently, the Taliban have exploited this weakness and stepped up their recruiting efforts by offering almost three times the daily pay for a soldier: up to \$300 a month versus the \$70 a month earned by a first-year private. An Afghan official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that the “basic pay of \$70 a month was a lot of money in 2003, but it is harder to recruit people to fight in a bitter insurgency now.”⁷⁷ Moving up the chain of command, the monthly salary in 2006 was \$180 for the top

enlisted man, \$160 for a second lieutenant, and \$850 for a general. By 2008, each was only \$30 a month higher.⁷⁸ In many instances, general officers have not been paid in months, but still continue to serve.⁷⁹

The Taliban often entice tribesmen and farmers with a variety of offers on a “seasonal” basis in different provinces, including “piece-rates of \$10 to \$20 a day for joining a given attack on Western forces,” \$15 to launch a single mortar round into nearby coalition military bases, and \$1,000 for the head of a government worker or a foreigner.⁸⁰ A 205th Corps officer believes the Taliban’s cash comes from Pakistan and the flourishing drug trade. In addition, Afghan officials believe that certain Arab countries are also funding the insurgency.⁸¹

The Taliban [offer]... “piece-rates of \$10 to \$20 a day for joining a given attack on Western forces,” \$15 to launch a single mortar round into nearby coalition military bases, and \$1,000 for the head of a government worker or a foreigner.

Beyond the lure of cash, Lieutenant Colonel David Hammond of the British Parachute Regiment highlighted the intangible benefits the insurgents offered: “If you were a lad in the hills and you were offered \$12 to stay local, or you could take \$4 and fight miles away from home, which would you do?”⁸² Fighting miles away from home has certain operational disadvantages. Afghanistan’s minister adviser for Tribal Affairs and former governor of Uruzgan, Jan Mohamed Khan, says that certain army units have not performed well because “they are from the north” and unfamiliar with both the terrain and people of “the south” (e.g. Uruzgan, Helmand, and Kandahar).⁸³ Coalition forces, though, would argue that in many instances non-local units are the only way to combat corruption because they have no connections in the province.⁸⁴

Lastly, the Taliban often field better and larger caliber weapons as compared to the Afghan army, including heavy machine guns, mortars, and sometimes even recoilless rifles.⁸⁵ In the meantime, army

units that have not received improved weapons continue to operate with “recycled” weapons taken from militias, with some rifles lacking even the basic aiming sights.⁸⁶

In addition to the above mentioned pay issues, there are a multitude of other reasons why army soldiers desert their posts and go absent without leave (AWOL). Often, “a reluctance to fight alongside foreigners against countrymen and a need to bring money to families in remote villages or help at harvest time,” is exacerbated by “poor conditions and fierce resistance from the Taliban [and] the absence of a banking system [that] prevents them from sending money to their families.”⁸⁷ Besides the “monthly AWOL tendencies,” two seasonal events cause the mass exodus of soldiers to their hometowns. The first is the holy month of Ramadan, especially the week following *Eid-il-Fitr* (the end of Ramadan), when families gather for celebration and feasts marking the end to the fasting period. The other is winter, when the cold, inadequate supplies, and poor living conditions make living in the field intolerable.⁸⁸ In late 2006, each 611-billet kandak had only about 428 men assigned (70 percent), and out of that reduced personnel pool, only about 300 actually showed up for formations (another 70 percent). CSTC-A, in partnership with the Afghan army, aims to improve the manning assignment rate to 85 percent with 80 percent of them turning up for duty.⁸⁹

To solve these problems, the Afghan army uses the carrot-and-stick approach of both inducements and discipline. One important “carrot” is a pay raise. A spokesman for the Afghan Ministry of Defense said that “the government had enhanced the salaries of ANA soldiers from 80 to 100 dollars per month [and] soldiers who wanted to renew their contract [three-year reenlistment for soldiers and a five-year re-enlistment for NCOs] would get another raise of \$35 in their monthly salaries.”⁹⁰ To help get reliable equipment and greater protection to field units, ISAF-partner nations have delivered substantial amounts of materiel in the forms of small arms, up-armored HMMWVs to replace the unprotected Ford Ranger pick-up trucks, howitzers, Mi-17 and Mi-35 helicopters, Leopard tanks, and armored personnel carriers.⁹¹ As for the “stick,” the Afghan army’s chief of operations acknowledged the “problems, particularly the problem of attrition



U.S. Marine Corps, LCPL Shawn M. Stutz

British Army Cpl. Matt Madine, assigned to the Royal Military Police, uses rocks to demonstrate foot patrol formations in Musa Quela, Afghanistan, 12 June 2008.

and desertion,” and proposed a regimental solution to ensure that those who go AWOL are apprehended and face military justice.⁹²

With the steady delivery of aid and improvements in soldiers’ welfare, the overall absentee rate was reduced in 2007 from the peak of 38 percent to 12 percent, and by early 2008 it stood at 10 percent.⁹³ Concurrently, with careful attention to soldiers’ needs, army retention rates rose from 35 percent in mid-2006 to the current year-to-date averages of 50 percent for soldiers and 56 percent for NCOs.⁹⁴ This success can be credited to the army’s recognition of the need to adapt Western standards of discipline and concern for soldiers. In March of 2007, the army’s chief of staff proposed the creation of a flexible schedule that would incorporate active duty, training, and liberal leave to give soldiers time to visit families, stay closer to home, and maintain unit cohesion by remaining with their designated units. “In the ANA, we have a commitment to each other,” announced General Khan. “If the soldiers can learn to follow orders and do what we ask, then we must do what we can to care for our subordinates, which means finding a better way for our men to serve their country . . . It is our job to make their choice as a soldier easier.”⁹⁵

The Afghan army’s legal system has also been established to enforce the basic rights of soldiers. It aims to eradicate ill treatment of soldiers by officers who mete out punishment contrary to army policies. In late 2006, the former chief of staff of the 201st Corps’ 2d Brigade tested the resolve of the army’s judge advocate and ended up on the receiving end

of a six-month jail sentence with three years' probation for striking a soldier.⁹⁶

These developments may be harbingers of good things to come. The army "has really been struggling onto its feet, and it's probably not even now fully on them. But there is potential. The basic material is as good as I've seen anywhere in the world," said Colonel Paul Farrar, a British officer with 32 years of service and no stranger to training foreign armies.⁹⁷ Another officer said, "The Afghan National Army itself is growing not only in size, but it seems that they're growing smarter in the way they do things."⁹⁸

Even though progress is underway, the development of a fully professional army requires much more patience. Staff Sergeant George Beck Jr., a U.S. military adviser, provided an apt analogy: "It's all about crawl, walk, run. Right now, the Afghan army is at a crawl. In a few more years, it will walk, and in 10, it will run. Then we can all go home."⁹⁹ Is the Afghan army a capable force or merely a paper army? Indicators show that the army is growing steadily and material aid is flowing in, mainly from the U.S. However, gauging the army's quality requires examining reports from the field to obtain a current operating picture.

Current Operating Picture

Today, more than two dozen Afghan army battalions and air corps squadrons are capable of "operating on their own with minimal support from U.S. or coalition forces," while two units were validated as being operationally independent in March 2008. Two years ago, no unit was even close to that.¹⁰⁰ Even so, despite the efforts of trainers from first-class armies, some quarters still report that the army "remains an ill-disciplined force weakened by drug abuse and desertion" and that there is a need to foster "national ethics rather than tribal belief."¹⁰¹ According to these reports, "young and poorly-equipped Afghan troops have either broken under fire during battles with superior Taliban fighters or were 'trigger happy' soldiers who shot at the slightest excuse."¹⁰²

The British Army, the leading and largest military contingent in the restive southern province of Helmand, has taken on the dual role of training and mentoring Afghan army units in its areas of operation.¹⁰³ To date, feedback on the Afghan army

from members of the British operational mentor and liaison team has been mixed. In regard to Afghan soldiers, some team members have reported instances of cowardice under fire, a dislike for patrols, a tendency to extort locals, and a penchant for smoking illicit substances. A local tribal elder even claimed that on any given day, as many as half of the soldiers in Helmand are high on hashish.¹⁰⁴ It is hardly surprising to hear one British NCO exclaim, "One guy threatened to shoot me. We had no powers to discipline them."¹⁰⁵ Two American service members were not fortunate enough to avoid being shot. They were fatally wounded by an Afghan army soldier outside a top-security prison at Pul-e-Charkhi (east of Kabul) in May 2006.¹⁰⁶ Another coalition soldier said that "at the moment, the Afghan army is not trained to the degree where they can maneuver. When our troops are attacked, they aren't in a position to come and help us."¹⁰⁷

Afghanistan's internal intelligence services have also arrested several Afghan officers, including a former chief of weapon depots in Khirabad (south of Kabul) for trafficking "150 boxes of Kalashnikov rounds and other arms" from Kabul to the Taliban in the neighboring province of Logar.¹⁰⁸ Such instances have contributed to accusations that "increasing corruption in the government and the national army are spreading the power base of the Taliban."¹⁰⁹

Other quarters have praised the army for its willingness to learn and its gallant performances in the field. Captain Matthew Williams found the army's progress impressive. "The highlight of my tour has been finding out that the ANA we had helped train had captured a key Taliban leader; this really shows the progress that has been made," said the British Royal Marine. "We trained them and then they completed the operation on their own; it is really gratifying to see."¹¹⁰ Still, problems abound for future trainers, including cultural differences; misunderstandings brought on by different work

"We trained them and then they completed the operation on their own; it is really gratifying to see."

ethics applied to such things as equipment maintenance; language barriers; and the average Afghan soldier's ability to absorb and act on information and make decisions.¹¹¹

The Afghan army may be young and plagued with many problems, but it is currently the only effective tool of the central government. Prior to the presidential elections in September 2004, the army deployed two kandaks to the western province of Herat in a show of force to keep in check rival factions that threatened the pre-election stability. Two years later, army units again deployed to Herat when violent clashes erupted between militia groups commanded by Arbab Baseer and Amanullah Khan in the Shindand district. Order came after the army's arrival, but not before 32 persons were killed and numerous others were wounded.¹¹² An Afghan lieutenant concluded, "The Afghan National Army is the spine of this country and of our president. The central government can defend itself now."

However, another officer provided a more somber assessment, saying, "A few months of training are not going to make an illiterate young Afghan boy a soldier. It takes time to build an army. The U.S. mili-

tary is the backbone of the ANA. Without them, the ANA couldn't stand alone."¹¹³ The former statement highlights the optimism among the Afghan army, but the latter speaks an uncomfortable truth.

To achieve operational readiness to assume control of Afghanistan's security, the army requires substantial and constant material aid as well as mentoring to eradicate seemingly immutable traditions like the NCO-officer divide. Thus far, ISAF partnerships and mentoring have imbued the army with valuable skills, experience, and insights into how professional militaries conduct operations. In the Afghan capital, joint operations enabled mixed ISAF and Afghan army units to man checkpoints and conduct personnel and vehicle searches.¹¹⁴ In Uruzgan province, the Dutch mentoring and liaison team conducted train-the-trainer programs in partnership with selected Afghan army instructors. "The ANA instructors are more than qualified to deliver and run this course," said Dutch Major Marloes Visser. "This is another strong indication of the growing strength of the ANA."¹¹⁵ In Kabul, it is not the coalition, but Afghans who train their countrymen and almost all of the classes are Afghan-led.¹¹⁶



U.S. Army, SPC Casey Ware

U.S. and Afghan National Army Soldiers conduct a transition of authority ceremony at the district center in Bak, Afghanistan, 16 August 2008.

Meanwhile, in the southeastern province of Zabul, close cooperation between Romanian and Afghan forces have resulted in hundreds of joint security patrols and the establishment of a combined quick-reaction force able to provide immediate assistance throughout the province. “Even though there are differences in tactics, languages, equipment, and culture, our overall mission—providing a secure environment for the people of Zabul—is the same. It is this overall goal that binds us together,” says Romanian Captain Mihai Marius.¹¹⁷

Where mentoring has been lacking, the growth of the army has slowed, halted, and in some cases, backtracked. U.S. Army Engineers have trained Afghan sappers “with an emphasis on mine warfare, basic demolitions, and combat construction [focused on wire obstacles and survivability positions].”¹¹⁸ Problems began to surface when the sappers were deployed to their respective areas of operation and, due to a lack of collective training and a shortage of project management skills, their ability to contribute to the overall mission was severely restricted. The sapper companies ended up being utilized as infantry instead of engineers, a move no doubt taken because of the shortage of manpower due to staffing and AWOL issues.¹¹⁹

Continued mentoring is vital to the Afghan army’s maturity. The hands-on approach has allowed Afghans to gain confidence in their own army and show the locals the great strides it has taken. “If a squad of our guys goes out, a platoon of their guys goes out; if a platoon of our guys goes out, a company of their guys goes out,” said a Connecticut National Guardsman. “We will not go into a compound by ourselves. We do not kick down doors anymore; those days are over. They kick the door down or knock on the door. We’re providing the additional security—the big guns so nobody messes with them.”¹²⁰ Another mentor concurred that “It’s better that the ANA do it their way than us telling them how to do it.”¹²¹

Warfighting is just one of a number of skills expected of militaries, so the army has trained for operations other than war. Early in 2006, the 203d Corps conducted the army’s first Medical Civilian Assistance Program in the eastern province of Khost to test the support system and to build trust in the army and its abilities.¹²² During torrential rains which led to numerous floods across Afghanistan

in 2007, the army was instrumental in the success of humanitarian and disaster relief operations. Such operations are now second nature to it.

In July 2007, the army reached a milestone when Major General Abdul Khaliq, Commander of 203d Corps, became the commanding general during Operation Maiwand in the Taliban stronghold of the Andar district of Ghazni province. His mission involved over 1,000 Afghan and 400 U.S. military personnel and was the first large-scale operation the Afghans planned and executed. Afghan staff planners gained confidence and valuable experience in command and control, which today allows them to lead two-thirds of the operations in which they are involved and continue the Afghanization of military operations which “is vital if the problems of civilian casualties is to be addressed effectively.”¹²³ American commanders praised the continued improvement of the Afghan army, but wisely cautioned against over-expectations as the army still relies heavily on coalition air, medical, and logistical support.¹²⁴

Still, the confidence imbued into battle-hardened units enabled the army to build on past experiences and play key roles in myriad operations against Taliban strongholds in southern Afghanistan. In August 2007, the army planned and executed its first combined arms live-fire exercise, which tested the capability of its infantry and armor in a variety of challenging combat scenarios while supported by its own artillery, medical, and air assets.¹²⁵ More recently, it took responsibility for printing material required for administration, training, recruitment, and logistical support.¹²⁶

Unfortunately, an unprofessional and corrupt Afghan National Police has increased the army’s burden in upholding security. During the Kabul riots in May 2006, Afghan police officers reportedly abandoned their posts, with some even taking off their uniforms and joining the rampaging looters.¹²⁷ While rioters took over the streets, Interior Ministry officials in charge of the police “took their phones off the hook, and [President] Karzai failed to make a public statement on TV until the riots, lasting some eight hours, had run their course.”¹²⁸ Ultimately, the Afghan army’s presence calmed the situation. Kabul residents said the formation of the army was the only “decent thing” President Karzai has done thus far during his presidency. “Now the

soldiers are here. The police can't steal and hassle people and we feel safe!" exclaimed a shopkeeper in Kabul.¹²⁹

"The people fear the police more than they do the Taliban, and until we can get that fixed, it's going to be a long road" said a U.S. captain.¹³⁰ In the "single largest, most comprehensive public opinion poll ever conducted in Afghanistan" (by the Asia Foundation between June and August 2006), 87 percent of the 6,226 respondents indicated that they trusted the army, leading the Afghan police (surprisingly at 86 percent), electronic media (84 percent), print media (77 percent), nongovernmental organizations (57 percent), political parties (44 percent), justice system (38 percent), and local militias (31 percent).¹³¹ Concurrently, the public perceives the Afghan army as the least corrupt institution in the country.¹³²

Friction between the police and the army has sometimes resulted in armed confrontations between them. An accident involving their vehicles in the northern province of Parwan sparked a heated argument and gun battle, during which soldiers shot a policeman dead.¹³³ A month later in the southern province of Ghazni, the soldiers and police almost came to blows when locals beat up a police officer accused of stealing from a shop keeper. The police took the side of the accused officer while the army sided with the locals. The tension escalated with the gathering of more members from both sides. Warning shots followed, and tensions rose when "the yelling increased, followed by the unmistakable sound of numerous rifles being locked and loaded."¹³⁴ A gun battle was narrowly averted thanks to the actions of U.S. Soldiers in the vicinity.

Colonel Matiollah Khan, a fearless fighter with a wealth of experience in securing the main highways in the restive provinces of Uruzgan, Helmand, and Kandahar, depicts the Afghan army and the police as close security partners and says there has never been any hint of friction during any operation in which he has taken part.¹³⁵ The level of animosity

between the two forces may be difficult to gauge, but the undeniable truth is that in places where a security void exists, anti-government elements create a parallel quasi-governmental infrastructure that threatens Afghan democracy and stability. When coupled with corruption in the government and the people's ever-increasing lack of trust, the future of Afghanistan is in a perilous situation.¹³⁶

Afghanistan seeks closer cooperation with its neighbors as well as equipment, mentorship, and aid from international partners. During a tour of an army training installation with U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates in mid-2007, General Khan remarked that Afghanistan was not getting enough cooperation from Pakistan in information sharing and joint training exercises. "We have a relationship, of course, under the coordination of the United States," Khan said, "But the cooperation that we need, unfortunately, we don't get."¹³⁷ These remarks came after a joint intelligence team from NATO, Afghanistan, and Pakistan began operating in Kabul in early 2007 to enhance information sharing. With cross-border infiltration a perennial hindrance to Afghan security, Minister Wardak recently proposed the creation of a "combined joint task force for coalition, Afghan and Pakistan to be able to operate on both sides of the border, regardless of which side."¹³⁸

Will the army be ready to take over responsibility for security and fulfill its role as the sentinel of Afghan democracy? The jury is still out. Reports of heroics in the battlefield and the genuine eagerness of its young recruits to make a difference in their country's future intertwine with accusations of drug abuse and dereliction of duty, portraying the army as a trigger-happy and ill-disciplined force. Can it stand on its own without coalition support if ISAF troops withdraw? Brigadier General Tim Grant, the former Commander of Canadian Forces in Afghanistan, provided a candid assessment: "Can we fix them in two years? I am not sure. We can certainly make them much better than they are in two years, and that's where our focus is right now."¹³⁹

Conclusion

The Afghan army has been a beacon of hope and a shining example of what Afghans can achieve through cooperation and ethnic cohesion. It has made phenomenal progress and tremendous

"The people fear the police more than they do the Taliban, and until we can get that fixed, it's going to be a long road"

improvements since its formation, but there are still many issues to address if it is to become the protector of Afghan democracy and territorial integrity. Not surprisingly, the solutions to these issues are in the hands of both the Afghans and the international community.

The Afghans often find themselves in all-too-familiar *Catch-22* situations. They want to increase the salary of their soldiers, but budgetary restrictions constrain them; they seek more operational responsibility, but find that their forces are undermanned and often outgunned. They are trying to balance the quantity and quality of the army in an environment of constrained resources.

Only the Afghans themselves can decrease absentee rates and improve the retention rates of their soldiers. Similarly, discipline and professionalism can only be instilled into an institution by the people who define the institution—the officers and the men of the army. Only Afghans can eradicate negative cultural norms such as the NCO-officer divide, inculcate loyalty to national ethics rather than tribal beliefs, and stem the seasonal exodus of personnel that reduce the army's operational capability. Only the Afghans can breathe a soul into their army.

The international community must realize two very important truths. First, the Afghan army will require financial support, professional mentoring, and military partnerships for many years to come. Three decades of fighting have made Afghanistan what it is today, and it may take an equal number of years of peace to turn the country around. No superficial milestone or declaration of force capability will be able to hide operational deficiencies should coalition forces leave the Afghans to “go it alone.” One only has to recall the Army of the

Republic of Vietnam and the fate of South Vietnam during the Second Indo-China War. Mentoring the army transcends merely showing Afghans what to do: it requires developing mutual respect; preparing soldiers to be mentors; and understanding local culture, religion, and social norms. Sustaining the partnership between coalition and Afghan army requires a large amount of patience. Soldiers from militaries with long and established histories often expect an army that is only six years old to possess values that take a generation to build. But it is only through mentoring and patient partnership that the newly minted second lieutenants and the fresh-face privates of today will be able to lead the Afghan army professionally as the flag officers and senior enlisted personnel of tomorrow. Forcing the army to assume too much responsibility while it is still unprepared for it is not an exit strategy. It is a recipe for disaster and an invitation to do it all again sometime in the future.

Second, creating, mentoring, and partnering an operationally ready Afghan army is not the sole responsibility of the United States. All coalition partners must play active roles, from contributing equipment and providing education to conducting joint training with army units in the provinces. Irrelevant or non-compatible aid simply creates more friction and hinders the army's progress. As Secretary Gates aptly explained, “Going forward, the success Afghanistan has achieved must not be allowed to slip away through neglect or lack of political will or resolve. [After all], Afghanistan is a mission in which there is virtually no dispute over its justness, necessity, or international legitimacy. Our failure to get the job done would be a mark of shame.”¹⁴⁰ **MR**

NOTES

1. Karl Eikenberry, former commanding general, Combined Forces Command—Afghanistan, speaking to the press on 16 January 2007 in Kabul, Afghanistan.

2. David Barno, “Challenges in Fighting a Global Insurgency,” *Parameters* (Summer 2006), 15-29.

3. “NATO Supreme Commander Praises Progress of Afghan Army,” *Washington Files*, 21 September 2006.

4. Edgar O’Ballance, *Afghan Wars: Battles in a Hostile Land: 1839 to the Present* (Basseys’s, London, 2002), 75.

5. J. Bruce Amstutz, *Afghanistan: The First Five Years of Soviet Occupation* (National Defense University Publications, Washington, DC, 1986), 21.

6. O’Ballance, *Afghan Wars*, 76.

7. Amstutz, 21-22.

8. Anthony Hyman, *Afghanistan under Soviet Domination, 1964-91* (MacMillan Academic and Professional Ltd, London, 1992), 29-30, 151, 155, 264.

9. Amstutz, 21-22; and Hyman, 29-30.

10. Hyman, 29; and Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History, from Alexander the Great to the Fall of the Taliban* (Da Capo Press, New York, 2002).

11. Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham: Duke Uni-

versity Press, 1985), 28.

12. Hyman, 30, 155.

13. *Ibid.*, 94, 230.

14. *Ibid.*, 147.

15. *Ibid.*, 147-8.

16. “Five-Year Strategic Benchmarks—National Defence,” website of the president of Afghanistan, accessed at <www.president.gov.af/english/security.mspx>.

17. Ali A. Jalali, “Rebuilding Afghanistan’s National Army,” *Parameters* (Autumn 2002), 72-86.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, “DoD News Briefing with Major General Durbin,” *Public Affairs*, (U.S. Department of Defense), 13 July 2006; and J5 Branch (CSTC-A), “CSTC-A Key ANA Data Points,” 3 November 2006.

20. Robert Cone, “Afghanistan National Security Forces Update,” *Foreign Press Center DVC Briefing* (U.S. Department of State), 22 July 2008; and Sean McCormack, “Afghanistan National Army Expansion,” *Press Statement* (U.S. Department of State), 10 September 2008. For a comparison to the national army under the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, see Amstutz, 180-89.

21. Jim Garamone, "Pace Pleased with Progress at Afghan Training Center," *American Forces Press Service (AFPS)*, 23 April 2007; and J5 Branch (CSTC-A), "CSTC-A Key ANA Data Points." Ethnic Balance defined as ± 5 percent of targeted goal to reflect ethnic composition of Afghan society.
22. Kevin Dougherty, "Despite obstacles, Air Force has support," *Stars and Stripes*, 7 May 2007; ISAF Public Information Office (PIO), "First joint training with Afghan helicopters," *Release no. 2007-540*, 15 July 2007; Beth Del Vecchio, "Snapshot of Progress: ANAAC Emergency Response Exercise," *The Enduring Ledger* (publication of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan) (September 2008), 13; and Donna Miles, "Afghan National Army Air Corps Increases Capability," AFPS, 15 September 2008. For a comparison to the Air Force under the Democratic Republic Afghanistan, see Amstutz, 157, 186; and Hyman, 151, 264.
23. Tim Touzeau, "Air Corps tours new home, \$182 million facility," *CSTC-A News*, 20 October 2007; Joey Schwartz and Sonny Alberdeston, "Building Air Power for Afghanistan," *The Phoenix Patriot* (publication of CJTF-Phoenix) (January 2008), 4-5; and Miles, "Afghan National Army Air Corps Increases Capability."
24. *Ibid.*
25. Al Pessin, "Afghan General Wants Special Forces to Fight Terrorists," *Voice of America*, 4 May 2006.
26. David Pugliese, "Canada may supply Afghan military with Leopard tanks," *CanWest News Service*, 21 May 2007.
27. *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, June 2008, 16, accessed at <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/Report_on_Progress_toward_Security_and_Stability_in_Afghanistan_1230.pdf>; and Cone.
28. Barry R. McCaffrey, "Academic Report—Trip to Afghanistan and Pakistan (19-26 May)" in memorandum for: COL Mike Messe and COL Cindy Jebb, 3 June 2006, 6.
29. *Ibid.*, 7.
30. Office of the Spokesman, "Total U.S. Security and Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan," *Fact Sheet* (U.S. Department of State), 10 June 2008.
31. Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11* (CRS Report for Congress, 14 July 2008), 19.
32. Afghanistan National Development Strategy: Summary Report (2006), 10, 27, accessed at <http://www.and.gov.af/admin/ands/ands_docs/upload/UploadFolder/ANDS%20Summary%20Report%20-%20Final%20English.pdf>; and Ali A. Jalali, "The Future of Afghanistan," *Parameters* (Spring 2006), 4-19.
33. Transcript of testimony provided by Professor Ali Jalali, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, to the U.S. House of Representatives' House Armed Services Committee on 30 January 2007, accessed at <www.ndu.edu/nesa/docs/webfile/jalalitestimony30jan07.pdf>; and *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, June 2008, 10, accessed at <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/United_States_Plan_for_Sustaining_the_Afghanistan_National_Security_Forces_1231.pdf>.
34. Margaret C. Nelson, "209th Rolls Out the Red Carpet for President," *The Phoenix Patriot* (March 2007), 5.
35. Scott Baldauf, "A 'half full' Afghan army," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 10 February 2006.
36. Sara Wood, "U.S. Leaders: NATO Must Do More in Afghanistan," AFPS, 13 February 2007.
37. Transcript of testimony provided by Ms. Mary Beth Long, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs to the U.S. House of Representatives' House Armed Services Committee on 13 February 2007, accessed at <armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/FC_Afghan021307/Long_Testimony021307.pdf>.
38. *U.S. Plan for Sustaining the A.N.S.F.*, 19.
39. Makia Monir, "Minister acknowledges strength of Taliban," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 18 March 2007.
40. "Defence minister says Afghan army must be 5 times larger," *The Associated Press (AP)*, 12 July 2006; Ahmad Khalid Moahid, "Qanuni for a stronger military to counter terrorism," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 31 October 2006; Robert Burns, "Iranian Weapons Found in Afghanistan," *AP*, 4 June 2007; and Ahmad Khalid Moahid, "550 Afghan Army officers awarded certificates," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 15 June 2007.
41. Tim Kilbride, "As Afghan Troops Build Capacity, Decisive Battles Loom," AFPS, 2 March 2007.
42. Jim Krane, "Afghan Army to Strike Taliban in Winter," *The Washington Post*, 19 November 2006; Donna Miles, "Afghan Official Urges Faster Timetable for Training, Equipping Afghan Forces," AFPS, 21 November 2006; and Garamone, "Pace Pleased with Progress at Afghan Training Center."
43. Jim Garamone, "Pace: U.S. Working to Send More Training Support to Afghanistan," AFPS, 19 July 2007; and *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 17.
44. Michael Evans, "Afghan security handover is on track for 2008, says NATO," *The Times*, 29 November 2006.
45. Alastair Leithead, "Afghans take over Kabul security," *BBC*, 28 August 2008.
46. "Coalition Forces Information," *Task Force Phoenix Website*, accessed at <<http://www.taskforcephoenix.com/cofor.htm>>.
47. David M. Votroubek, "An OMLT takes to the field," *The Enduring Ledger* (January 2008), 13; and Tim Newborn, "ANA hosts ribbon cutting for the first NCO academy," *The Phoenix Patriot* (March 2008), 5.
48. Luis P. Valdespino Jr., "ANA graduates 700 basic trainees" and "In the lead: Mentors take back seat as Afghan drill sergeants step up to mold new recruits," *The Enduring Ledger* (October 2007), 8, 12.
49. Raymond Brown, "Canadian Soldiers Train the Afghan National Army," *National Defence and the Canadian Forces (N.D.C.F.) Website*, 13 June 2005, accessed at <www.forces.gc.ca/site/Feature_Story/2005/06/13_f_e.asp>; and André Desrochers, "First Afghan Soldiers Graduate Canadian-run Training Centre," *N.D.C.F. Website*, 25 July 2005, accessed at <www.forces.gc.ca/site/Feature_Story/2005/07/25_f_e.asp>.
50. *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 17.
51. "Former Afghan Military Officers take test to rejoin Army," *Afghan State TV*, 21 November 2006.
52. Eric S. Bartelt, "Afghan National Ready to Begin West Point Experience," *Pointer View* (United States Military Academy), 24 June 2005.
53. ISAF PIO, "Turkey Donates Military Equipment," *Release no. 2007-210*, 20 March 2007.
54. J5 Branch (CSTC-A), "CSTC-A Key ANA Data Points."
55. Danny O'Connor, "Sandhurst in the Sand," *Afghan National Army Officer Training Team (ANAOTT) and Officer Candidate School (OCS)*, 2006, accessed at <www.army.mod.uk/linked_files/gurkhas/ANAOTT1.doc>; and Charles Di Leonardo, "Training the Afghan National Army," *Infantry Magazine*, 1 March 2005.
56. Author's conversation with Afghan Minister for Defense, Abdul Rahim Wardak, at the Ministry of Defense, Kabul, Afghanistan on 23 July 2006.
57. "Indian Army to Train Afghanistan, Uzbekistan Armed Forces," *India Defence*, 24 April 2007, accessed at <www.e-ariana.com/ariana/eariana.nsf/allDocs/53AF0A109DA7602E872572C700687F76?OpenDocument>.
58. "Afghan War College—Open for Training," *The Phoenix Patriot* (6 November 2006), 1, 3.
59. Ann Scott Tyson, "Desertions Deplete Afghan Army," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 17 December 2003.
60. "Afghanistan—Army," *GlobalSecurity.org*, 7 August 2005, accessed at <www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/army.htm>.
61. O'Connor.
62. Annie Fernandez, "Afghan troops in peril," *The London Free Press*, 26 October 2006.
63. David Zucchini, "It's Starting to Look a Lot Like an Army," *The Los Angeles Times*, 22 August 2006.
64. David Zucchini, "Afghan Army Could Help Unify a Nation," *The Los Angeles Times*, 13 November 2006; and Krane.
65. Kevin Dougherty, "Process aims to keep the bad guys out of new force," *Stars and Stripes*, 7 May 2007.
66. Scott Baldauf, "A 'Half Full' Afghan Army," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 10 February 2006.
67. Jonathan Byrom and Aaron Parker, "The First Afghan National Army T-62 Tank GUNNERY," *Armor Journal* (January-February 2004); and Di Leonardo.
68. Di Leonardo.
69. "Afghan army troops complain of low wages, equipment shortage," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 14 August 2005; and *U.S. Plan for Sustaining the A.N.S.F.*, 17.
70. Zucchini, "It's Starting to Look a Lot Like an Army."
71. Di Leonardo.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Jim Garamone, "Afghan Sergeant Major Shows Way Ahead for Fledgling Army," AFPS, 11 August 2006.
74. *Ibid.*
75. Kathleen T. Rhem, "Afghan Sergeant Major Making Inroads for NCO Corps in Fledgling Army," AFPS, 23 November 2006; and Brian P. Seymour, "Turning heads: Sergeant major of the ANA continues to impress coalition," *The Enduring Ledger* (October 2007), 13.
76. Di Leonardo.
77. Rachel Morarjee, "Taliban Goes for Cash Over Ideology," *Financial Times*, 25 July 2006.
78. J5 Branch (CSTC-A), "CSTC-A Key ANA Data Points," *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 20.
79. Author's conversation with ANA Chief of Operations, Lieutenant General Sher Mohammad Karimi, at the Ministry of Defense, Kabul, Afghanistan on 26 November 2006.
80. Nelofer Pazira, "Return to Kandahar: The Taliban Threat," *The Independent*, 22 August 2006; and Max Hastings, "The World Cannot Walk Out on Afghanistan," *The Guardian*, 12 September 2006.
81. Morarjee, "Taliban Goes for Cash Over Ideology" and "Taliban Offers Fighters More Money," *United Press International*, 26 July 2006.
82. *Ibid.*
83. Author's conversation with Minister Adviser for Tribal Affairs, H.E. Jan Mohamed Khan, during the latter's visit to the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (CAPS), Kabul, Afghanistan on 17 July 2006. Trans. from Pashto to English by Hekmat Karzai, Director, CAPS.
84. Interview with LTC Nick Crosby, USA, and LTC Jeff Waechter, USAF, J5 Branch, CSTC-A at Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan on 15 September 2006.
85. "Tanks, More Troops to Afghanistan," *Canadian Press*, 15 September 2006.
86. Interview with Crosby and Waechter.
87. Roland Buerk, "Desertions Blow Hits Afghan Army," *BBC*, 9 June 2005; and Krane, "Afghan Army to Strike Taliban in Winter."
88. Kathleen T. Rhem, "U.S. Soldiers Work With Afghan Army to Fortify, Instill Discipline," AFPS, 24 November 2006.
89. Remarks by MG Robert Durbin at the Joint PRT Commanders Meeting at HQ ISAF (Kabul, Afghanistan) on 13 November 2006.
90. "Sixteen 'Foreigners' Amongst Killed in Clash in South Afghan Province," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 26 September 2006; and Beth Del Vecchio, "New ANA re-contracting regulation strengthens ranks," *The Enduring Ledger* (September 2008), 5.
91. "U.S. Transfers Humvees, Weapons to Afghan National Army," AFPS, 6 February 2007; "NATO support to Afghan National Army (ANA)," NATO Fact sheets (June, December 2007 February 2008); and *U.S. Plan for Sustaining the A.N.S.F.*, 10, 17.
92. Ann Scott Tyson, "Desertions Deplete Afghan Army," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 17 December 2003.
93. Jim Garamone, "Afghan Security Forces Making Strides, Addressing Problems," AFPS, 13 July 2006; and *U.S. Plan for Sustaining the A.N.S.F.*, 19.
94. Testimony of Mary Beth Long to the U.S. House of Representatives' House Armed Services Committee; and *U.S. Plan for Sustaining the A.N.S.F.*, 17.
95. ISAF PIO, "Corps Commanders Convene at Herat Conference," *Release no. 2007-173*, 11 March 2007.

96. Robert Church, "Unprecedented Trial in 201st Corps Sets Judicial Standards," *The Phoenix Patriot* (January 2007), 1, 3.

97. Sue Bailey, "Afghan Army 'Wafer Thin'," *Canadian Press*, 5 November 2006.

98. Kilbride.

99. Aryn Baker, "Can the Afghans Defend Themselves?" *Time*, 3 January 2007.

100. *Ibid.*

101. Thomas Harding, "Afghan Army 'is Weak under Fire,'" *The Telegraph*, 15 August 2006; and Tim Newborn, "Afghan, Coalition senior enlisted advisors strive for a stronger ANA," *The Enduring Ledger* (June 2008), 4.

102. Harding, "Afghan Army 'is Weak Under Fire,'" and "Afghan Army 'Taking Drugs' Says British Soldier," *Daily Mail*, 14 August 2006.

103. "Operations in Afghanistan: British Forces," *Defence Factsheet*, 6 November 2006, accessed at <www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FactSheets/OperationsFactsheets/OperationsInAfghanistanBritishForces.htm>.

104. Baker.

105. Harding, "Afghan Army 'is Weak Under Fire,'" and "Afghan Army 'Taking Drugs' Says British Soldier."

106. "Afghan Soldier Kills 2 U.S. Troops Outside Top-security Jail," *CNN*, 6 May 2007.

107. Patrick Bishop, "We're on the Way to Defeating Taliban," *The Telegraph*, 12 September 2006.

108. "Afghan Officers Arrested for Smuggling Weapons to Taliban," *Xinhua News Agency*, 22 September 2006.

109. David Loyn, "Travelling with the Taliban," *BBC*, 24 October 2006.

110. "Marine Ends Tour Impressed by Afghan Army He Helped Train," *Defence News*, 21 March 07, accessed at <www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/PeopleInDefence/MarineEndsTourImpressedByAfghanArmyHeHelpedTrain.htm>.

111. "Marine Ends Tour Impressed by Afghan Army He Helped Train," and Luis P. Valdespino Jr., "Afghan officers take control in Afghanistan," *CSTC-A News*, 24 January 2008.

112. Javid Hamim, "Fresh troops deployed in Herat," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 23 October 2006.

113. Halima Kazem, "New Afghan Army Asserts Itself," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 23 August 2004.

114. ISAF PIO, "Joint ISAF, ANA Training in RC-C," *Release no. 2007-118*, 21 February 2007.

115. ISAF PIO, "Afghan National Army Training Takes Place at Camp Holland," *Release no. 2007-204*, 19 March 2007.

116. Garamone, "Pace Pleased with Progress at Afghan Training Center."

117. ISAF PIO, "ISAF's Romanian Forces Working Closely with ANSF," *Release no. 2007-278*, 7 April 2007.

118. Eric Nichols, "Engineer Mobile Training Team: Standing up the Afghan National Army Engineering School," *Engineer* (July-September 2005).

119. Remarks by Brigadier Dickie Davis, Chief Engineer, ISAF IX, at the Joint PRT Commanders Meeting at HQ ISAF (Kabul, Afghanistan) on 13 November 2006.

120. Kathleen T. Rhem, "U.S. Military Operations Evolve as Afghan Army Becomes More Capable," *AFPS*, 24 November 2006.

121. Luis P. Valdespino Jr., "ETT stands back as ANA shows presence in village," *CSTC-A News*, 24 January 2008.

122. Dan Huvane, "ANA, CTF Devil Team Up for MEDCAP," *Desert Devil Dispatch* (Newsletter of the 82d Airborne Division, U.S. Army), 15 February 2006.

123. Cone; and Transcript of speech by H.E. Mr. Hâmid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, at the UN Assembly's General Debate of the 63rd Session on 24 September 2008, accessed at <http://www.un.org/ga/63/generaldebate/pdf/afghanistan_en.pdf>.

124. David Votroubek, "Operation Maiwand makes a point in Ghazni," *CSTC-A News*, 29 June 2007; and Jason Straziuso, "Afghan army executes first big operation," *AP*, 3 July 2007.

125. "Unprecedented," *The Phoenix Patriot* (September 2006), 4-5.

126. Beth Del Vecchio, "ANA print plant supports mission, training," *CSTC-A News*, 7 July 2008.

127. Rachel Morarjee, "Where does Karzai Go from Here?" *The Christian Science Monitor*, 2 June 2006.

128. *Ibid.*

129. *Ibid.*

130. Jason Straziuso, "Afghan army executes first big operation," *AP*, 3 July 2007.

131. "Afghanistan in 2006: A Survey of the Afghan People," *The Asia Foundation* (2006), 30, accessed at <www.asiafoundation.org/pdf/AG-survey06.pdf>.

132. Renée Montagne, "Afghan Army Making Progress, Still Reliant on NATO," *National Public Radio*, 17 November 2006.

133. "NATO Says Taliban Use Hezbollah Tactics," *AP*, 15 August 2006.

134. Nancy Montgomery, "Friction between Afghan Army, Police Boils to Surface," *Stars and Stripes*, 18 September 2006.

135. Author's conversation with Colonel Matiollah Khan, during the latter's visit to CAPS on 23 November 2006. Trans. from Pashto to English by Mr. Hekmat Karzai.

136. Robert Densmore, "How Fervent is Taliban Support?" *Time*, 7 March 2007.

137. Kristin Roberts, "Afghan army says needs more help from Pakistan," *Reuters*, 4 June 2007.

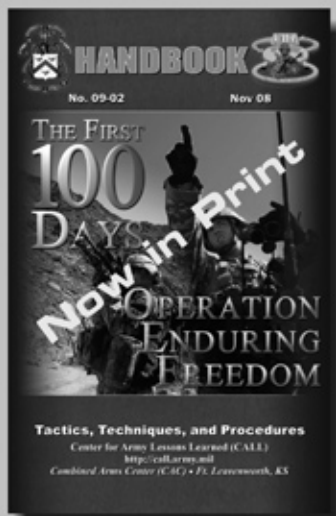
138. Najib Khilwatgar, "Joint intelligence centre to be opened in Kabul," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 17 January 2007; and John J. Kruzal, "Afghan Defense Minister Recommends Border Region Task Force," *AFPS*, 22 September 2008.

139. James McCarten, "Commander Uncertain if Afghans can Go It Alone by '09," *CNews*, 23 April 2007.

140. Linda D. Kozaryn, "Gates Urges NATO Allies to Honor Commitments," *AFPS*, 11 February 2007.

Center for Army Lessons Learned

10 Meade Avenue, Building 50 Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027 COM: 913-684-3035 DSN: 552-3035



Check out the CALL Web site for the latest publications.

NIPR Website: <http://call.army.mil>

RFI: <https://call-rfi.leavenworth.army.mil/rfisystem>