



INSS ROUNDTABLE SERIES ON  
POST-CONFLICT STABILIZATION AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT  
"Rebuilding Afghanistan's Security Institutions"  
22 JULY, 2004

**Featured Guest:** Deputy Minister of Defense of Afghanistan, Abdul Rahim Wardak

### **Introduction**

General Abdul Rahim Wardak, a distinguished veteran of the war against the USSR and current Deputy Minister of Defense (MOD), gave a roundtable presentation at the National Defense University on July 22, 2004. In his opening comments, Minister Wardak observed that the creation of the Afghan National Army (ANA) has been a great success to date, due mainly to continued American hard work and assistance. He emphasized that the ANA is becoming an ethically balanced organization which is committed to Afghan national interests and is having a significant impact on overall national security. He also stated that most of the retention and recruitment problems that had plagued the ANA in its early days had been resolved so that desertion rates have dropped significantly. It is now time to accelerate programs in training ANA forces.

### **Afghan National Army**

Rebuilding the country and the security forces has been a difficult task since the Soviets left Afghanistan in 1989, leaving the country to the war factions and later the Taliban. The army was reconstituted after the fall of the Taliban and is the first army created by a civilian Afghan government in over 30 years. ANA soldiers have already performed a variety of missions ranging from stability operations to countering anti-coalition forces and they are playing a greater role in increasing national security. The use of embedded trainers is one reason why the ANA has been so successful at some of its most important missions. For the continued success of this program however, it is necessary for embedded trainers to stay with their units for at least two years, if not longer.

Another reason for ANA success is the enthusiastic public support received from the Afghan population across the country, and praise received from the international forces with which the ANA has operated.

One of the army's main near-term objectives is to preserve national sovereignty and strengthen the authority of the central government. Long-term objectives include Afghanistan gaining complete autonomy, becoming a source of stability in the region and its military participating in worldwide peacekeeping operations.

There are many obstacles, according to Wardak, that must be overcome if these long-term goals are to be achieved. Two of the most prominent challenges concern the overall size of the forces and its equipment (and the funding issues related to that). The training for the ANA grew from an initial two battalions to four and the Afghan government is now requesting funding for a fifth battalion. At this rate, sustained training would be completed in September 2007, rather than 2009 as previously planned. There should be corps for Kandahar and Herat as well as the central corps already established. Funding is identified for this. There also needs to be rapid reaction air capabilities. As yet no funding has

been identified. Currently, the ANA has 10,660 soldiers with a central corps of 7,600. There are 2,800 men undergoing training and 1,300 waiting to start training.

## **Elections**

If all this training is complete in time for the October elections, there will be 15,000 Afghan soldiers to help with election security. In addition to this, close to 25,000 Afghan police and 3,000 additional NATO troops (beyond the 6,500 already deployed) will also be helping with security, bringing the estimated number of forces to 43,000 in addition to help from Combined Forces Command (CFC) forces.

One of the problems associated with providing election (and more general) security is Afghan terrain. The many rugged, mountainous regions of the country inhibit movement by ground and place a high premium on the ability to transport troops and material by air, especially by helicopter. However, Afghanistan has no standing air force and no financial means to acquire the necessary aircraft and other equipment to support extensive air operations. The army does hope to have a few helicopters in time for the elections in October.

## **Army Relationship With Other Security Elements**

The ANA has had the tough job of working in conjunction with a multitude of security elements operating in Afghanistan, including the US and coalition forces, the UN, NATO, provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) as well as the AMF (militia forces reorganized by the Afghan government). The overall relationship between the army and these various elements has been good, particularly in regards to the ANP and PRTs. Throughout the reconstruction process, there has been close cooperation between the Minister of Interior (MOI), who is responsible for the police force, and the Ministry of Defense. The army was crucial to helping provide security during the Constitutional Loya Jirga and they are currently working with the MOI to design a security plan for the upcoming elections.

They also have a close relationship with PRTs, helping them with disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) or other local security requirements as needed. In general, the PRTs have been very useful in providing local security which the army or police cannot provide due to lack of numbers and equipment. At the moment, there are few PRTs outside the south and east of the country; therefore, the plan is for NATO to start three more PRTs (one in Faryab) and to takeover the German-led PRT in Kunduz and the UK-led PRT in Mazar-i-Sharif.

## **Securing the Borders**

While Afghanistan may hope to one day become a beacon of stability in the region, the country still has border issues with many of their neighbors. Wardak noted that the flow of drugs and arms, as well as Taliban and other militants, across the borders between Pakistan, Iran and other neighbors, still causes great concern. These border problems contribute to some of Afghanistan's most difficult internal challenges: foreign-instigated rebellion, political and religious militancy (Taliban, al Qaeda and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's group), covert operations by neighboring countries and the growth of organized crime. Moreover, many well-known Taliban leaders are living freely in major Pakistani cities. Wardak expressed concern that, to date, Pakistan has not arrested any major Taliban leaders even though they live and operate more or less in the open. However, the Pakistanis have taken action against foreign terrorists (Al Qaeda). Iranian influence in Afghanistan is exercised through ties to Shi'a co-religionists (Hazaras) and through links to the Herat warlord, Ismail Khan. The Russians are also providing some direct military assistance in the North. All these problems add to the already difficult task of creating a new security force from scratch and coordinating its border operations as well as its other activities. One of the problems in dealing with the anti-Coalition forces is their clear expectation that they can outlast the Coalition. There is a need to reaffirm credibility of the CFC's long-term commitment.

In the meantime, the Afghan government continues to press ahead with new initiatives to help improve the cross-border situation. A project to train 5,000 national guard specifically for border security has been shelved, but another pilot project will make tribes on both the Afghan-Pakistan and Afghan-Iranian frontiers responsible for border security in their own areas. Local Afghan forces, border police or the ANA could provide assistance and legitimacy. Experience has shown that the tribes, jealous of their territorial prerogatives, are often willing to preserve their land without the central government instructing them to do so. Even a little ANA presence in border areas is sufficient enough to provide assistance to the tribes and based on ANA popularity among the general population, there should not be much objection to their influence in those regions. However, this concept has drawbacks. A key issue is that the heavily armed tribesmen are largely independent of central government authority; pursuing their own parochial interests, they could thus spark border incidents and create international problems contrary to Kabul's wishes. The 12,000 Border police to be trained by Germany and the US and commanded by the Minister of Interior can also help.

## **Internal Security**

Another major issue is DDR, where cantoning heavy weapons is the key. Done carefully, it can change the power balance in a positive way. However, the program has been moving very slowly. It took 3 months to agree upon a definition of what weapons were to be included. Now there is movement. In Kabul, at last, there has been 90-95 percent effectiveness. In the North and the Panjshir Valley there is still a lot to do. A decree has been issued banning retaining local militias and some commanders are being transferred and their militias dissolved. This will take time.

Prepared by: Ambassador Robert Oakley, Ms. Bindi Patel, NDU-INSS & COL Jack Gill, USA, NDU-NESA, 8/1/04

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The INSS Roundtable Series on Post-Conflict Stabilization and Crisis Management (PCS/CM) explores challenges to the effective utilization of U.S. diplomacy, security assistance and military power, often in concert with allies and partners, for the purposes suppressing or mitigating conflicts and achieving post-conflict stabilization and associated humanitarian objectives in war-torn countries.

### Previous PCS/CM Roundtables:

"Afghanistan Roundtable with Minister of Internal Affairs Ali Jalali", June 4, 2004

Speaker: Mr. Ali Jalali, Minister of Interior, Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan

Mr. Jalali, a former Afghan Army officer, Mujaheddin leader, security expert, radio personality and author, was made the Interior Minister of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan in 2002. He addressed Afghanistan's general security situation, the ongoing development of its national police, security challenges for elections and Afghanistan's war on drugs. This report is not available online. For more information, please contact COL Paul Hughes at the number listed below.

**"Afghanistan: An Assessment of Current Challenges"**, February 6, 2004.

Speaker: Mr. Ali Jalali, Minister of the Interior, Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan.

Mr. Jalali, a former Afghan Army officer, Mujaheddin leader, security expert, radio personality and author, was made the Interior Minister of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan in 2002. He addressed Afghanistan's general security situation, the ongoing development of its national police, security challenges for elections and Afghanistan's war on drugs. For more information, please see the online INSS report "[Afghanistan: Current and Future Challenges](#)".

**"Meeting Iraq's Security Requirements: Where do we go from here?"**, December 15, 2003.

Speaker: Mr. Walter Slocombe, Former Senior Advisor for National Security & Defense, Coalition Provisional Authority.

Mr. Walter Slocombe, formerly Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from 1994-2001, served as the Coalition Provisional Authority's Senior Advisor for National Security and Defense from May to November, 2003. In this capacity, he was CPA's senior official responsible for assessing Iraq's future defense needs and directing the process of creating the New Iraq Army. He also was closely involved in synchronizing these efforts with on-going U.S.-led operations aimed at stabilizing the country and defeating threats to Iraq's post-Saddam recovery. For more information, please visit [http://www.csis.org/features/040209\\_slocombe.pdf](http://www.csis.org/features/040209_slocombe.pdf).

**"Bringing Congo Back from the Brink: A Report from the Field"**, October 24, 2003.

Speakers: Dr. William Durch, Senior Fellow, Henry L. Stimson Center and Mr. Paul Simo, Director for Africa at the International Human Rights Law Group.

Dr. William J. Durch of the Stimson Center, together with colleague Paul Simo of the International Human Rights Law Group, discussed their recent trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DROC), where they observed on-going stabilization operations being conducted by the United Nations and the European Union. In particular, the EU's effort, *Operation Artemis*, has focused on security stabilization with the goal of handing the operation over to an expanded UN mission in the near future. For more information, please visit [http://www.hrlawgroup.org/country\\_programs/drc/default.asp](http://www.hrlawgroup.org/country_programs/drc/default.asp).

For more information on the Post-Conflict Stabilization and Crisis Management series, please contact COL Paul Hughes, NDU-INSS, (202) 685-2371, email: [hughesp@ndu.edu](mailto:hughesp@ndu.edu).

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