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# Afghanistan at a Crossroads: Challenges, Opportunities, and a Way Ahead

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# **Bottom Line**

- **Mission summary:**

- Undertook a two-week research trip to Afghanistan to interview Afghan and international officials in order to analyze why the security situation deteriorated this year and to develop recommendations for adjustments in U.S. policies

- **Bottom line up front:**

- The deteriorating security situation in 2006 was principally the result of the combination of two factors:
  - A decision by the Taliban and its external supporters to escalate the scope and character of enemy operations
  - Weak or bad governance, particularly in southern Afghanistan, that created a vacuum of power into which the enemy moved
- These developments have put Afghanistan at a crossroads:
  - Looking down one path, an escalating threat and the crisis in governance would if unchecked likely produce a secular trend of increasing enemy activity and deteriorating security
  - Looking down the other path, these negative trends can be reversed through an asymmetrical counter-escalation by the Afghan government and its international supporters
  - This counter-escalation does not require more U.S. or international military forces but does require new diplomatic initiatives vis-à-vis Pakistan, renewed energy and urgency in shaping the U.S. partnership with the Afghan government, and more resources for security and development programs

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# Research and Assessment

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# Assessment

- **The deteriorating security conditions in 2006 resulted from an enemy decision to escalate its operations in a way that exploited a vacuum of governance in the southern Afghanistan**

- Since 2002, the Taliban has enjoyed a sanctuary in Pakistan that has enabled recruitment, training, finance, equipping, and infiltration of fighters
  - Pakistan's ISI provides some operational support to the Taliban, though the level at which this assistance is authorized within the Pakistani government remains unclear
  - During this period, Taliban leaders have pursued a classic insurgency strategy
    - From 2002 through late 2004, they were risk averse and focused on survivability
    - From late-2004 to the present, they have aggressively sought to expand their scope of action through increased kinetic and non-kinetic activities
- Since 2002, the government of Afghanistan has generally failed to project good governance to the provincial and district levels
  - Too often, corrupt or ineffective governors and district administrators have been appointed for patronage or political reasons
  - Despite U.S. and German training and assistance programs, police forces typically have been understaffed and ill-equipped and have been involved in corruption and illegal activities
  - In areas with weak and bad governance, the Afghan population has become demoralized and is less willing to run risks to support the Afghan government against enemy encroachments



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## **Assessment (cont.)**

- In addition, the Taliban is attempting to provide some services – dispute resolution and security – in some areas as a “shadow government”
- In 2006, the Taliban and its sponsors choose to escalate the insurgency, with the assistance of al Qaeda, other insurgent groups, and external support networks, in order to take advantage of opportunities they saw to set the conditions for a return to power
  - The Taliban sought to strike NATO-ISAF forces in order to induce European and Canadian parliaments to pull out of Afghanistan
  - The Taliban campaign plan was designed to seize control of key regions in the south in order to isolate and seize control of Kandahar city
  - Beginning in spring 2006, the Taliban implemented the first elements of this plan by concentrating larger elements in Helmand province and elsewhere and attempting on at least 42 occasions to seize key district centers (Sangin, Musa Qala, Garmser, Kajaki, Nawa, and Khan Shin) by overrunning undermanned and outgunned Afghan security forces
  - A key point of consensus among Afghan and international interviewees: “It is not that the enemy is so strong but that the Afghan government is so weak.”
- **The Taliban has not achieved its campaign objective of laying siege to the city of Kandahar but has undermined security conditions in the south**
  - Areas in which the population provides coerced support or is subject to Taliban “shadow government” have expanded, and larger areas are non-permissive for civilian or small-unit military activity



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# Scenarios

- **Looking forward, the key question is whether the enemy's escalation in 2006 represents a single-year surge or a secular trend of year-on-year increases in capability**
  - Some interviewees said that the increase in activity taxed the limits of the Taliban's logistical and other capabilities and that operations likely would fall back down toward previous plateau's in the future
  - Other interviewees said that, looking back over the past five years, there is a secular rising trend or spiral development in the Taliban insurgency, with each year's activity representing an increase over that of the previous year
- **Key judgment: The evidence more strongly supports the view that the Taliban is mounting steady year-on-year improvements in its capabilities**
  - In 2005, the effort to increase terrorist attacks, particularly suicide bombings, bolstered morale and garnered greater press coverage and was followed by increases in financial, material, and manpower support – which paved the way for further escalation in 2006
  - In 2006, the Taliban's success in challenging the Afghan government's control in the south has given them greater visibility and prestige and has enabled further development of financial, logistics, and recruitment networks
    - Indications are increasing that the Taliban's logistic networks now extend not only to Pakistan but also to Central Asia and Iran

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## Scenarios (cont.)

- Taliban commanders believe that they have adequate levels of funding to sustain their current elevated levels of operations
- In 2006, the Taliban enjoyed a surge in recruitment, allowing the movement to increase and sustain high levels of violence
  - In the south, the Taliban has achieved psychological momentum, with the Afghan people in many areas fearing the worst and starting to adopt a neutral position between the Taliban and the government for the sake of survival
- **Key implication: If unchecked, the Taliban threat is likely to grow in 2007 and beyond, further undermining security and eventually imperiling the legitimacy of the Afghan government**

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# Recommendations for a Way Ahead



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# Strategic approach

- **The Afghan government and its international partners can counter and defeat the Taliban's rising capabilities through two approaches:**
  - Inducing Pakistan's leaders to deprive the Taliban of sanctuary and support, to arrest its key leadership, and to dismantle training and other infrastructure in Pakistan
  - Hardening Afghanistan against insurgent activities by escalating efforts to develop Afghan National Security Forces, to improve governance, and to stimulate economic development
- **In partnership with the Afghan government, the United States should increase efforts to move along both of these lines simultaneously**
  - Hardening Afghanistan against the insurgency reinforces efforts to induce changes in Pakistani policy, and inducing a change in Islamabad's approach to the Taliban reduces the threat and makes hardening Afghanistan against remaining insurgent capability easier
- **However, this must involve a change in the mindset of Afghanistan's partners and friends**
  - The military escalation by the Taliban means that Afghanistan should not be viewed as a country engaged in "post-conflict stabilization" but rather one facing an active insurgency
  - This in turn means that U.S. civilian and military policies, as well as those of other friends of Afghanistan, must be resourced and pursued with an urgency appropriate to war

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# *Inducing cooperation from Pakistan*

- **President Musharraf has not made the strategic choice to cooperate fully with the United States and Afghanistan to suppress the Taliban**
  - There are some positive signs of greater cooperation as a result of recent U.S entreaties
  - However, these initial actions by Pakistan are insufficient to end the cross-border insurgent threat
- **The United States, working with President Karzai, should undertake a new diplomatic initiative vis-à-vis Pakistan to achieve a rapprochement between the two countries that includes an end to destabilizing Pakistani actions**
  - It should be grounded in an understanding of potential Pakistani motivations for providing sanctuary and support to the Taliban and other insurgents
  - It should take advantage of President Karzai's willingness to reach out to Pakistan and to address any and all of Islamabad's legitimate concerns
  - It should take advantage of the multiple sources of leverage that the United States has over Pakistan
  - It should present President Musharraf with a deal that takes into account all of the possible motivations for Pakistan's conduct and that enables Musharraf to act against the interests of those elements in the Pakistan government that seek restoration of imperial control over Afghanistan

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# Pakistani motivations

- Though Pakistan's reasons for giving the Taliban sanctuary are unclear, the following set of potential motivations exist:

- Fear of the political pull of a strong and successful Afghanistan on the 25 million Pashtuns who live in Pakistan and the resurrection of the Pashtunistan issue
- Fear of the possibility that key regional rivals – India, Iran, or Russia – will secure dominant influence over the new Afghan government and use Afghanistan as a platform to work against Pakistan's interests or stability
- A desire to hedge against the possibility of U.S. withdrawal by retaining the Taliban as an instrument for what would be an inevitable subsequent proxy competition among regional powers
- An imperial aspiration to control Afghanistan as a satellite state and to secure "strategic depth" against India
- An aspiration to control the land and trade routes to Central Asia
- A domestic political imperative to serve the interests of radical Islamic parties in Pakistan, which represent the principal social base for Musharraf's regime
- A geopolitical imperative to create insecurity in order to obtain benefits by helping reduce insecurity – the logic of a "strategic rentier state"

- In all likelihood, different elements in Pakistani regime are acting on the basis of differing motivations

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## Karzai's new posture

- In a one-and-a-half-hour meeting, President Karzai set forth a rationale for and proposed a coordinated U.S.-Afghan approach to Pakistan
  - He indicated that Iran and Russia were becoming more assertive in Afghanistan and adopting more adversarial postures
  - He said that while Pakistan was supporting the Taliban and other insurgents, Afghanistan needed to find a way to achieve a rapprochement with Pakistan that would end such destabilizing activities and create a balance against Iran and Russia
  - He suggested that the United States mediate between Afghanistan and Pakistan – “your two main allies in the region” – in order to resolve the issues that resulted in the current adversarial relationship
  - He argued that, based on a variety of their actions, Pakistani leaders betrayed a fear that secular Pashtuns, who historically have been the “dominant political group” in Pashtun areas of Pakistan, felt the political attraction of the new Afghanistan
  - He asked that as a first step the United States “engage deeply and in a smart way” with Pakistan to find out “what the Pakistanis want from us”
  - He pledged that he would present for consideration in Afghanistan’s democratic process whatever issues the Pakistanis wanted to put on the table, even including the sensitive question of the future of the Durand Line

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## *Karzai's new posture (cont.)*

- Karzai stressed that the United States needed to engage Pakistan first – “Musharraf will not be honest with us in the room” – and then begin a “Camp David-style mediation” to find ways to address Islamabad’s interests if possible
- This new approach represents an opportunity to move Afghanistan-Pakistan relations off the confrontational posture of recent years





# Sources of U.S. leverage

- Although Pakistani leaders have historically proven to be difficult to shift from a committed course of action, the United States has a wide variety of points of leverage:

- Diplomatic leverage:
  - Ability to provide Pakistan with relationship to a second major power besides China
  - Ability to organize NATO countries in a coordinated diplomatic campaign to pressure Pakistan to curtail insurgent sanctuaries or to reward Pakistan for positive action
  - Ability to disclose information about Pakistan's ambiguous role on issues related to the Taliban and the global war on terrorism
- Direct assistance:
  - Ability to increase or decrease access to modern weapons needed by Islamabad to pursue a regional military balance with India
  - Ability to increase or decrease assistance for economic reform and development
  - Provision of Coalition operations support funds (totaling more than \$8 billion during past five years)
  - Ability to fund at a high level programs to enable Musharraf to pursue his professed goal of putting Pakistan on a trajectory to become a moderate, progressive country
- Leverage on Afghanistan related issues:
  - Ability to influence Afghanistan to address border issues (Durand Line and Pushtunistan)

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## **Sources of U.S. leverage (cont.)**

- Leverage on Afghanistan-related issues (cont.):
  - Ability to influence Afghanistan on issues related to the positions of Pakistan's rivals in Afghanistan (Indian consulates, Northern Alliance influence, etc.)
  - Ability to influence Afghanistan to calibrate the relative influence in key regional powers in the building of the new Afghanistan (determining whether Kabul favors one country over another)
- Leverage on regional balance of power:
  - Ability to increase the level of U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relationship to the levels of U.S.-Afghanistan and U.S.-India relationships (strategic partnership, cooperation in key technology sectors, etc.)
  - Ability to upgrade U.S. ties with Afghanistan and/or India to put pressure on Pakistan's regional position
  - Ability to appeal to New Delhi on India-Pakistan issues (e.g., Kashmir, normalization of relations, gas pipelines, etc.)
  - Ability to appeal to Beijing to press Pakistan on Afghanistan-related issues, particularly in light of constructive stances China has taken in recent meetings with Afghan leaders
  - Ability to fund infrastructure that affects Pakistan's economic and political influence in Central Asia
- Leverage on internal Pakistani politics:
  - Ability to pay attention to military officers other than Musharraf and create a more competitive climate to address U.S. interests
  - Ability to press the military regime to open up political space for civilian parties, to grant greater authority to parliament, or to move rapidly toward democratic elections

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# Proposed Initiative

- **The United States should work with Afghanistan to put together an initiative designed to result in a quid pro quo deal with Pakistan to suppress the Taliban and other insurgents**
  - First, the initiative should begin with an engagement between U.S. and Afghan leaders to come to a common understanding on the approach to Pakistan
  - Second, the United States should then engage Pakistan bilaterally to probe what goals or fears are motivating Pakistan's destabilizing actions in Afghanistan
  - Third, the United States should mediate discussions between Afghanistan and Pakistan to find ways that Kabul can address whatever legitimate issues or fears Pakistan might raise
  - Fourth, the United States should drive discussions toward a quid pro quo deal along the following lines:
    - Pakistan must suppress the Taliban and other insurgents on Pakistani territory, including turning over to Afghanistan the top 20 to 40 leaders of the insurgency
    - In exchange, Afghanistan would find ways to allay Pakistani concerns on issues such as Pashtunistan and the influence of other regional powers, including a de facto tilt toward Pakistan in regional relations
    - In addition, the United States should offer to fund or finance the building of infrastructure to privilege the Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor to Central Asia:
      - Roads, tunnels, bridges to route ground traffic from Central Asia toward the Pakistani port at Gwadar (and away from the Iranian port at Chabahar)

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## *Proposed Initiative (cont.)*

- Hydrocarbon pipelines from Central Asia through Afghanistan into Pakistan (including spurs to stimulate economic development in Pakistan's tribal areas) and extending to Gwadar and India
- Railroads connecting Central Asian rail networks through Afghanistan to the Pakistani railhead near Quetta
- Tribal groups along the routes of this infrastructure should receive key employment and economic development benefits in exchange for guaranteeing security in their areas
  - The building of this infrastructure, which should be a cooperative trilateral undertaking, should be made contingent on the prior cessation of the cross-border insurgency directed at Afghanistan
  - (It should be noted that construction of this infrastructure would simultaneously serve U.S. policy interests vis-à-vis Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and Central Asia)
- Fifth, the United States should utilize, as necessary, its other sources of leverage in the course of the negotiations to induce Pakistan to accept the deal
  - To encourage Beijing to influence Pakistan positively, China should be given a role in construction activities and enabled to link up its infrastructure development with the new north-south routes
  - NATO nations should be mobilized at the appropriate time to link their relations with Pakistan to implementation of such a bargain
  - Other positive and negative incentives should be used based on assessments of what issues are holding back Pakistan's acceptance of this framework
- Effectively, this creates a common U.S.-Afghan approach to address all of Pakistan's fears and interests, without giving ground to any potential desire to subordinate Afghanistan

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## *Proposed initiative (cont.)*

- **Initial implementation step:**

- Utilizing Karzai's September visit: The United States should propose that Karzai's travel plans accommodate a visit to Crawford to develop with President Bush and the Principals a common understanding of how to approach the Pakistani leadership along the lines of this overall initiative

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# Hardening Afghanistan

- Because the Taliban threat is escalating and sufficient cooperation from Pakistan is not yet forthcoming, the United States should lead an effort to mount a counter-escalation that will overwhelm the prospective insurgent threat
  - This escalation does not require additional U.S. or other international forces, though it will require new financial resources
  - Instead, it should leverage Afghan political and military capabilities and non-military instruments of power, particularly improvements in governance and economic development
- Key baskets for new actions:
  - Increasing the effectiveness of Karzai's leadership
  - Developing a multi-year Afghan/U.S./NATO counterinsurgency strategy and plan to secure contested areas
  - Escalating the development of the Afghan National Security Forces
  - Building on effective counterinsurgency techniques
  - Resolving the crisis of weak and bad governance
  - Establishing a record of successes for the election in 2009

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# Increasing Karzai's effectiveness

- Karzai is still the same Karzai – an indispensable player with major strengths as a political leader but with limitations as a state-builder – but the United States needs to restore the close partnership with him that was the foundation of his most effective periods as president
- There is a three-part formula for maximizing Karzai's effectiveness as a leader
  - Ensure he is confident of his relationship with the United States
  - Coordinate closely with him on a political action plan to deal with spoilers and to pursue reforms needed to normalize the country
  - Organize joint processes involving Afghans and the international community to compensate for Karzai's limitations at an institution builder (e.g., the Joint Election Management Board that organized national elections)
- Karzai is currently underperforming – for example, making bad decisions that have harmed the quality of governance – because the United States and the international community have departed from the formula that produced past successes
  - Unlike other figures on the Afghan political landscape, Karzai has opted not to keep in the field the kind of informal instruments of power that other Afghan actors have sought to maintain (e.g., militias, patronage networks, narcotics-based financial capabilities, links with foreign intelligence services, etc.)

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## ***Increasing Karzai's effectiveness (cont.)***

- As a result, his power as president depends on still-developing formal institutions (such as the police, the army, and state ministries) and on his relationship with the United States and the international community
  - When Karzai has been confident of his relationship with the United States, he has been willing to take strong and risky actions in dealing with potential spoilers (such as the sequence of actions needed to disarm warlords by political means in 2003-2005)
  - When he is not confident of his ties with the United States, Karzai becomes a balancer, with a tendency to accommodate spoilers who have strong informal instruments of power
  - Key interviewees said that Karzai believes his linkage with the United States has been lost and that Karzai has drifted into a detrimental reliance on advice from potential spoilers such as Rabbani, Sayaf, and Fahim
  - A critical example of the negative consequences of this drift was the undermining of the reform process of the Ministry of Interior by the appointment, at Fahim's suggestion, of 14 senior police officials who have links to criminal networks
- **Needed actions:**
    - Appoint Amb. Zalmay Khalilzad as a special presidential envoy for Afghanistan: In one move, this would restore the vital U.S. connection with Karzai and enable the United States to catalyze good decisions on his part



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## ***Increasing Karzai's effectiveness (cont.)***

### **Needed actions (cont.):**

- Persuade Karzai of the value and importance of the new Policy Action Group (PAG) structure that can provide joint staffing of needed strategies and action plans
  - The PAG is a planning and implementation structure under Afghanistan's National Security Council that will be composed of officials of the Afghan government and the international community
  - The PAG will help the Afghan government staff and operationalize strategies and plans in key areas related to successful counterinsurgency efforts
  - The PAG has four operational groups: intelligence fusion cell, security operations group, strategic communications group, and outreach reconstruction group
  - Though it has just begun work, this structure has great promise in enabling President Karzai to plan and carry out complex initiatives
- Support the creation of a national reform movement composed of national and local leaders from all communities to support actions by Karzai to counter corruption and to serve as a political counterweight to spoilers who pressure Karzai to maintain the status quo

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# Developing a multi-year COIN plan

- The transition to NATO-ISAF control of military operations in Afghanistan is an optimal moment to develop a synchronized Afghan/U.S./NATO strategy and plan to prevail over insurgents elements over a projected period of time
- Positive developments to build upon:
  - CFC-A has steadily improved its counterinsurgency operations since the shift from a counter-terrorist strategy in late 2003 and recently has had positive enduring security effects through its “engage, clear, hold, and build” approach
  - NATO-ISAF has developed a complementary concept for counterinsurgency operations – establishing and expanding Afghan Development Zones – that focuses on creating enduring security in specific locations to enable development and then incrementally pushing out security to outlying areas over time
  - The Afghan Ministry of Defense is eager to engage with NATO-ISAF to develop a multi-year plan to expand security zones step-by-step until all contested areas are fully secured
  - CSTC-A is postured to provide steadily growing and increasingly effective Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police forces – which are the essential instruments needed to effect the above-noted security strategies

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## **Multi-year COIN plan (*cont.*)**

- Needed actions:**

- Utilize the Policy Action Group, and specifically the Security Operations Group, to develop an integrated, synchronized, multi-year counterinsurgency plan to guide the building of ANSF and the deployment and operations of ANSF and NATO-ISAF
- Undertake planning for countering next year's likely Taliban offensive and for a projected five-year campaign to defeat the insurgency
- Base the plan on creating a mosaic of security institutions that reach from the national down to the village level
  - In light of progress in building the ANSF, the time is right to do the detailed work of determining what Afghan capabilities will be needed to secure contested areas village by village, district by district, and province by province
  - Providing village-level security – a challenge never previously addressed and a gap that the Taliban has exploited through intimidation campaigns – should be achieved by enhanced police presence combined with unarmed and/or armed police auxiliaries that have the ability to call in police or ANA from nearby locations within a reasonable time
  - The absence of a village-level security strategy, which prompted Karzai to seek to mobilize informal militias earlier this year, is a need that can be addressed through state structures but in an “Afghan way”
  - The analysis undertaken to develop this multi-year counterinsurgency campaign should then inform CSTC-A plans for building, training, and equipping the ANSF and U.S. and NATO plans for shaping needed residual military capabilities (to mentor the ANSF, to provide key enablers such as air support and intelligence, etc.)

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# **Multi-year COIN plan (cont.)**

- Needed actions (cont.):**

- Develop approaches to compensate for the “Achilles’s heel” of the NATO-ISAF Afghan Development Zones concept
  - The NATO-ISAF concept envisions creating sufficient security in key cities and towns to attract development activities by NGOs and private enterprise – that is, “if you build up security, they will come”
    - This is partly because NATO views its “military mission” not to include development activities run by NATO itself and because many NATO countries lack CERP-like monies
  - It is likely that, at a minimum, there will be a substantial lag in the arrival of NGO or private sector-driven development, as organizations and investors calculate whether security will in fact be enduring
  - Because achieving synchronized effects is crucial to winning popular confidence – development must quickly follow improved security – the United States should develop mechanisms to direct reconstruction and development into the Afghan Development Zones (through Army Corps of Engineers infrastructure projects or other U.S.-owned and -operated economic development instruments)
- Undertake an assessment of the optimal approaches to achieving U.S. strategic objectives in Afghanistan in a NATO-ISAF command structure
  - The assumption of control by NATO-ISAF will create a more complex and potentially less responsive command structure
  - It would be wise to send someone like LTG Kicklighter or LTG Barno (USA, ret.) to assess issues related to the pursuit of U.S. objectives in a NATO context



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# *Escalating development of ANSF*

- **Enlarge the vision for the role of the Afghan National Security Forces with the objective of enabling them to “fill the space” in contested areas and eventually to take ownership of security responsibilities for Afghanistan, with only some residual international mentoring and support**
- **Positive developments to build upon:**
  - The ANSF are maturing, and it is now appropriate to envision the next level of their development
  - The ANA program has been adjusted and synchronized to overcome the challenges that arose in the course of the initial acceleration of ANA development (e.g., embedded training team coverage, infrastructure development, equipment availability)
  - CSTC-A has programmed for the re-acceleration of ANA training and fielding to a level that not only can maintain the force structure as recruits complete their enlistment tours but also can expand the ANA toward the 50,000 and 70,000 milestones
  - CSTC-A has fielded a strong program to reform the Ministry of Interior police forces, one comparable to the successful Ministry of Defense reform and capacity-building program
  - CSTC-A has put into place a new, more robust police training and equipping program that is poised to start delivering and fielding major capability in early 2007
    - The training program takes cognizance of the twin needs to develop police appropriate to enforce the rule of law in a democratic system and to protect the population in a counter-insurgency environment



## ***Escalating development of ANSF (cont.)***

- Positive developments to build upon (cont.):**

- CFC-A and CJTF-76 have initiated a program of joint exercises with the leadership of the ANSF – a good step in starting the process of enabling the ANSF to assume security responsibilities over time
  - For Operation Mountain Lion, ANSF leaders were brought in to participate in a pre-operation table top exercise
  - For Operation Mountain Thrust, ANSF leaders jointly conducted the pre-operation exercise with Coalition officers
  - For Operation Mountain Fury, ANSF leaders took the lead in conducting the pre-operation exercise
- **Needed actions:**
  - Announce the intent and shape the ANSF development program to expand Afghan security capabilities until all contested areas are secured against threats beyond occasional terrorist attacks
    - This means that the ANF program should not be bound by arbitrary ceilings of 62,000 police and 70,000 ANA troops, numbers developed in a lower-threat context
    - Instead, ANSF program targets should be determined by an analysis of the projected requirements to secure contested areas and adjusted as actual experience proves what is needed to achieve enduring security effects
  - When such security is achieved, the ANSF programs can then take “off ramps” and plateau police and ANA numbers at the needed level

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# *Escalating development of ANSF (cont.)*

- **Needed actions (cont.):**

- Provide strong support for efforts of CFC-A and CSTC-A to insist on effective reform of the police structure in the Ministry of Interior
  - Corrupt and criminal elements are making a major play to retain control or a foothold in the ministry despite the reform program
  - The reform process is the single best chance to set right a ministry that is essential to stabilizing Afghanistan through good governance, and this effort cannot succeed if senior ranks are infiltrated by corrupt elements
  - At an appropriate time, Minister Moqbil, who has been part of or acquiesced to this power play, should be replaced with a “Jalali-like” pro-reform figure
- It is imperative that the group of 14 corrupt cronies of Fahim be purged at the end of the probationary period imposed by the international community
  - The United States should use its institution- and capacity-building program, as well as its training and equipping program, as quid pro quo leverage to make these needed changes
  - Washington should fully support CFC-A and CSTC-A in whatever “program brinksmanship” is needed to effect the reforms, even if this delays the program’s implementation
- Expand upon the initial ANA modernization program that will provide body armor, U.S.-made small arms, HUMVEES, air mobility, and other capabilities for a portion of the force
  - At a minimum, the ANA should receive a variety of weapons – mortars, recoilless rifles, etc. – needed to match the equivalent capabilities of the Taliban

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# **Escalating development of ANSF (cont.)**

## **Needed actions (cont.):**

- In addition, CSTC-A should be asked to propose capabilities that the ANSF should receive in order to overmatch and dominate the Taliban
- Establish a mechanism for European countries and Canada to fund ANSF development, modernization, and sustainment and impose a “success-strategy tax” on all countries participating in NATO-ISAF
  - Because the success of the ANSF is the vehicle that will allow NATO to complete its mission in Afghanistan and to draw down forces over time, all NATO members should play roles in paying for what it takes to succeed
- Create an Afghanistan/U.S./NATO combined intelligence fusion center and joint operations center at the soonest practicable time, thereby bringing the ANSF in as integral element in planning and executing operations and setting the stage for the eventual hand off of security responsibilities
  - Though it will take several years before the ANSF will be ready to assume full responsibilities, it is not too early to start working with ANSF leadership to prepare the ground work for such transfers
- Plan to subsidize the operations and sustainment of the ANSF, in partnership with other NATO countries, for as long as the threat requires capabilities above the level that the Afghan government can reasonably afford to pay
  - The escalating Taliban threat requires the postponement of the objective of self-sufficiency by the Afghan government in paying ANSF operating and sustainment costs



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# *Escalating development of ANSF (cont.)*

- **Needed actions (cont.):**

- The Ministry of Finance has indicated that, if the Afghan government complies with the current schedule for achieving self-sufficiency, the ANA will need to be capped at 44,000 troops
- This would mean that U.S. and other NATO forces will need to be maintained at current levels indefinitely and that Afghanistan will not be able to take principal responsibility for its own security at any point in the foreseeable future
- Building the ANSF to the level required by the threat and subsidizing ANSF operations and sustainment is the preferable option in terms of creating “partnership capacity” that substitutes for U.S. and other NATO forces and the less costly option in comparison to fielding U.S. and other international forces



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# ***Building on effective COIN techniques***

- While the past three years have seen progressive improvements in the counterinsurgency techniques of the Coalition, there are opportunities to undertake additional innovations
- Positive developments to build upon:
  - Operations Mountain Lion, Thrust, and Fury underscored the powerful synergistic effects of integrated political-military-economic actions in terms of achieving enduring security gains
  - In areas where the population has enduring security, the Afghan people willingly provide intelligence on insurgent activities and cooperate to keep insurgents out
  - The establishment of Regional and Provincial Coordination Centers (RCCs and PCCs) that co-locate operators from Afghan and international security forces has improved situational awareness and responsiveness to security incidents
- Needed actions:
  - Complete the development of a “CORDS-like” parallel and integrated structure to support Afghan counterinsurgency efforts
    - The CORDS structure established a parallel U.S. organization to support each level of the Vietnamese civil and security administrative structure (national, regional, provincial, district) and enabled the United States to support Vietnamese area security and development programs
    - The U.S. support structure in Afghanistan has nearly evolved to that level, but gaps such as the lack of a PRT in every province should be closed.

# **COIN techniques (cont.)**

- Needed actions (cont.):**

- The completed structure should cover support and mentoring in the following ways:
  - National government – supported by international participation the Policy Action Group
  - Ministries of Defense and Interior – supported by CSTC-A capacity and mentoring programs
  - RCCs – supported by CFC-A or NATO-ISAF embeds
  - Provincial government – largely but not completely supported by PRTs or nearby FOBs
  - PCCs – supported by CFC-A or NATO-ISAF embeds
  - District administration – supported by PRT teams traveling among district centers
  - ANA and police units – supported by embedded training teams and police mentors
- This structure will enable the execution of the multi-year counterinsurgency campaign at the village and district levels and the spending of U.S. or other NATO country development resources at the provincial and district levels
- Establish innovative reconstruction and economic development “combat branches” that are an integral part of the military counterinsurgency campaign
  - CERP has been the most effective program by far in terms of delivering reconstruction and economic development effects as part of the counterinsurgency effort
  - National-level development programs, such as that of USAID, do not deliver “area effects,” have seldom been synchronized with military operations, and cannot easily be carried out in contested areas

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# COIN techniques (*cont.*)

- **Needed actions (cont.):**

- Recent operations – such as Mountain Lion in eastern Afghanistan – showed that integrated and synchronized reconstruction (including roads, schools, dams, etc.) is a key element in efforts to develop enduring security
- The integration of combat engineering and Army Corps of Engineers activities in counterinsurgency operations should therefore be built upon
- U.S. forces that are part of NATO should be given funding and authorities to carry out “counterinsurgency infrastructure development,” starting with CFC-A’s proposed \$600 million program for the building of roads in eastern and southern Afghanistan that would connect provincial capitals to the ring road and district centers to provincial roads
- U.S. forces should also be given funds and authorities to create an “Afghanistan Counterinsurgency Economic Development Fund” – an enterprise fund that would be used to provide micro-credit through PRTs and to provide loans to establish Afghan firms or joint Afghan-foreign ventures in agriculture, food processing, building materials, or other sectors
  - A key benefit of such a security-directed economic development effort would be to cement relationships between local leaders and U.S. forces
  - If done in partnership with appropriate Afghan ministries, this economic development effort would enhance the Afghan government’s legitimacy
- When undertaken in poppy-growing areas, this capability would deliver the first real alternative livelihoods to local people – and this in turn would enable other counter-narcotics operations that could over time degrade the funding the Taliban receives from the drug trade

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# COIN techniques (*cont.*)

- **Needed actions (*cont.*):**

- As economic opportunity grows, it will undercut the economic incentives for Afghans to cooperate with the Taliban by accepting money to be a “terrorist for a day”
- Implementing this concept will require no new forces but will demand that CFC-A or U.S. forces under NATO contract with civilian firms or individuals skilled in such economic development and embed such personnel in PRTs or with maneuver forces
- Work with Afghan leaders to develop dense human intelligence networks through tribes in the border areas with Pakistan
  - Minister Wardak and other Afghan leaders have long argued that this traditional mechanism can create a powerful intelligence capability, which could be connected to local police or to Provincial Coordination Centers, and neighboring states, particularly Pakistan, have used this approach to great effect as well
- Develop a strategy and plan to exploit the myriad rivalries and divisions within the Taliban leadership
  - U.S. intelligence analysts indicate that exploitable differences exist in terms of personal rivalries, regional divisions, factional competition, as well as disagreements on ideology, strategy, and tactics
  - DIA analysts should be tasked to do an “opportunities analysis” to feed into the development of a strategy to create dissension within or split the insurgency
- The United States and the Afghan government should create an operational cell that utilizes the current reconciliation program – perhaps upgraded with new incentives – and that explores other political actions to undermine the insurgency and induce defections

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# *Resolving the crisis in governance*

- Enormous popular discontent is building against corrupt and ineffective governance, undermining Karzai's political standing, weakening the legitimacy of the new political order, and creating a vacuum of power in the south and other areas that the Taliban can exploit
- Positive developments to build upon:
  - A consensus exists among key Afghan leaders and international officials on the nature of the problem
  - A number of actors – CFC-A, NATO-ISAF, UNAMA, the Afghan Human Rights Commission, and key Afghan leaders – have extensive data on the quality of governance across the country down to the district level
  - The Afghanistan Compact contains a provision requiring that the Afghan government create a joint Afghan-international committee to vet and recommend appointees to key positions in the government
  - The CSTC-A reform program for the Ministry of Interior provides enormous leverage to effect positive change in a ministry that is the principal interface between the Afghan government and the people
  - LTG Eikenberry has worked successfully with President Karzai to appoint better governors in Zabol, Uruzgan, and Helmand provinces, and the new appointees have performed better and improved security conditions as a result

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## **Crisis of governance (cont.)**

- **Positive developments to build upon (cont.):**

- Recent changes in senior personnel in the judicial sector – particularly the Supreme Court, the prosecutor's office, and the Ministry of Justice – have created a political setting in which ambitious rule of law programs are now feasible
- A successful rule of law pilot project in Wardak province represents an attractive and replicable model for the rest of the country

- **Needed actions:**

- Persuade President Karzai that the political success of Afghanistan requires a systematic effort to improve governance and that the United States will stand with him as this requires removal of figures associate with potential spoilers
- Undertake the following sequence of steps that will create a system to establish and monitor performance of governance down to the district level:
  - Persuade Karzai to implement the Afghanistan Compact requirement to form a committee charged with recommending personnel for senior positions and work with him to appoint reform-oriented Afghans to the committee
  - Work with the Policy Action Group system to create a process to solicit nominations for provincial and district roles from all levels of Afghan society (particularly through Provincial Councils) and to create a presidential personnel system controlled by reform-oriented Afghans
  - Undertake a province-by-province review of the quality and performance of key appointees and make changes as needed



## ***Crisis of governance (cont.)***

### **• Needed actions (cont.):**

- Establish the practice of consulting with provincial and local leaders before selecting nominees for governor and district administrator positions
- Establish concentrated training programs for governors and district administrators to disseminate best governance practices (currently only short seminars are offered)
- Before their appointment, send governor and district administrator nominees to their areas to identify handful of key needs
- Arrange for a package of resources from ministries to address the identified needs upon deployment of the governor or district administrator (money is available but not spent in many ministries)
  - Develop a system among CFC-A, CSTC-A, NATO-ISAF, UNAMA, the Human Rights Commission, and the Afghan National Security Council staff to monitor performance of governors, administrators, and police chiefs (data exists but needs to be systematically pooled and cross checked)
  - Identify for Karzai – on a private basis – the failing or corrupt appointees and arrange for trade outs of such personnel over time as needed
- Mount prosecutions of selected bad actors – abusive police chiefs, spoilers, and officials involved in the drug trade – as an example to others
  - Identify several former governors and police chiefs who have used militias or other devices to undermine their reform-oriented successors – which has been a recent and troubling pattern – and develop the legal cases to prosecute them

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# **Crisis of governance (cont.)**

## **• Needed actions (cont.)**

- Review the performance of key potential spoilers – for example, former warlords who were given political roles under the warlord strategy – and determine whether further actions against them are necessary or desirable
  - Consider working with Karzai to develop the legal basis for prosecuting Dostam for his alleged role in the assault of a member of parliament from his region while at the same time reaching out to second-tier Uzbek leaders to assure them of their community's place in the political order
  - Identify several senior or middle-level government officials involved in the drug trade and prosecute them
- Assume a de facto lead role in enabling the international community to mount a nationwide judicial reform program that takes advantage of key new appointees in the Supreme Court and other institutions
  - Fund immediately a \$500,000 proposal of the U.S. Mission rule of law working group to undertake a six-month nationwide assessment the needed actions in the judicial sector
  - Create a new CSTC-A element focused on the judicial sector and move the CFC-A's rule of law personnel into it as CFC-A is dissolved
  - Utilize CSTC-A's planning capability to develop with the Afghan government and the international community a comprehensive nationwide judicial sector plan
  - Utilize the successful rule of law pilot project in Wardak province as the model for the rest of the country
  - Market the nationwide plan to the international donor community and piece together funding for a five-year judicial sector program currently estimated to cost a total of \$500 million

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# **Building a record of success for 2009**

- As noted in LTG Eikenberry's campaign assessment, it is essential to decide now what record of achievements the United States and the international community wants to enable the Afghan government to run on in the national election of 2009
- There are many positive developments already programmed, including completion of the ring road and associated spurs and the development of ANSF capabilities
- However, at a minimum, the following goals should be added and funded:
  - Deliver on improved governance nationwide
  - Deliver provincial and district road networks (as proposed by CFC-A)
  - Deliver electrical power to 40 percent of the Afghan population (USAID concept best carried out by Army Corps of Engineers)
  - Develop and begin implementation of a nationwide water management program (initially funding the needed hydrological research and analysis and starting the refurbishing of key dams and previously existing infrastructure)
  - Field a nationwide comprehensive agriculture and rural development program (along the lines of former Deputy Secretary Mosley's proposals)
  - Make productive capital – micro-credit, enterprise funding, etc. – available nationwide



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# Resources

- **A key goal – and the intended effect of the proposals in this briefing – is to create the perception and reality of the “inevitability of success” of the new Afghanistan**
  - Winning the war in Afghanistan is eminently feasible, despite the enemy's escalation in 2006, but requires an increase in the scale of financial resources and the urgency of program implementation
  - **The first step should be to undertake the above-prescribed major asymmetrical counter-escalation**
    - A joint U.S-Afghanistan diplomatic initiative vis-à-vis Pakistan
    - An upgrade of ANSF programs sufficient to “fill the contested space” over a period of time
    - A new effort to reinforce security operations with counterinsurgency infrastructure building and economic development
    - A collaborative effort with the Afghan government to improve governance
    - An upgrade of programs to ensure a strong record of success by 2009
  - **If the Coalition and NATO represent the “breaching force” and the ANSF and non-military programs are the “exploitation force,” it is vital that we scale and resource the exploitation forces to win decisively**

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