



# CARE International in Afghanistan

# Policy Brief

January 2003

## Promises made...

*We will help the new Afghan Government provide the security that is the foundation for peace.*

**U.S. President George Bush**  
January 2002

*The United States and our coalition partners are committed to staying as long as necessary in Afghanistan and until the new order is consolidated. The era of warlords is over in Afghanistan.*

**President Bush's Special Envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad**  
November 2002

## but not yet delivered...

*The most serious challenge facing Afghanistan and Afghans today remains the lack of security.*

**Kofi Annan**  
October 2002

*I would like to once again request donor countries to further support our strategy for the creation of a national army and a national system for security by translating international pledges into concrete contributions.*

**President Hamid Karzai**  
UN General Assembly  
September 2002

## A New Year's Resolution to Keep: Secure a Lasting Peace in Afghanistan

**W**here will Afghanistan be one year from now? In the thousands of villages where CARE works, hope and fear are palpable. For the first time in decades, communities have something to lose. The people with whom we work are ready to rebuild their country. But they also fear that insecurity will once again rob them of this chance to put their lives and livelihoods back together.

In 2002, the central government was unable to deploy security forces in most of the country and the training of the national army fell critically behind, while international peacekeepers were restricted to Kabul. Regional commanders fought with each other in the West and North and committed human rights abuses against local populations. In Southern Afghanistan the trade in illicit drugs continued to grow, while in the East and Southern border areas, anti-government forces grew in strength and threatened both Afghanistan's leaders and international military forces. Numerous attacks against civilians and assistance workers took place throughout the country.

As this new year begins, as insecurity continues in Afghanistan, as neighboring powers seek to increase their influence over Afghan affairs, as the world's attention turns to Iraq, the communities where CARE works fear for the worst. CARE urges international policy makers to show the resolve necessary over the next year to address the security vacuum in Afghanistan. We recommend:

1. The international community should acknowledge that the security vacuum in Afghanistan will not resolve itself and requires urgent international attention.
2. International support for army and police training programs should be substantially increased so as to produce an adequate number of qualified graduates in a timely manner. Sufficient incentives should be put in place to integrate regional militias into a national security force, demobilizing those that are not integrated.
3. An international force, mandated to create a secure environment in which reconstruction can be accelerated and commerce re-established, should be put in place in key locations outside Kabul without further delay.
4. In the absence of an international peacekeeping force outside of Kabul, U.S.-led Coalition forces should focus their efforts on the maintenance of peace and the promotion of security throughout Afghanistan.
5. The Coalition should leave the coordination of reconstruction to the Afghan government, UN and other civilian aid agencies, and it should take all necessary steps to ensure that communities, policy makers and the general public do not confuse military- and civilian- implemented assistance.

# Security: the problem that won't solve itself

Security in Afghanistan requires dealing with three sets of actors: 1) those militarily dedicated to the overthrow of the current regime, 2) leaders of the many armed militias still operating throughout the country, and 3) criminal opportunists profiting from the current security vacuum. Each of these three threats persists today.

Since last September, the war against the Taliban and Al Qa'ida has achieved only partial success. The UN reports increased Taliban and Al Qa'ida activity on the Pakistan border in December. These "total spoilers" remain capable of threatening the current political administration and its international supporters, and will likely remain a major focus of Coalition<sup>1</sup> efforts in Afghanistan over the next year.

Of even greater concern to most Afghans, however, is that so many militias loyal to individuals (not institutions) remain in place in Afghanistan. With more than 200,000 armed men, militia commanders rule local populations through force of arms, control trade routes, and fight with each other for ever greater influence and power, causing scores of civilian deaths and thousands of displacements.<sup>2</sup> Outside of Kabul, they have filled the gap left by the lack of an Afghan army or an international peacekeeping force, and they continue to grow in strength and influence.

Yet, the Coalition has been reluctant to get involved in fighting between these commanders, even though civilian deaths have often occurred as a result.<sup>3</sup> All of the militia leaders at the 2001 Bonn meeting (which initiated the transition to a new Afghan government) have received arms and support from the United States.<sup>4</sup> The Coalition continues to recruit from and train regional militias to fight Al Qa'ida.<sup>5</sup> Recent reports indicate that Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and India are all providing support to Afghan military forces outside of central government control.<sup>6</sup> A continuation of such support would violate the agreement signed in December by the Afghan government and its neighbors, calling for an end to interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

As long as the international community and Afghanistan's neighbors provide political and financial support to militia leaders at the expense of Afghanistan's central government, security will be compromised.<sup>7</sup> Eliminating this phenomenon not only demands the immediate suspension of such support, but it will also require a process that disarms, demobilizes and reintegrates regional militias while developing an Afghan National Army to fill the security vacuum left behind.<sup>8</sup>

## Facts on Insecurity

- ◆ The government reported more non-terrorist murders (20) and robberies in Kabul in late November than during any other month last year.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Anti-Coalition forces remain active in a third of Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> There were more attacks on Coalition bases in November 2002 than any month last year.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ Every region in Afghanistan remains in a Security Phase Three (relocation for non-emergency staff) or Phase Four (program suspension) for humanitarian workers.
- ◆ A World Bank study of 52 post-conflict countries since 1960 estimates the risk of relapse into violence as 50-50. Where a lootable resource such as heroin exists, the chances of relapse are higher.<sup>4</sup>

### Finding One

Security in Afghanistan remains fragile. Militia commanders have filled the security gap in more than 90% of the country.

### Recommendation One

The international community should acknowledge that the security vacuum in Afghanistan will not resolve itself and requires urgent international attention.

# An Afghan security force: a decade away?

The international response to Afghanistan's security gap has been consistent: Afghan security must be provided by Afghans. The preferred option, for both Afghans and the international community, has been to train an Afghan National Army (ANA) and police force.

Six months into this US-led effort,<sup>1</sup> the signs are not good. Only 2-3,000 recruits have been trained to date in the ANA.<sup>2</sup> About half of them have deserted, leaving behind 1,400 graduates as of November 24, 2002.<sup>3</sup> On December 1, 2002, President Karzai issued a comprehensive

decreed urging greater national and international support for the ANA.<sup>4</sup>

The reasons for slow progress are troubling: The persistence of post-conflict internecine tension has made it difficult to recruit an ethnically balanced army. Living conditions and low salaries for army graduates (at \$50 per month) do not compare well to the lifestyle and income a young man can earn working for a regional militia or for Coalition-sponsored "anti-Al Qa'ida units" that operate outside the ANA structure.<sup>5</sup> Militia commanders have been slow to release their best troops, instead volunteering their least motivated, worst-equipped men, many of whom have already deserted.

The police training program, led by the Germans, is also in trouble. Average salaries at \$24 per month create incentives for corruption and coercion of local populations. Like the national army, almost all trained police officers remain in Kabul.<sup>6</sup>

The international commitment to Afghan security exists in principle, but has not been backed by the necessary financial support or adequate action. As a consequence, the security gap outside of Kabul has been filled by regional militias, who continue to act with virtual autonomy. Those regional militias will integrate into a national security structure only if the right incentives and guarantees are put in place. Until then, a truly representative Afghan national security force will remain a pipedream.

## Facts on Army Development

- ◆ For every trained soldier now in the National Army, there are at least 100 armed men in local militia throughout the country.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ The first battalion to begin training in May 2002 was 600-strong. By late November, only 300 graduates remained.<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ At the current rate of graduation, it will take as long as 25 years for the Afghan army to meet its minimum effective force size of 70,000.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ The US commitment to equip and train the Bosnian Muslim-Croat force in 1996 was double the commitment made to training an Afghan army.<sup>4</sup>

*If you visit any police station you see that they have 50 police officers or soldiers but only two very primitive guns and two bicycles. No radio assets, no vehicles, nothing. First, they do not work, second, they do work their own businesses by using their guns to rob the people to feed their families.*

**Major General Akin Zorlu, Head of ISAF**

November 25, 2002

### Finding Two

International efforts will have to be rapidly intensified if an effective and representative Afghan security force is to be fully deployed in less than a decade.

### Recommendation Two

International support for army and police training programs should be substantially increased so as to produce an adequate number of qualified graduates in a timely manner. Sufficient incentives should be put in place to integrate regional militias into a national security force, demobilizing those that are not integrated.

# The peacekeepers nobody wants... except Afghans

peacekeeping in Afghanistan remains a fraction of commitments elsewhere.

The Americans and Europeans have blamed each other for the failure to expand peacekeepers. The US, which covers costs for the bulk of Operation Enduring Freedom, says it has no objection to peacekeeping as long as others foot the bill and provide the soldiers. The Europeans say supporting such a

force makes no sense unless it integrates with the US-led Coalition, and point to US reluctance to engage in peacekeeping generally.

In December, President Bush re-ignited the peacekeeping debate by signing the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act, authorizing up to \$1 billion over the next two years for expanding ISAF. CARE calls on the US Congress to now act to appropriate the full funding provided in this legislation for both peacekeeping and reconstruction.

While Coalition forces continue to deter anti-government militias, their central goal in Afghanistan remains "the war on international terrorism". As long as US policy makers remain reluctant to burden Coalition forces with an explicit peacekeeping role, ISAF will remain the only military force mandated to make and keep the peace in Afghanistan. As a consequence, there is still no nationwide security force, Afghan or international, mandated to provide security outside of Kabul.

*In asking for more international peacekeepers, we are repeating the demands of the Afghan people.*

**Afghan President Hamid Karzai**

March 13, 2002

Berlin, Germany

*[President Bush] would like, over time, to be able to draw down [US peacekeeping obligations] so the core mission of our military can remain focused on a combat-ready force.*

**Ari Fleisher, White House**

**Spokesperson**

January 28, 2002

*France does not favor deploying international troops outside of the Afghan capital, Kabul.*

**French President Jacques Chirac**

February 28, 2002

*We are skeptical about extending the territory of the mandate for ISAF.*

**German Chancellor Gerhard**

**Schroeder**

March 13, 2002

**Table A: Ten peacekeeping commitments in internal conflicts since 1993**

Rated by population per Peacekeeper (PK) (ascending order)	Peace keepers	Sq. kms. per PK	Population per PK
1. Kosovo (KFOR NATO)	48,159	0.2	48
2. Bosnia (IFOR-NATO)	62,000	0.9	58
3. Croatia (UNTAES)	2,847	1.7	65
4. East Timor (UNTAET)	9,327	1.9	86
5. Bosnia (UNPROFOR)	30,869	1.3	113
6. Somalia (UNOSOM II)	28,000	11.4	212
7. Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)	17,472	4.1	304
8. Cambodia (UNTAC)	15,991	11.3	727
9. Haiti (UNMIH)	6,912	4.6	1,135
10. Rwanda (UNAMIR)	2,434	10.8	3,350
Afghanistan (ISAF)	4,800	134.9	5,380

## Finding Three

Mandated peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan remain at a fraction of troop commitments to comparable settings elsewhere. The lack of peacekeepers has resulted in a security vacuum outside of Kabul.

## Recommendation Three

An international force, mandated to create a secure environment in which reconstruction can be accelerated and commerce re-established, should be put in place in key locations outside Kabul without further delay.

# Time to bite the bullet

The Coalition has announced its plans to increase use of reconstruction assistance projects as a tool for promoting security and political stability in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> The current proposal is to deploy 7-10 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in population centers to assess needs, and determine appropriate response.<sup>2</sup> Latest reports on these evolving structures indicate that PRTs will consist of a modest number (50-100) of combat soldiers and civil affairs soldiers plus civilian US government officials. The first pilot PRT was

deployed to Gardez in December. It may take 6-12 months before the remaining teams are deployed throughout the country.

To the extent this strategy shift represents a greater focus on promoting security beyond Kabul, it should be welcomed. It remains doubtful, however, that this incremental approach will adequately address Afghanistan's pressing security problem. The funding allocated to reconstruction programs under the PRT initiative—\$12 million for FY03—is simply not on a scale to significantly impact security through indirect efforts.

Rather than relying upon a minimally resourced reconstruction initiative, the Coalition should focus their efforts on the direct provision of security. Such functions should include:

- ◆ De facto peacekeeping in key locations throughout Afghanistan and along main transportation routes;
- ◆ Training the Afghan National Army;
- ◆ Working in conjunction with trained units of the Afghan National Army in the field;
- ◆ Minimizing the power of regional commanders to abuse the human rights of local populations; and
- ◆ Supporting Afghan government-led efforts to demobilize armed factions outside of the Afghan National Army, and to collect and destroy arms held by militias.

**Table B: Comparing Tasks of proposed PRTs, against Fully Mandated Peacekeepers**

Potential tasks	Peace Keepers	PRTs
Provide an on-the-ground policing presence to deter conflict and criminality and secure main transport routes	Yes	No*
Intervene directly in internecine fighting	Yes	No
Seek out and capture human rights abusers	Yes	No
Disarm and demobilize militias	Yes	No

\* PRTs will have the capacity to call upon the main Coalition force when necessary, but those forces will not be deployed on a permanent basis with PRTs.

In sum, the needs of Afghans will be best served if all international actors focus their efforts and resources on areas of critical need for which they are best-suited. Coalition forces should focus less on providing assistance, which duplicates the efforts of civilian agencies and should focus more on directly improving security—a task for which they are both qualified and equipped.

## Finding Four

The Coalition's proposed strategy to promote peace through reconstruction is unlikely to adequately address Afghanistan's urgent security vacuum.

## Recommendation Four

In the absence of an international peacekeeping force outside of Kabul, U.S.-led Coalition forces should focus their efforts on the maintenance of peace and the promotion of security throughout Afghanistan.

# Military engagement in reconstruction is no substitute for security

**Without security, reconstruction cannot progress.** And without progress on reconstruction, insecurity will inevitably result. The new US strategy outlined above acknowledges this Catch 22 by seeking to address security and reconstruction simultaneously. An urgent two-pronged effort is exactly what is required in Afghanistan. However, success depends on each front receiving the attention it requires.

For the reasons outlined in this brief, CARE believes security is still getting the short end of the stick. Increased military involvement in reconstruction will inevitably divert military expertise from security concerns and overextend it in areas where the military has limited experience.

CARE's concerns are that any extensive Coalition engagement in reconstruction efforts:

- ◆ *Takes the focus away from security prematurely.* Only international military forces can fill the immediate security gap in Afghanistan today. Engaging in reconstruction without creating a foundation of security is unwise; it ignores the reality of current security conditions in Afghanistan.
- ◆ *Duplicates existing government-led coordination structures.* The coordination of reconstruction efforts is a job for the Afghan government and civilian aid agencies, not the military. The barriers to locally led reconstruction in Afghanistan are a lack of human and financial resources and prevailing insecurity, not a lack of strategic vision. Investing in externally-driven reconstruction would divert attention and resources from empowering the Afghan government to manage the reconstruction effort, with the support of the United Nations.
- ◆ *Risks the security of communities that accept assistance from the Coalition* in an environment of uncertainty and continued hostilities.
- ◆ *Blurs the lines between humanitarian workers and a combatant military force,* creating increased security risks for civilian aid workers, who have at times been very inappropriately characterized by senior US government and military officials as "force multipliers."<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ *May inaccurately assess community priorities.* Needs assessments conducted by expatriate male military personnel will not identify community priorities with the same accuracy as gender-balanced Afghan assessment teams who are familiar with community concerns and trained in participatory assessments and development. Unrepresentative or rushed assessments will not serve those in greatest need or lead to a sustainable positive impact for communities.<sup>2</sup>

To address these concerns, we recommend that the Coalition should focus its direct involvement in reconstruction on important Afghan government infrastructure projects. While Coalition forces may be both qualified and equipped to build and repair bridges, roads, airports, and government facilities such as courts, police stations and banks, they are ill-prepared to respond to community-driven needs such as sustainable health care and education. Five years from now, no one wants to see empty schools and health clinics, or wells in disrepair throughout Afghanistan. If reconstruction efforts are to be community-owned and have a lasting impact, they must be driven by the real needs of communities, and implemented by government and civilian assistance professionals who work with those communities over the long haul.

## Finding Five

Extensive Coalition engagement in Afghanistan's reconstruction distracts attention from their security role, risks undermining government capacity, and may put communities and civilian assistance workers at risk.

## Recommendation Five

The Coalition should leave the coordination of reconstruction to the Afghan government, UN and other civilian aid agencies, and it should take all necessary steps to ensure that communities, policy makers and the general public do not confuse military- and civilian- implemented assistance.

# Endnotes

## Page 2

<sup>1</sup> The term "Coalition" is used throughout this brief to refer to the US-led international military coalition.

<sup>2</sup> "Afghanistan's many armies have continued to fight each other in localized conflicts that have killed scores of civilians and displaced thousands from their homes in the north, southeast, and west of the country." Human Rights Watch, *Afghanistan's Bonn Agreement One Year Later: A Catalog of Missed Opportunities* (December 2, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> For a Coalition perspective on non-interference, see *US Bombs W. Afghanistan*, AFP, November 26, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Army Lt. Gen. Dan McNeill has said, "Until U.S. military trainers are able to help build a viable national army, warlords who helped the U.S. topple the Taliban regime last winter will continue to receive American support." *General Values Alliance With Afghan Warlords*. Los Angeles Times, November 4, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> The problem is complex. Militia leaders controlled the country before the Taliban, and never lost control over the troops that now support them. The central government does not have the power to remove them or to deal with the security gap their absence would create. The fear-based order they have imposed over local populations has brought some level of stability in some regions.

<sup>6</sup> See Far Eastern Economic Review, January 2, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Less than one-fifth of donor funding for Afghanistan in 2002 fell under government control. See CARE policy brief *A Little Less Talk, a lot More Action*, October 7, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> For thoughtful analyses of alternative security options, see The Stimson Center proposals at [www.stimson.org](http://www.stimson.org), Anja Manuel & P.W. Singer, *A New Model Afghan Army*, Foreign Affairs, July/August 2002, and Mark Sedra, Bonn Center for Conversion argues *Challenging the Warlord Culture: Security Sector Reform in Post-Taliban Afghanistan* (2002).

## Page 2 Box

<sup>1</sup> Reuters, *Suspects in Afghan Attack on Aid Workers Held*, December 12, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Estimate from General Tommy Franks. See Ahmed Rashid, *US Officials Prepare New Campaign for Afghan Security*, November 25, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> The Coalition reported 57 rocket attacks against US military camps in November, an increase over prior months.

<sup>4</sup> *World Bank Study Says 50-50 Chance of Failure*, Washington Post, November 26, 2002.

## Page 3

<sup>1</sup> The first recruits began training on May 1, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Washington Post, *Wishful Thinking on Afghanistan*, November 25, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> USA Today, *US Helping Train an Army in Afghanistan*, November 26, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Decree of the President of the Islamic Transitional State of Afghanistan on the Afghan National Army, December 1, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> The Coalition is offering salaries of up to \$150 per month for work with covert operations units, three times more than that offered by the ANA. See Interhemispheric Resource Center, *US undermining long-term security in Afghanistan*, October 24, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> UNDP reports that most police remain in Kabul. See Sedra (2002) at 34.

## Page 3 Box

<sup>1</sup> Reports on the numbers of armed men vary greatly. One Coalition representative estimated more than 700,000 armed men last April. The Washington Post recently reported an estimate of 200,000.

<sup>2</sup> Sebastian Mallaby, *Wishful Thinking on Afghanistan*, Washington Post, November 25, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> 1,400 were trained over the first six-month cycle. While plans exist to increase the rate of training over time, levels of desertion and non-graduation make even the official estimates of 2-8 years to reach the proposed size force of 70,000 highly optimistic.

<sup>4</sup> Analysts have suggested that the needs are commensurate. See Sedra (November 2002). In fact, Afghanistan's need may be

greater—there are three times more Afghans than Bosnians and Croats combined.

## Page 4

<sup>1</sup> There have been 'increasingly vocal demands' from ordinary Afghans, members of the interim government, and even from warlords, for the International Security Assistance Force to expand, UNSG Brahimi said. AFP, February 6, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> The Stimson center estimates that a strategically deployed force of 18,000 could significantly enhance security nationwide at a cost of \$2-3 billion per year, less than 20% of what was spent this year on Operation Enduring Freedom.

<sup>3</sup> The underlying data was developed by William Durch of the Stimson Center ([www.stimson.org](http://www.stimson.org)). The table includes all major peacekeeping operations since 1993 with mandate strengths estimated at 5 or higher on a scale of 10. (Peacekeeping operations with weak mandates such as monitoring or unarmed observer status are ignored.)

## Page 5

<sup>1</sup> See Washington Post, *Pentagon Plans a Re-direction in Afghanistan*, November 20, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> The nomenclature of these teams recently changed, at the Afghan government's request, from Joint Regional Teams or JRTs to "Provincial Reconstruction Teams" or "PRTs".

## Page 6

<sup>1</sup> A term used by Colin Powell at the National Foreign Policy Conference for Leaders of Nongovernmental Organizations, Washington, DC, October 26, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> As of January 8, 2003, the PRT assessment of communities' needs in Gardez was being conducted by six expatriate male military personnel with no access to Afghan women in communities. (Interview with CARE staff in Gardez.)

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## Findings of Fact

1. Security in Afghanistan remains fragile. Militia commanders have filled the security gap in more than 90% of the country. Regional commanders fought with each other in the West and North and committed human rights abuses against local populations. In Southern Afghanistan the trade in illicit drugs continued to grow, while in the East and Southern border areas, anti-government forces grew in strength and threatened both Afghanistan's leaders and international military forces. Numerous attacks against aid workers took place throughout the country.
2. International efforts will have to be rapidly intensified if an effective and representative Afghan security force is to be fully deployed in less than a decade.
3. Mandated peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan remain at a fraction of troop commitments to comparable settings elsewhere. The lack of peacekeepers has resulted in a security vacuum outside of Kabul.
4. The Coalition's proposed strategy to promote peace through reconstruction is unlikely to adequately address Afghanistan's urgent security vacuum.
5. Extensive Coalition engagement in Afghanistan's reconstruction distracts attention from their security role, risks undermining government capacity, and may put communities and civilian assistance workers at risk.