

# Community Defense in **AFGHANISTAN**

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**S**ince the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, which established an interim Afghan government, the United States and international community have focused on building Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) forces as the linchpin to security. While necessary, national security forces have *never* been sufficient to establish security in Afghanistan. This strategy reflects a Western understanding of the “state,” more appropriate for U.S. efforts in Germany and Japan after World War II. Both of these nations had histories of strong central governmental institutions and competent technocrats. But Afghanistan is a much different state and combines a central government in Kabul, fiercely

independent tribes in Nuristan and Pashtun areas, and a range of ethnic minorities in the west, north, and center. As illustrated during Afghanistan’s most recent stable period, from 1929 to 1978, security has historically required a synergy of top-down efforts from the central government and bottom-up efforts from local tribes and other communities. Based on this reality, America’s counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy needs to better incorporate working with tribal and other community forces in Afghanistan, with a direct link to the Afghan government.

This article outlines the development of *local defense forces* in Afghanistan, which should be leveraged along with other efforts to build the ANA and ANP, counter the

**Afghan National Army soldiers during graduation ceremony from Kabul Military Training Center**



U.S. Air Force (Larry E. Reid, Jr.)

pervasive corruption, and improve governance.<sup>1</sup> It begins by outlining the importance of protecting the local population, especially the challenge of relying only on Afghan National Security Forces to establish order in rural areas. It then examines the historical precedent for working with tribal and other local defense forces. It concludes by outlining a community defense initiative that needs to be carefully monitored and shaped by the Afghan government and international community.

One of the most significant challenges in Afghanistan has been protecting the local population, especially in rural areas. Some studies argue that a rough estimate needed to win a counterinsurgency is 20 security forces per 1,000 inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> As the U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual notes, “Twenty counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents is often considered the minimum troop density required for effective COIN operations; however, as with any fixed ratio, such calculations remain very dependent

likely be a gap of at least 150,000 troops to secure the Afghan population, even with the projected increases in Afghan National Security Forces.<sup>7</sup> More importantly, even during Afghanistan’s most recent stable period—the 1929–1978 Musahiban dynasty led by Nadir Shah, Daoud Khan, and Zahir Shah—central government forces generally did not establish security at the village level. Instead, local forces assumed that task in rural areas. In Pashtun areas, the role of tribes has been particularly important.



U.S. Marine Corps (William Greason)

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Tribes, subtribes, clans, *qawms*, and other local institutions have historically played an important role in Afghanistan. A *qawm* is a unit of identification and solidarity, and could be based on kinship, residence, or occupation.<sup>8</sup> Pashtunwali, the Pashtun code of behavior, shapes daily life through such concepts as *badal* (revenge), *melmastia* (hospitality), *ghayrat* (honor), and *nanawati* (sanctuary). The tribal structure has evolved over the past several decades because of such factors as war, drought, migration patterns, and sedentarization, the process by which tribes cease seasonal or nomadic lifestyles and settle in permanent habitats. The 1978 tribal rebellion against the communist regime and subsequent Soviet invasion initiated a cycle of warfare causing massive displacement among tribes.<sup>9</sup> The departure of the Soviets in 1989 ushered in another civil war among competing factions that triggered mass migration.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, the tribal structure remains strong in many Pashtun areas of western, southern, and eastern Afghanistan, and *jirgas* and *shuras* remain instrumental in decisionmaking at the local level. A *jirga* has historically been a council established on a temporary basis to address specific issues, while a *shura* has been a more permanent consultative council. However, the terms are often used interchangeably. Tribes tend to be more hierarchical in southern and western Afghanistan than in the east. The southern Durrani tribes, for instance, are divided between the Panjpai (including the Alizai, Ishakzai, Khugiani, Maku, and Noorzai) and

Marine on Civil Affairs group patrol and tribal leader discuss infrastructure improvements in Helmand Province

### Protecting the Population

Successful counterinsurgency requires protecting the local population and gaining its support—or at least acquiescence. Both insurgents and counterinsurgents need the support of the population to win. “The only territory you want to hold,” one study concluded, “is the six inches between the ears of the *campesino* [peasant].”<sup>12</sup> British General Sir Frank Kitson argued that the population is a critical element in COIN operations, as “this represents the water in which the fish swims.”<sup>13</sup> Kitson borrowed the reference to the water and fish from one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s most successful insurgents, Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung, who wrote that there is an inextricable link in insurgencies “between the people and the troops. The former may be likened to water and the latter to the fish who inhabit it.”<sup>14</sup>

upon the situation.<sup>16</sup> This ratio translates into a force requirement of approximately 660,000 troops for Afghanistan, which has approximately 33 million people. Yet these numbers do not provide a clear roadmap, and they certainly do not take into consideration such variables as the competence of local forces and what types of forces should be used. For example, what percentage of the forces should be international versus Afghan? Among Afghan forces, what percentage should be national versus local?

There is no clear-cut answer—and certainly no magic number—of U.S. and Afghan forces to conduct a successful counterinsurgency campaign and establish security. Most public discussions in the United States have focused on increasing the number of international, ANA, and ANP forces. But there will

the Zirak (Achakzai, Alikozai, Barakzai, and Popalzai). In some areas, the Taliban appear to be currying favor with some of the Panjpai tribes—including some of the Ishakzai, Alizai, and Noorzai subtribes—against the Zirak tribes.<sup>11</sup> However, there appear to be opportunities to coopt a range of Durrani and other communities across Afghanistan to help them establish village-level security.

### A History of Bottom-up Security

Establishing security in Afghanistan has generally been a combination of top-down efforts by the central government, whose forces have established security in major cities and along key roads, crushed revolts and rebellions, and mediated intratribal disputes, and bottom-up efforts from local tribes and other communities, whose forces have established security at the village level in rural areas.

The bulk of the current insurgency is occurring in Pashtun areas. There are at least five traditional Pashtun institutions for organizing local security forces. In each case, they implement decisions of tribal jirgas or shuras. A *tsalweshtai* is a guard force. Members of the tribe are appointed for a special purpose, such as protecting a valley from raiding groups. An *arbakai* is similar to a *tsalweshtai* and is a tribal police force. Members supervise the implementation of the tribal jirga's decisions. *Arbakai* have been most prolific among the Pashtun tribes in such eastern provinces as Paktia, Khowst, and Paktika. A *chagha* is a group of fighters raised spontaneously within a village when faced by a bandit raid, robbery, or similar threat. *Chagha* is also the word for the drum used to alert villagers of the need to organize and drive off invaders. A *chalweshtai* is a larger force than a *tsalweshtai* and is raised by the tribe from families to implement tribal decisions. A *chalweshtai* may be engaged in community projects, such as digging a canal or building a dam, but they are more commonly used to perform security tasks. A *lashkar* is a body of tribesmen organized to deal with a large-scale problem, and is often used for offensive purposes.<sup>12</sup>

Tribal and other local forces have been used throughout the history of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Beginning in 1880, Abdul Rahman Khan made one of the first attempts at modern state-building in Afghanistan and tried to establish an independent army. But he still relied on tribal levies in Pashtun areas. During his two-decade rule, the tribal levies were helpful in establishing order, though he

still faced armed opposition from Hazaras, Aimaqs, Nuristanis, and various Pashtun tribal confederations throughout the country.<sup>13</sup>

In 1929, Nadir Shah assembled a tribal army to capture Kabul from Habibullah Kalakani, and he used tribal forces against an uprising by the Shinwari subtribes and Tajiks in Kabul. These forces were effective in overthrowing the Kalakani government and establishing order, though they did face some resistance from Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Hazaras.<sup>14</sup> When Nadir Shah took power, he exempted some tribes in eastern Afghanistan from conscription in the military and police. *Arbakai* were used as a police force by tribal jirgas to implement their decisions or to respond to specific threats against the community or tribe. During the reign of King Zahir Shah, the government often did not provide direct salaries to the *arbakai* in Loya Paktia, but instead gave privileged status, property, money, advisory roles, and exclusion from military service to tribal authorities.<sup>15</sup>

had loose command and control. Ultimately, however, the *lashkars* were not effective in securing Kashmir because they faced a much better organized Indian army, and many of the *lashkar* fighters were not from the areas they fought in, undermining their legitimacy.<sup>16</sup> Pakistan also used *lashkars* during Operation *Gibraltar* in 1965 to liberate Kashmir from Indian control. They were trained and led by Pakistan's Special Services Group, as well

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as Azad Kashmir and Jammu officers. Much like in 1947, however, they were ineffective. The *lashkars* were defeated by regular Indian forces, and were viewed as illegitimate by locals since few if any of the commanders spoke

U.S. Air Force (Erfan Lopez)



**Afghan National Army soldier conducts search in Zabul Province**

Pakistan also has a history of using tribal institutions. In 1947, the newly formed state used *lashkars* in an attempt to seize Kashmir before the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir could join India. Most were from the Mahsud, Afridi, and Mohmand tribes, though there were also some Kashmiri auxiliaries. Pakistan General Akbar Khan organized the forces and

Kashmiri.<sup>17</sup> In both the 1947 and 1965 cases, tribal *lashkars* were used with little success for prolonged offensive operations against much better equipped and organized armies.

The Afghan government used tribal forces more effectively in some areas. The Zahir Shah government used Shinwari, Mohmand, and Khogyani *arbakai* to establish

order in eastern Afghanistan in the 1960s and 1970s. The government handed over a section of irrigated land to the tribal jirgas, which was intended to help cover *arbakai* expenses. The amount of land ranged from 1,000 square meters per small village with one or two *arbakai* members to 8,000 square meters for bigger groups of *arbakai*.<sup>18</sup> Unlike the previous Pakistan *lashkars*, these *arbakai* were used primarily for defensive purposes and were organized under the auspices of legitimate tribal institutions, contributing to their effectiveness. In Nuristan, villages established local defense forces to protect their areas. As one assessment of the Vaygal Valley of south-central Nuristan concluded, “The survival of Kalasha villages depended on careful, unrelenting attention to defensive arrangements” since there was virtually no government presence in the area.<sup>19</sup>

By the time the Soviets invaded in 1979, a range of anti-Soviet and progovernment militias were established throughout the country. Some were tribal forces, while others—such as Abdul Rashid Dostum’s Jowzjani militia—were centered on charismatic, powerful commanders. There were some successful uses of *arbakai* during the Soviet era. In several Afghan refugee camps in the Haripur area of Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province, for instance, *arbakai* were raised from among the refugees. These groups of unpaid volunteers worked effectively to help maintain law and order, discourage harassment of girls, and prevent theft.<sup>20</sup> The

Soviets attempted to establish a range of tribal militias, mostly under the direct control of the Afghan Ministry of Interior. They were not particularly effective, partly because the Afghan government was so illegitimate, and they were used for offensive purposes.<sup>21</sup> In addition, each of the main mujahideen parties had fairly large militia forces.<sup>22</sup> Those forces were helpful in overthrowing the Soviet-backed government and driving Soviet forces out of Afghanistan, but they were deeply counter-productive over the long run as Afghanistan slipped into anarchy. Many turned on each other in a bid to control Kabul, creating a window of opportunity for the Taliban to rise in 1994. Ultimately, they were not effective in establishing order because they centered on charismatic individuals rather than legitimate tribal institutions, were excessively large and well armed, used for offensive missions, and operated in a governance vacuum since the government had stopped functioning. The accompanying table highlights some of the most significant historical uses of local forces.

**A Community Defense Approach**

Based on the historical use of local security forces and the current realities in Afghanistan, a community defense strategy should be organized around several principles:

- identifying grassroots initiative
- utilizing legitimate local institutions such as shuras and jirgas

- ensuring the Afghan government is the lead for monitoring and overseeing community defense programs
- providing a quick reaction force to aid endangered communities
- establishing development assistance.

The term *community defense* is used here instead of *tribal defense* or *tribal engagement* because, as noted earlier, the tribal structure has weakened or ceased to exist in some areas.

**Grassroots.** A community defense initiative should begin from the bottom up, not from top-down efforts by the Afghan government or coalition forces. This development is critical; a local defense force will only be effective where locals view it as in *their* interest. Two types of opportunities are particularly apropos. The first are cases where tribes, subtribes, clans, *qawms*, or other local communities have already come to the Afghan or coalition governments asking for assistance against insurgent groups. The second are cases where tribes or other local institutions have already resisted insurgents. Fortunately, there are a range of grassroots initiatives where local tribes and communities have resisted insurgents or asked Afghan or coalition forces for assistance. They extend from Noorzais, Barakzais, and Alikozais in the west and south to Shinwaris, Kharotis, Mangals, Chamkanis, and Jajis in the east. Even in such northern provinces as Konduz

**Tribal and Other Local Forces, 1880 until Today**

Case	Dates	Objective	Effectiveness
Abdul Rahman Khan’s Pashtun tribal levies	1880–1901	Establish order with aid of army	Established order, though Abdul Rahman Khan had to deal with some rebellions
<i>Arbakai</i> and other tribal forces during Musahiban dynasty	1929–1978	Establish village-level security with aid of government	Established security
Pakistan <i>lashkars</i> in Kashmir	1947–1948 and 1965	Seize Kashmir	Did not secure Kashmir; <i>lashkars</i> not local and minimally effective for offensive purposes
Anti-Soviet tribal forces	1979–1989	Defeat Soviet and Afghan armies	Ultimately defeated the Soviet and Afghan armies
Pro-Soviet tribal forces	1984–1989	Help establish order in rural areas	Not effective, partly because Afghan government was so illegitimate and used for offensive purposes
Militias during the civil war (Dostum, Massoud, and Hekmatyar)	Late 1980s/early 1990s	Control Kabul	Did not establish order because militias were large, offensive, and ultimately unpopular among Afghans
Popalzai, Barakzai, and other tribal forces	November 2001–March 2002	Control Uruzgan, Kandahar, Zabol, and Helmand Provinces	Helped overthrow Taliban and established initial security and order

and Baghlan Districts, there are ongoing local efforts by Tajiks, Uzbeks, and even Pashtuns to fight the Taliban and other insurgents. There appear to be several reasons for these developments. In some areas of eastern Afghanistan, such as Konar and Nangarhar Provinces, some communities have lost faith with local police forces, which are perceived as corrupt and incompetent. In such northern provinces as Konar and Baghlan, locals have created forces because they fear a spreading Taliban insurgency and are seeking additional protection.

**Legitimate Local Institutions.** Local forces such as *arbakai* have generally been most effective when they are developed through legitimate local institutions. Indeed, jirgas and shuras represent the Pashtun version of a democratic institution, since participants are leaders who represent their tribal and other constituents.<sup>23</sup> In practical terms, the jirga or shura should decide whether they want a local defense force, choose who should participate, oversee what tasks it performs, coordinate with Afghan government officials, and decide when to disband it. A 2008 survey by the Asia Foundation indicated that most Afghans did not trust warlords, and only 4 percent would turn to a local warlord to deal with a security problem.<sup>24</sup> As noted earlier, forces under the control of warlords have generally been unpopular because they are used to benefit individuals rather than tribes or other institutions. In addition, local forces have often been most effective when they are viewed as supporting nearby interests, especially defending villages for the sake of the village rather than the central government or foreigners.

**Afghan Lead.** Any community defense program must be Afghan-led. Xenophobic Afghans oppose a large, overt foreign military footprint.<sup>25</sup> Taliban propaganda consistently refers to the war as one against foreign occupation. One Taliban propaganda message warned Afghans that “the Americans themselves have unveiled their antagonistic nature toward the Afghans, and disclosed their ill-fated objectives considering the killing of the Afghans, burning them in more furnaces of war, and torturing them as a U.S. duty and main course of action.”<sup>26</sup> A community defense program must be perceived by the local population as defending their own interests, organized and run exclusively by the local jirga and shura, and not beholden to any outsiders. Nonetheless, the Afghan government can—and must—provide the

resources and capabilities to support community defense programs. This could be done in several ways. Provincial governors and district subgovernors should participate in community defense shuras and jirgas to help oversee the program and provide assistance when able. Their role may be particularly important when community defense programs occur in areas with multiple tribes to assist in mediation. In Chamkani District in Paktia Province, for example, many tribes have opposed the Taliban and other insurgents, including the Jajis, Chamkanis, Mangals, and Moqbils. But they have also engaged in land and other disputes among themselves. In addition, ANA and ANP forces must be involved in helping vet community defense members, training them in basic defensive tactics, sharing information with them, and establishing a community system that can respond in emergencies.

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Avoiding the appearance that a local defense force is an American program does not mean withholding U.S. participation. Instead, the American footprint should be minimal. There are several specific actions that U.S. forces can take to minimize public exposure. One is to work with ANA and ANP forces to provide basic training and guidance to a local defense force (a train-the-trainer program). A case-by-case evaluation should be made on what training is needed based on the competence of local security forces, threat level in the area, and competence of ANA and ANP forces conducting training. To facilitate these activities, coalition forces should live in or around the villages where community defense programs are established to help ensure that they are not used for offensive purposes or come under the control of warlords. This means buying or renting *qalats*, or safe houses, in villages. U.S. Special Forces are ideally suited for implementing this type of program, which has similarities to the Robin Sage training exercise conducted at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

**Quick Reaction Capability.** Pakistan has repeatedly tried to raise *lashkars* against militants in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and North West Frontier Province

but has often failed to protect them from retaliation. In December 2008, Pir Samiullah organized a *lashkar* against militants in Swat, but the retaliation from local militants was swift. He and eight supporters were captured and executed publicly.<sup>27</sup> In Bajaur, local militants retaliated by conducting a series of suicide bombings and assassinations when the Salarzai tribe established *lashkars* to assist Pakistan security forces. They slit the throats of four Hilal Khel tribal leaders from the Charmang area of Bajaur who had organized a *lashkar* against militants, dumping their bodies along a road.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, an essential part of any local defense force should be establishing a rapid reaction capability that is on standby to come to the assistance of the community. This quick reaction force could be composed of ANA, ANP, and coalition units. It would be counterproductive to have local communities stand up to the Taliban, Haqqani network, and other groups and be overrun. Providing security to the local population should be the top priority of coalition forces, as opposed to chasing the enemy and killing enemy combatants.<sup>29</sup> This requires establishing a communications system that connects villages to the quick reaction force to ensure the call for help is received in a timely manner. It may require providing cell phones, Thurayas satellite phones, or radios to villages to contact ANA, ANP, and coalition forces. Communication between a local defense force and the quick reaction force should be not only for rapid response, but also for general intelligence regarding enemy movements in the area and information on their activities and capabilities.

**Development.** U.S. and other coalition forces should generally not pay local defense members a regular salary, since they should be motivated to work for their communities and not outsiders. A better approach may be to provide development aid that benefits the communities. A rising complaint against the Afghan government is that it has not provided basic services to the population, especially in rural areas.<sup>30</sup> To achieve maximum impact, community elders should be asked what projects their communities need rather than have outside development experts make that determination. Indeed, the U.S. Agency for International Development has developed a framework to identify, prioritize, and mitigate the causes of instability—and to serve as a baseline for development aid—called the

Tactical Conflict Assessment and Planning Framework. It includes a range of questions to ask villagers, such as: Have there been changes in the village population in the last year? What are the most important problems facing the village? Whom do you believe can solve your problems? What should be done first to help the village?

The goal should be to implement development projects with a COIN focus. The primary goal should not necessarily be to improve literacy or infant mortality rates, but to encourage more people to turn against insurgents. Coordination with Afghanistan's Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, U.S. Agency for International Development, and other development organizations is important to facilitate the implementation of projects and to provide incentives for communities establishing local defense forces.

An effective COIN strategy that secures the local population needs to focus on improving the competence of the ANA and ANP, counter corruption, and improve broader governance in Afghanistan. But it also needs to include leveraging a range of bottom-up initiatives where tribes and other local communities have resisted the

Taliban. Former U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives Tip O'Neill could have been talking about Afghanistan when he quipped that "all politics is local." Establishing local defense forces where there is a local initiative should be encouraged. But the efforts also need to be carefully managed by the Afghan government, with support from coalition forces. "We need to subcontract security in some areas to local villagers," Minister of Interior Mohammad Hanif

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Atmar remarked. "And then let Afghan and coalition forces target insurgents in between."<sup>31</sup> In short, villages that established local defense forces would provide self-defense in their villages—and only in their villages—and ANA, ANP, and coalition forces could conduct offensive operations outside of villages.

A carefully implemented and managed community defense initiative should be able

to minimize the risks and maximize the benefits of leveraging local security forces. Keeping forces small, defensive, under the direct control of local jirgas and shuras, and monitored by Afghan national and coalition forces should prevent the rise of warlords in Afghanistan. Indeed, Afghan and coalition forces can learn several lessons from the successful and unsuccessful use of local security forces to establish security.

One is that local defense forces need to be tied to legitimate community institutions, especially village-level shuras and jirgas. This means empowering legitimate institutions that have historically contributed to local security and the rule of law. It also means preventing local forces from becoming hijacked by warlords. The last three decades of warfare in Afghanistan were littered with efforts to establish forces under the control of warlords, whose fighters were loyal to them and not the communities. Another lesson is that local forces need to be small, defensive, and geared toward protecting villages. Between 1929 and 1978, Afghan leaders such as Nadir Shah, Zahir Shah, and Daoud Khan supported local security forces in much of rural Afghanistan. A final lesson is that the Afghan government needs to manage the process. The objective



ANA soldier and U.S. Marine interview residents in Helmand Province to determine their needs

should be to help tribes, subtribes, and communities provide security and justice in their areas and help the government manage the process. When tribes rebel against the government or fight each other, Afghan government and coalition forces can crush the uprising or mediate the disputes.

A range of tribes and local communities have already expressed a desire to stand up to the Taliban and other insurgents. The Afghan government and coalition forces need to take advantage of these opportunities. As one senior Afghan government official recently said to me, “It’s the only way out of this situation.”<sup>32</sup> **JFQ**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The World Bank ranked Afghanistan among the top 1 percent of countries as most corrupt, and Transparency International ranked it 176<sup>th</sup> of 180. See World Bank, *Governance Matters 2009: World Governance Indicators, 1996–2008* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009); Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index* (Berlin: Transparency International, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Siegel and Joy Hackel, “El Salvador: Counterinsurgency Revisited,” in *Low Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency, and Antiterrorism in the Eighties*, ed. Michael T. Klare and Peter Kornbluh (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 119.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peacekeeping* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1971), 49. On counterinsurgency strategies, also see C.E. Callwell, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, 3<sup>d</sup> edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 34–42; David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 1964), 17–42.

<sup>4</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith II (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), 93.

<sup>5</sup> James T. Quinlivan, “Force Requirements in Security Operations,” *Parameters* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1995–1996), 59–69; James Dobbins, *America’s Role in Nation-building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), and *The UN’s Role in Nation-building: From the Congo to Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Field Manual 3–24 and U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3–33.5, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army and Headquarters Marine Corps Combat Development Command, December 2006), 1–13.

<sup>7</sup> There are approximately 70,000 international forces in Afghanistan (with the possibility of increasing by another 30,000 or 40,000). The growth rates for Afghanistan National Security

Forces (ANSF) include 134,000 for the army by 2010 (and potentially increasing to 240,000) and 160,000 for the police by 2013. This translates to 364,000 total international and ANSF, with the possibility of expanding to 510,000. See, for example, “Memo from Stanley A. McChrystal to the Honorable Robert M. Gates, Subject: COMISAF’s Initial Assessment, Reference: Secretary of Defense Memorandum 26 June 2009, 30 August 2009.”

<sup>8</sup> David Phillips, *Afghanistan: A History of Utilization of Tribal Auxiliaries* (Williamsburg, VA: Tribal Analysis Center, 2008), 1.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, M. Nazif Shahrani, “Introduction: Marxist ‘Revolution’ and Islamic Resistance in Afghanistan,” in *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert L. Canfield (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1984), 3–57.

<sup>10</sup> Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); and Roohullah Ramin, *Afghanistan: Exploring the Dynamics of Sociopolitical Strife and Persistence of the Insurgency*, Occasional Paper 2 (Ottawa: Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, 2008), 1–38.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Thomas Johnson and M. Chris Mason, “Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan,” *Orbis* 51, no. 1 (2006); *The Panjpai Relationship with the Other Durranis* (Williamsburg, VA: Tribal Analysis Center, January 2009); *The Quetta Shura: A Tribal Analysis* (Williamsburg, VA: Tribal Analysis Center, October 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Mohammed Osman Tariq, *Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan* (London: Crisis States Research Centre, December 2008), 1–19; Shahmahmood Miakhel, “The Importance of Tribal Structures and Pakhtunwali in Afghanistan: Their Role in Security and Governance,” in *Challenges and Dilemmas of State-Building in Afghanistan: Report of a Study Trip to Kabul*, ed. Arpita Basu Roy (Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2008), 97–110; Phillips, 1–2.

<sup>13</sup> Kristian Berg Harpviken, “Transcending Traditionalism: The Emergence of Non-State Military Formations in Afghanistan,” *Journal of Peace Research* 34, no. 3 (August 1997), 271–287; Rubin, 48–52.

<sup>14</sup> Rubin, 58–59.

<sup>15</sup> Miakhel.

<sup>16</sup> Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, Its Army, and the Wars Within* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 42–75; Julian Schofield and Reeta Tremblay, “Why Pakistan Failed: Tribal Focoism in Kashmir,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 1, March 2008, 23–38.

<sup>17</sup> Altaf Gauhar, *Ayub Khan: Pakistan’s First Military Ruler* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1993); Schofield and Tremblay; Nawaz, 205–214.

<sup>18</sup> Tariq, 9.

<sup>19</sup> David J. Katz, “Responses to Central Authority in Nuristan: The Case of the Vaygal Valley Kalasha,” in *Revolutions and Rebellions in Afghanistan*, 97, 99.

<sup>20</sup> Tariq, 8–9.

<sup>21</sup> Richard F. Nyrop and Donald M. Seekins, eds., “National Security,” *Afghanistan Country Study* (Washington, DC: Foreign Area Studies, The American University, 1986); Lester W. Grau and Michael A. Gress, *The Soviet-Afghan War: How a Superpower Fought and Lost* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 50–51; Allan Orr, “Recasting Afghan Strategy,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 20, no. 1 (March 2009), 87–117.

<sup>22</sup> Zalmay Khalilzad, *Prospects for the Afghan Interim Government* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991); Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 2<sup>d</sup> edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>23</sup> In practice, there are often competing jirgas and shuras at the village, district, and provincial levels. Consequently, deciphering which are “legitimate” and “illegitimate” can be difficult for outsiders. In addition, the Taliban have targeted tribal leaders in some areas who resist their activity. Many have been killed, while others have fled to cities such as Kabul and Kandahar.

<sup>24</sup> Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2008: A Survey of the Afghan People* (Kabul: Asia Foundation, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> On declining perceptions of the United States, see, for example, ABC News/BBC/ARD Poll, *Afghanistan—Where Things Stand* (Kabul: ABC News/BBC/ARD, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> Jihadist Web site <www.AlBoraq.info>, February 4, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Zahid Hussain, “Pakistan Turns to Tribal Militias,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 30, 2008, A13.

<sup>28</sup> Jane Perlez and Pir Zubair Shah, “Pakistan Uses Tribal Militias in Taliban War,” *The New York Times*, October 24, 2008.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America’s War in Afghanistan* (New York: Norton, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Author interview with Minister of Interior Mohammad Hanif Atmar, September 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Author interview with Afghanistan cabinet minister, October 2009.