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Headquarters  
International Security Assistance Force  
Kabul, Afghanistan



30 August 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301 - 1400


SUBJECT: COMISAF'S INITIAL ASSESSMENT

REFERENCE: Secretary of Defense Memorandum 26 June 2009,  
Subject: Initial United States Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A) Assessment.

Dear Secretary Gates,

As directed by the Reference, my Initial Assessment is attached. A review of resources necessary to achieve the military campaign plan will be provided by separate correspondence at a later date.

Sincerely,

  
STANLEY A. McCHRISTAL  
General, U.S. Army  
Commander,  
United States Forces – Afghanistan/  
International Security Assistance  
Force, Afghanistan

Enclosure

cc: CDRUSCENTCOM  
SACEUR

CONFIDENTIAL REL NATO/ISAF (UNCLASSIFIED WITH REMOVAL OF ENCLOSURE)

# **Commander's Initial Assessment**

**30 August 2009**

**Commander  
NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan  
U.S. Forces, Afghanistan**

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## **Purpose**

On 26 June, 2009, the United States Secretary of Defense directed Commander, United States Central Command (CDRUSCENTCOM), to provide a multidisciplinary assessment of the situation in Afghanistan. On 02 July, 2009, Commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF) / U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A), received direction from CDRUSCENTCOM to complete the overall review.

On 01 July, 2009, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe and NATO Secretary General also issued a similar directive.

COMISAF subsequently issued an order to the ISAF staff and component commands to conduct a comprehensive review to assess the overall situation, review plans and ongoing efforts, and identify revisions to operational, tactical and strategic guidance.

The following assessment is a report of COMISAF's findings and conclusions. In summary, this assessment sought to answer the following questions:

- Can ISAF achieve the mission?
- If so, how should ISAF go about achieving the mission?
- What is required to achieve the mission?

The assessment draws on both internal ISAF components, to include Regional Commands, and external agencies such as GIROA ministries, International Governmental Organizations and Nongovernmental Organizations. It also draws on existing ISAF and USFOR-A plans and policy guidance, relevant reports and studies, and the consultation of external experts and advisors.

## Commander's Summary

The stakes in Afghanistan are high. NATO's Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan and President Obama's strategy to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al Qaeda and prevent their return to Afghanistan have laid out a clear path of what we must do. Stability in Afghanistan is an imperative; if the Afghan government falls to the Taliban – or has insufficient capability to counter transnational terrorists – Afghanistan could again become a base for terrorism, with obvious implications for regional stability.

The situation in Afghanistan is serious; neither success nor failure can be taken for granted. Although considerable effort and sacrifice have resulted in some progress, many indicators suggest the overall situation is deteriorating. We face not only a resilient and growing insurgency; there is also a crisis of confidence among Afghans -- in both their government and the international community – that undermines our credibility and emboldens the insurgents. Further, a perception that our resolve is uncertain makes Afghans reluctant to align with us against the insurgents.

Success is achievable, but it will not be attained simply by trying harder or “doubling down” on the previous strategy. Additional resources are required, but focusing on force or resource requirements misses the point entirely. The key take away from this assessment is the urgent need for a significant change to our strategy and the way that we think and operate.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) requires a new strategy that is credible to, and sustainable by, the Afghans. This new strategy must also be properly resourced and executed through an integrated civilian-military counterinsurgency campaign that earns the support of the Afghan people and provides them with a secure environment.

To execute the strategy, we must grow and improve the effectiveness of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and elevate the importance of governance. We must also prioritize resources to those areas where the population is threatened, gain the initiative from the insurgency, and signal unwavering commitment to see it through to success. Finally, we must redefine the nature of the fight, clearly understand the impacts and importance of time, and change our operational culture.

### **Redefining the Fight**

This is a different kind of fight. We must conduct classic counterinsurgency operations in an environment that is uniquely complex. Three regional insurgencies have intersected with a dynamic blend of local power struggles in a country damaged by 30 years of conflict. This makes for a situation that defies simple solutions or quick fixes. Success demands a comprehensive counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign.

Our strategy cannot be focused on seizing terrain or destroying insurgent forces; our objective must be the population. In the struggle to gain the support of the people, every action we take must enable this effort. The population also represents a powerful actor that can and must be leveraged in this complex system. Gaining their support will require a

better understanding of the people's choices and needs. However, progress is hindered by the dual threat of a resilient insurgency and a crisis of confidence in the government and the international coalition. To win their support, we must protect the people from both of these threats.

Many describe the conflict in Afghanistan as a war of ideas, which I believe to be true. However, this is a 'deeds-based' information environment where perceptions derive from actions, such as how we interact with the population and how quickly things improve. The key to changing perceptions lies in changing the underlying truths. We must never confuse the situation as it stands with the one we desire, lest we risk our credibility.

### **The Criticality of Time**

The impact of time on our effort in Afghanistan has been underappreciated and we require a new way of thinking about it.

First, the fight is not an annual cyclical campaign of kinetics driven by an insurgent "fighting season." Rather, it is a year-round struggle, often conducted with little apparent violence, to win the support of the people. Protecting the population from insurgent coercion and intimidation demands a persistent presence and focus that cannot be interrupted without risking serious setback.

Second, and more importantly, we face both a short and long-term fight. The long-term fight will require patience and commitment, but I believe the short-term fight will be decisive. Failure to gain the initiative and reverse insurgent momentum in the near-term (next 12 months) -- while Afghan security capacity matures -- risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible.

### **Change the Operational Culture**

As formidable as the threat may be, we make the problem harder. ISAF is a conventional force that is poorly configured for COIN, inexperienced in local languages and culture, and struggling with challenges inherent to coalition warfare. These intrinsic disadvantages are exacerbated by our current operational culture and how we operate.

Pre-occupied with protection of our own forces, we have operated in a manner that distances us -- physically and psychologically -- from the people we seek to protect. In addition, we run the risk of strategic defeat by pursuing tactical wins that cause civilian casualties or unnecessary collateral damage. The insurgents cannot defeat us militarily; but we can defeat ourselves.

Accomplishing the mission demands a renewed emphasis on the basics through a dramatic change in how we operate, with specific focus in two principle areas:

1. **Change the operational culture to connect with the people.** I believe we must interact more closely with the population and focus on operations that bring stability, while shielding them from insurgent violence, corruption, and coercion.

2. **Improve unity of effort and command.** We must significantly modify organizational structures to achieve better unity of effort. We will continue to realign relationships to improve coordination within ISAF and the international community.

### **The New Strategy: Focus on the Population**

Getting these basics right is necessary for success, but it is not enough. To accomplish the mission and defeat the insurgency we also require a properly resourced strategy built on four main pillars:

1. **Improve effectiveness through greater partnering with ANSF.** We will increase the size and accelerate the growth of the ANSF, with a radically improved partnership at every level, to improve effectiveness and prepare them to take the lead in security operations.
2. **Prioritize responsive and accountable governance.** We must assist in improving governance at all levels through both formal and traditional mechanisms.
3. **Gain the Initiative.** Our first imperative, in a series of operational stages, is to gain the initiative and reverse the insurgency's momentum.
4. **Focus Resources.** We will prioritize available resources to those critical areas where vulnerable populations are most threatened.

These concepts are not new. However, implemented aggressively, they will be revolutionary to our effectiveness. We must do things dramatically differently – even uncomfortably differently – to change how we operate, and also how we think. Our every action must reflect this change of mindset: how we traverse the country, how we use force, and how we partner with the Afghans. Conventional wisdom is not sacred; security may not come from the barrel of a gun. Better force protection may be counterintuitive; it might come from less armor and less distance from the population.

### **The Basis of Assessment: Analysis and Experience**

My conclusions were informed through a rigorous multi-disciplinary assessment by a team of accomplished military personnel and civilians and my personal experience and core beliefs. Central to my analysis is a belief that we must respect the complexities of the operational environment and design our strategic approach accordingly. As we analyzed the situation, I became increasingly convinced of several themes: that the objective is the will of the people, our conventional warfare culture is part of the problem, the Afghans must ultimately defeat the insurgency, we cannot succeed without significantly improved unity of effort, and finally, that protecting the people means shielding them from *all* threats.

### **A Strategy for Success: Balancing Resources and Risk**

Our campaign in Afghanistan has been historically under-resourced and remains so today. Almost every aspect of our collective effort and associated resourcing has lagged a growing insurgency – historically a recipe for failure in COIN. Success will require a discrete “jump” to gain the initiative, demonstrate progress in the short term, and secure long-term support.

Resources will not win this war, but under-resourcing could lose it. Resourcing communicates commitment, but we must also balance force levels to enable effective ANSF partnering and provide population security, while avoiding perceptions of coalition dominance. Ideally, the ANSF must lead this fight, but they will not have enough capability in the near-term given the insurgency's growth rate. In the interim, coalition forces must provide a bridge capability to protect critical segments of the population. The status quo will lead to failure if we wait for the ANSF to grow.

The new strategy will improve effectiveness through better application of existing assets, but it also requires additional resources. Broadly speaking, we require more civilian and military resources, more ANSF, and more ISR and other enablers. At the same time, we will find offsets as we reprogram other assets and improve efficiency. Overall, ISAF requires an increase in the total coalition force capability and end-strength. This 'properly resourced' requirement will define the minimum force levels to accomplish the mission with an acceptable level of risk.

### **Unique Moment in Time**

This is an important -- and likely decisive -- period of this war. Afghans are frustrated and weary after eight years without evidence of the progress they anticipated. Patience is understandably short, both in Afghanistan and in our own countries. Time matters; we must act now to reverse the negative trends and demonstrate progress.

I do not underestimate the enormous challenges in executing this new strategy; however, we have a key advantage: the majority of Afghans do not want a return of the Taliban. During consultations with Afghan Defense Minister Wardak, I found some of his writings insightful:

*"Victory is within our grasp, provided that we recommit ourselves based on lessons learned and provided that we fulfill the requirements needed to make success inevitable... I reject the myth advanced in the media that Afghanistan is a 'graveyard of empires' and that the U.S. and NATO effort is destined to fail. Afghans have never seen you as occupiers, even though this has been the major focus of the enemy's propaganda campaign. Unlike the Russians, who imposed a government with an alien ideology, you enabled us to write a democratic constitution and choose our own government. Unlike the Russians, who destroyed our country, you came to rebuild."*

Given that this conflict and country are his to win -- not mine -- Minister Wardak's assessment was part of my calculus. While the situation is serious, success is still achievable. This starts with redefining both the fight itself and what we need for the fight. It is then sustained through a fundamentally new way of doing business. Finally, it will be realized when our new operational culture connects with the powerful will of the Afghan people.



## Initial Assessment

The situation in Afghanistan is serious. The mission is achievable, but success demands a fundamentally new approach -- one that is properly resourced and supported by better unity of effort.

Important progress has been made, yet many indicators suggest the overall situation is deteriorating despite considerable effort by ISAF. The threat has grown steadily but subtly, and unchecked by commensurate counter-action, its severity now surpasses the capabilities of the current strategy. We cannot succeed simply by trying harder; ISAF must now adopt a fundamentally new approach. The entire culture -- how ISAF understands the environment and defines the fight, how it interacts with the Afghan people and government, and how it operates both on the ground and within the coalition<sup>1</sup> -- must change profoundly.

As announced by President Obama in his March 27, 2009 speech outlining the new U.S. Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, the mission in Afghanistan has been historically under-resourced, resulting in a culture of poverty that has plagued ISAF's efforts to date. ISAF requires a properly-resourced force and capability level to correct this deficiency. Success is not ensured by additional forces alone, but continued under-resourcing will likely cause failure.

Nonetheless, it must be made clear: new resources are not the crux. To succeed, ISAF requires a new approach -- with a significant magnitude of change -- in addition to a proper level of resourcing. ISAF must restore confidence in the near-term through renewed commitment, intellectual energy, and visible progress.

This assessment prescribes two fundamental changes. First, ISAF must improve execution and the understanding of the basics of COIN -- those essential elements common to any counterinsurgency strategy. Second, ISAF requires a new strategy to counter a growing threat. Both of these reforms are required to reverse the negative trends in Afghanistan and achieve success.

ISAF is not adequately executing the basics of counterinsurgency warfare. In particular, there are two fundamental elements where ISAF must improve:

- change the operational culture of ISAF to focus on protecting the Afghan people, understanding their environment, and building relationships with them, and;
- transform ISAF processes to be more operationally efficient and effective, creating more coherent unity of command within ISAF, and fostering stronger unity of effort across the international community.

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<sup>1</sup> "coalition" hereafter refers to ISAF's coalition of troop and resources contributing nations

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Simultaneous to improving on these basic principles, ISAF must also adopt a profoundly new strategy with four fundamental pillars:

- develop a significantly more effective and larger ANSF with radically expanded coalition force partnering at every echelon;
- prioritize responsive and accountable governance -- that the Afghan people find acceptable -- to be on par with, and integral to, delivering security;
- gain the initiative and reverse the insurgency's momentum as the first imperative in a series of temporal stages, and;
- prioritize available resources to those critical areas where the population is most threatened.

There is nothing new about these principles of counterinsurgency and organizational efficacy. Rather, they represent profoundly renewed attention to pursuing the basic tenet of protecting the population, specifically adapted for this diverse force and unique conflict, and targeted to work through the most challenging obstacles that have hindered previous efforts.

ISAF's new strategy is consistent with the NATO Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan and supports the implementation of President Obama's strategy to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al Qaeda and prevent their return to Afghanistan. ISAF's new approach will be nested within an integrated and properly-resourced civilian-military counterinsurgency strategy.

This will be enormously difficult. To execute this strategy, ISAF must use existing assets in innovative and unconventional ways, but ISAF will also require additional resources, forces and possibly even new authorities. All steps are imperative and time is of the essence. Patience will see the mission through; but to have that chance, real progress must be demonstrated in the near future.

### I. Describing the Mission

ISAF's mission statement is: "ISAF, in support of GIRoA, conducts operations in Afghanistan to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development, in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population."

Accomplishing this mission requires defeating the insurgency, which this paper defines as a condition where the insurgency no longer threatens the viability of the state.

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GIRoA must sufficiently control its territory to support regional stability and prevent its use for international terrorism. Accomplishing this mission also requires a better understanding of the nature of the conflict, a change in the basic operational culture, concepts and tactics, and a corresponding change in strategy.

NATO source documents<sup>2</sup> have been consulted and the new strategy remains consistent with the NATO comprehensive approach. Existing UN mandates will continue to provide a framework for ISAF's effort. The international military forces, their civilian counterparts, and international organizations are a key component of ISAF's shared mission to support the people of Afghanistan. It is crucial that ISAF preserve, bolster, and help focus this diverse partnership.

## II. Nature of the Conflict

While not a war in the conventional sense, the conflict in Afghanistan demands a similar focus and an equal level of effort, and the consequences of failure are just as grave. The fight also demands an improved and evolved level of understanding.

The conflict in Afghanistan is often described as a war of ideas and perceptions; this is true and demands important consideration. However, perceptions are generally derived from actions and real conditions, for example by the provision or a lack of security, governance, and economic opportunity. Thus the key to changing perceptions is to change the fundamental underlying truths. To be effective, the counterinsurgent cannot risk credibility by substituting the situation they desire for reality.

### Redefining the Fight

The conflict in Afghanistan can be viewed as a set of related insurgencies, each of which is a complex system with multiple actors and a vast set of interconnecting relationships among those actors. The most important implication of this view is that no element of the conflict can be viewed in isolation – a change anywhere will affect everything else. This view implies that the system must be understood holistically, and while such understanding is not predictive, it will help to recognize general causal relationships.

The new strategy redefines the nature of the fight. It is not a cyclical, kinetic campaign based on a set "fighting season." Rather it is a continuous, year-long effort to help GIRoA win the support of the people and counter insurgent coercion and intimidation.

There are five principal actors in this conflict: the Afghan population, GIRoA, ISAF, the insurgency, and the external 'players'. It is important to begin with an understanding of each of these actors, starting with the most important: the people.

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<sup>2</sup> A list of references is included as Annex I.

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The people of Afghanistan represent many things in this conflict -- an audience, an actor, and a source of leverage -- but above all, they are the objective. The population can also be a source of strength and intelligence and provide resistance to the insurgency. Alternatively, they can often change sides and provide tacit or real support to the insurgents. Communities make deliberate choices to resist, support, or allow insurgent influence. The reasons for these choices must be better understood.

GIRoA and ISAF have both failed to focus on this objective. The weakness of state institutions, malign actions of power-brokers, widespread corruption and abuse of power by various officials, and ISAF's own errors, have given Afghans little reason to support their government. These problems have alienated large segments of the Afghan population. They do not trust GIRoA to provide their essential needs, such as security, justice, and basic services. This crisis of confidence, coupled with a distinct lack of economic and educational opportunity, has created fertile ground for the insurgency.

ISAF's center of gravity is the will and ability to provide for the needs of the population "by, with, and through" the Afghan government. A foreign army alone cannot beat an insurgency; the insurgency in Afghanistan requires an Afghan solution. This is their war and, in the end, ISAF's competency will prove less decisive than GIRoA's; eventual success requires capable Afghan governance capabilities and security forces. While these institutions are still developing, ISAF and the international community must provide substantial assistance to Afghanistan until the Afghan people make the decision to support their government and are capable of providing for their own security.

An isolating geography and a natural aversion to foreign intervention further works against ISAF. Historical grievances reinforce connections to tribal or ethnic identity and can diminish the appeal of a centralized state. All ethnicities, particularly the Pashtuns, have traditionally sought a degree of independence from the central government, particularly when it is not seen as acting in the best interests of the population. These and other factors result in elements of the population tolerating the insurgency and calling to push out foreigners.

Nonetheless, the Afghan people also expect appropriate governance, the delivery of basic services, and the provision of justice. The popular myth that Afghans do not want governance is overplayed -- while Afghan society is rooted in tribal structures and ethnic identities, Afghans do have a sense of national identity.

However, these generalizations risk oversimplifying this uniquely complicated environment. The complex social landscape of Afghanistan is in many ways much more difficult to understand than Afghanistan's enemies. Insurgent groups have been the focus of U.S. and allied intelligence for many years; however, ISAF has not sufficiently studied Afghanistan's peoples whose needs, identities and grievances vary from province to province and from valley to valley. This complex environment is challenging to understand, particularly for foreigners. For this strategy to succeed, ISAF leaders

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must redouble efforts to understand the social and political dynamics of areas all regions of the country and take action that meets the needs of the people, and insist that GIROA officials do the same.

Finally, either side can succeed in this conflict: GIROA by securing the support of the people and the insurgents by controlling them. While this multi-faceted model of the fight is centered on the people, it is not symmetrical: the insurgents can also succeed more simply by preventing GIROA from achieving their goals before the international community becomes exhausted.

### **Two Main Threats: Insurgency and Crisis in Confidence**

The ISAF mission faces two principal threats and is also subject to the influence of external actors.

The first threat is the existence of organized and determined insurgent groups working to expel international forces, separate the Afghan people from GIROA, and gain control of the population.

The second threat, of a very different kind, is the crisis of popular confidence that springs from the weakness of GIROA institutions, the unpunished abuse of power by corrupt officials and power-brokers, a widespread sense of political disenfranchisement, and a longstanding lack of economic opportunity. ISAF errors have further compounded the problem. These factors generate recruits for the insurgent groups, elevate local conflicts and power-broker disputes to a national level, degrade the people's security and quality-of-life, and undermine international will.

Addressing the external actors will enable success; however, insufficiently addressing either principle threat will result in failure.

### **Insurgent Groups**

Most insurgent fighters are Afghans. They are directed by a small number of Afghan senior leaders based in Pakistan that work through an alternative political infrastructure in Afghanistan. They are aided by foreign fighters, elements of some intelligence agencies, and international funding, resources, and training. Foreign fighters provide materiel, expertise, and ideological commitment.

The insurgents wage a "silent war" of fear, intimidation, and persuasion throughout the year—not just during the warmer weather "fighting season"—to gain control over the population. These efforts make possible, in many places, a Taliban "shadow government" that actively seeks to control the population and displace the national government and traditional power structures. Insurgent military operations attract more attention than this silent war but are only a supporting effort. Violent attacks are

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designed to weaken the government by demonstrating its inability to provide security, to fuel recruiting and financing efforts, to provoke reactions from ISAF that further alienate the population, and also to undermine public and political support for the ISAF mission in coalition capitals.

The major insurgent groups in order of their threat to the mission are: the Quetta Shura Taliban (QST), the Haqqani Network (HQN), and the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HiG). These groups coordinate activities loosely, often achieving significant unity of purpose and even some *unity of effort*, but they do not share a formal command-and-control structure. They also do not have a single overarching strategy or campaign plan. Each individual group, however, has a specific strategy, develops annual plans, and allocates resources accordingly. Each group has its own methods of developing and executing these plans and each has adapted over time. Despite the best efforts of GIROA and ISAF, the insurgents currently have the initiative.

### **Insurgent Strategy and Campaign Design**

The insurgents have two primary objectives: controlling the Afghan people and breaking the coalition's will. Their aim is to expel international forces and influences and to supplant GIROA. At the operational level, the Quetta Shura conducts a formal campaign review each winter, after which Mullah Omar announces his guidance and intent for the coming year. ... **REDACTION.**

The key geographical objectives of the major insurgent groups are Kandahar City and Khowst Province. The QST has been working to control Kandahar and its approaches for several years and there are indications that their influence over the city and neighboring districts is significant and growing. HQN aims to regain eventually full control of its traditional base in Khowst, Paktia, and Paktika. HQN controls some of the key terrain around Khowst and can influence the population in the region. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's HiG maintains militant bases in Nangarhar, Nuristan, and Kunar, as well as Pakistan, but he also sustains political connections through HiG networks and aims to negotiate a major role in a future Taliban government. He does not currently have geographical objectives as is the case with the other groups.

All three insurgent groups require resources – mainly money and manpower. The QST derives funding from the narcotics trade and external donors. HQN similarly draws resources principally from Pakistan, Gulf Arab networks, and from its close association with al Qaeda and other Pakistan-based insurgent groups. HiG seeks control of mineral wealth and smuggling routes in the east.

### **Insurgent Lines of Operation**

The QST's main efforts focus on the governance line of operations. Security and information operations support these efforts. ISAF's tendency to measure the enemy predominantly by kinetic events masks the true extent of insurgent activity and prevents an accurate assessment of the insurgents' intentions, progress, and level of control of the population.

*Governance.* The QST has a governing structure in Afghanistan under the rubric of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. They appoint shadow governors for most provinces, review their performance, and replace them periodically. They established a body to receive complaints against their own "officials" and to act on them. They install "shari'a" courts to deliver swift and enforced justice in contested and controlled areas. They levy taxes and conscript fighters and laborers. They claim to provide security against a corrupt government, ISAF forces, criminality, and local power brokers. They also claim to protect Afghan and Muslim identity against foreign encroachment. In short, the QST provides major elements of governance and a national and religious narrative. HQN and HiG co-exist with, but do not necessarily accept, the QST governing framework and have yet to develop competing governing structures.

*Information.* Major insurgent groups outperform GIRoA and ISAF at information operations. Information operations drive many insurgent operations as they work to shape the cultural and religious narrative. They have carefully analyzed their audience and target products accordingly. They use their Pashtun identity, physical proximity to the population, and violent intimidation to deliver immediate and enduring messages with which ISAF and GIRoA have been unable to compete. They leverage this advantage by projecting the inevitability of their victory, a key source of their strength.

*Security.* Major insurgent groups use violence, coercion and intimidation against civilians to control the population. They seek to inflict casualties on ISAF forces to break the will of individual ISAF countries and the coalition as a whole. They also use military activities to shape ISAF actions by denying freedom of movement, denying access to the population, and defending important terrain. The insurgents use the psychological effects of IEDs and the coalition force's preoccupation with force protection to reinforce the garrison posture and mentality. The major insurgent groups target GIRoA and ANSF to dissuade cooperation with the government and to show that GIRoA is ineffective. The insurgents control or contest a significant portion of the country, although it is difficult to assess precisely how much due to a lack of ISAF presence. ... **REDACTION.**

*Social/Economic.* The QST and other insurgent groups have deliberate social strategies that exacerbate the breakdown in Afghan social cohesion. They empower radical mullahs to replace local leaders, undermine or eliminate local elders and mullahs who do not support them, and consistently support weaker, disenfranchised, or threatened tribes or groups. They erode traditional social structures and capitalize on vast

unemployment by empowering the young and disenfranchised through cash payments, weapons, and prestige.

### **Insurgent Enablers and Vulnerabilities**

*Criminal networks.* Criminality creates a pool of manpower, resources, and capabilities for insurgents and contributes to a pervasive sense of insecurity among the people. Extensive smuggling diverts major revenue from GIRoA. Criminality exacerbates the fragmentation of Afghan society and increases its susceptibility to insurgent penetration. A number of Afghan Government officials, at all levels, are reported to be complicit in these activities, further undermining GIRoA credibility.

*Narcotics and Financing.* The most significant aspect of the production and sale of opium and other narcotics is the corrosive and destabilizing impact on corruption within GIRoA. Narcotics activity also funds insurgent groups, however the importance of this funding must be understood within the overall context of insurgent financing, some of which comes from other sources. Insurgent groups also receive substantial income from foreign donors as well as from other criminal activities within Afghanistan such as smuggling and kidnapping for ransom. Some insurgent groups 'tax' the local population through check points, demanding protection money, and other methods. Eliminating insurgent access to narco-profits -- even if possible, and while disruptive -- would not destroy their ability to operate so long as other funding sources remained intact.

*Insurgent Vulnerabilities.* The insurgents have important and exploitable shortcomings; they are not invulnerable. Command and control frictions and divergent goals hamper insurgent planning and restrict coordination of operations. ... **REDACTION**... Insurgent excesses can alienate the people. Moreover, the core elements of the insurgency have previously held power in Afghanistan and failed. Popular enthusiasm for them appears limited, as does their ability to spread viably beyond Pashtun areas. GIRoA and ISAF have an opportunity to exploit the insurgent's inability to mobilize public support.

In summary, ISAF confronts a loose federation of insurgent groups that are sophisticated, organized, adaptive, determined, and nuanced across all lines of operations, with many enablers, but not without vulnerability. These groups are dangerous and, if not effectively countered, could exhaust the coalition and prevent GIRoA from being able to govern the state of Afghanistan.

### **Crisis of Confidence in GIRoA and ISAF Actions**

The Afghan government has made progress, yet serious problems remain. The people's lack of trust in their government results from two key factors. First, some GIRoA officials have given preferential treatment to certain individuals, tribes, and groups or worse, abused their power at the expense of the people. Second, the Afghan government has been unable to provide sufficient security, justice, and basic services to



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the people. Although the capacity and integrity of some Afghan institutions have improved and the number of competent officials has grown, this progress has been insufficient to counter the issues that undermine legitimacy. These problems contribute to the Afghan Government's inability to gain the support of the Afghan population. ISAF errors also compound the problem.

*GIRoA State Weakness.* There is little connection between the central government and the local populations, particularly in rural areas. The top-down approach to developing government capacity has failed to provide services that reach local communities. GIRoA has not developed the means to collect revenue and distribute resources. Sub-national officials vary in competency and capability and most provincial and district governments are seriously undermanned and under-resourced.

The Afghan Government has not integrated or supported traditional community governance structures -- historically an important component of Afghan civil society -- leaving communities vulnerable to being undermined by insurgent groups and power-brokers. The breakdown of social cohesion at the community level has increased instability, made Afghans feel unsafe, and fueled the insurgency.

*Tolerance of Corruption and Abuse of Power.* Widespread corruption and abuse of power exacerbate the popular crisis of confidence in the government and reinforce a culture of impunity. Local Afghan communities are unable to hold local officials accountable through either direct elections or judicial processes, especially when those individuals are protected by senior government officials. Further, the public perceives that ISAF is complicit in these matters, and that there is no appetite or capacity -- either among the internationals or within GIRoA -- to correct the situation. The resulting public anger and alienation undermine ISAF's ability to accomplish its mission. The QST's establishment of ombudsmen to investigate abuse of power in its own cadres and remove those found guilty capitalizes on this GIRoA weakness and attracts popular support for their shadow government.

*Afghan power brokers and factional leaders.* Some local and regional power brokers were allies early in the conflict and now help control their own areas. Many are current or former members of GIRoA whose financial independence and loyal armed followers give them autonomy from GIRoA, further hindering efforts to build a coherent Afghan state. In most cases, their interests are not aligned with either the interests of the Afghan people or GIRoA, leading to conflicts that offer opportunities for insurgent groups to exploit. Finally, some of these power brokers hold positions in the ANSF, particularly the ANP, and have been major agents of corruption and illicit trafficking. ISAF's relationship with these individuals can be problematic. Some are forces of stability in certain areas, but many others are polarizing and predatory.

There are no clear lines separating insurgent groups, criminal networks (including the narcotics networks), and corrupt GIRoA officials. Malign actors within GIRoA support

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insurgent groups directly, support criminal networks that are linked to insurgents, and support corruption that helps feed the insurgency.

*ISAF Shortcomings.* Afghan social, political, economic, and cultural affairs are complex and poorly understood. ISAF does not sufficiently appreciate the dynamics in local communities, nor how the insurgency, corruption, incompetent officials, power-brokers, and criminality all combine to affect the Afghan population. A focus by ISAF intelligence on kinetic targeting and a failure to bring together what is known about the political and social realm have hindered ISAF's comprehension of the critical aspects of Afghan society.

ISAF's attitudes and actions have reinforced the Afghan people's frustrations with the shortcomings of their government. Civilian casualties and collateral damage to homes and property resulting from an over-reliance on firepower and force protection have severely damaged ISAF's legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people. Further, poor unity of effort among ISAF, UNAMA, and the rest of the international community undermines their collective effectiveness, while failure to deliver on promises further alienates the people. Problematic contracting processes and insufficient oversight also reinforce the perception of corruption within ISAF and the international community.

In summary, the absence of personal and economic security, along with the erosion of public confidence in the government, and a perceived lack of respect for Afghan culture pose as great a challenge to ISAF's success as the insurgent threat. Protecting the population is more than preventing insurgent violence and intimidation. It also means that ISAF can no longer ignore or tacitly accept abuse of power, corruption, or marginalization.

### **External Influences**

*Pakistan.* Afghanistan's insurgency is clearly supported from Pakistan. Senior leaders of the major Afghan insurgent groups are based in Pakistan, are linked with al Qaeda and other violent extremist groups, and are reportedly aided by some elements of Pakistan's ISI. Al Qaeda and associated movements (AQAM) based in Pakistan channel foreign fighters, suicide bombers, and technical assistance into Afghanistan, and offer ideological motivation, training, and financial support. Al Qaeda's links with HQN have grown, suggesting that expanded HQN control could create a favorable environment for AQAM to re-establish safe-havens in Afghanistan. Additionally, the ISAF mission in Afghanistan is reliant on ground supply routes through Pakistan that remain vulnerable to these threats.

Stability in Pakistan is essential, not only in its own right, but also to enable progress in Afghanistan. While the existence of safe havens in Pakistan does not guarantee ISAF failure, Afghanistan does require Pakistani cooperation and action against violent militancy, particularly against those groups active in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, the

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insurgency in Afghanistan is predominantly Afghan. By defending the population, improving sub-national governance, and giving disenfranchised rural communities a voice in their government, GIRoA – with support from ISAF – can strengthen Afghanistan against both domestic and foreign insurgent penetration. Reintegrating communities and individuals into the political system can help reduce the insurgency's virulence to a point where it is no longer an existential threat to GIRoA.

*India.* Indian political and economic influence is increasing in Afghanistan, including significant development efforts and financial investment. In addition, the current Afghan government is perceived by Islamabad to be pro-Indian. While Indian activities largely benefit the Afghan people, increasing Indian influence in Afghanistan is likely to exacerbate regional tensions and encourage Pakistani countermeasures in Afghanistan or India.

*Iran.* Iran plays an ambiguous role in Afghanistan, providing developmental assistance and political support to GIRoA while the Iranian Qods Force is reportedly training fighters for certain Taliban groups and providing other forms of military assistance to insurgents. Iran's current policies and actions do not pose a short-term threat to the mission, but Iran has the capability to threaten the mission in the future. Pakistan may see Iranian economic and political initiatives as threats to their strategic interests, and may continue to address these issues in ways that are counterproductive to the ISAF effort.

*Russia/Central Asia.* Afghanistan's northern neighbors have enduring interests in, and influence over, particular segments of Afghanistan. They pursue objectives that are not necessarily congruent to ISAF's mission. ISAF's Northern Distribution Network and logistical hubs are dependent upon support from Russian and Central Asian States, giving them the potential to act as either spoilers or positive influences.

### III. Getting the Basics Right

ISAF is not adequately executing the basics of COIN doctrine. Thus the first major recommendation of this assessment is to change and focus on that which ISAF has the most control of: ISAF. The coalition must hold itself accountable before it can attempt to do so with others. Specifically, ISAF will focus on two major changes to improve execution of COIN fundamentals and enhance organizational alignment and efficacy:

- ISAF will change its operating culture to pursue a counterinsurgency approach that puts the Afghan people first. While the insurgency can afford to lose fighters and leaders, it cannot afford to lose control of the population.
- ISAF will change the way it does business to improve unity of command within ISAF, seek to improve unity of effort with the international community, and to use resources more effectively.

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**New Operational Culture: Population-centric COIN.**

ISAF must operate differently. Preoccupied with force protection, ISAF has operated in a manner that distances itself, both physically and psychologically, from the people they seek to protect. The Afghan people have paid the price, and the mission has been put at risk. ISAF, with the ANSF, must shift its approach to bring security and normalcy to the people and shield them from insurgent violence, corruption and coercion, ultimately enabling GIRoA to gain the trust and confidence of the people while reducing the influence of insurgents. Hard-earned credibility and face-to-face relationships, rather than close combat, will achieve success. This requires enabling Afghan counterparts to meet the needs of the people at the community level through dynamic partnership, engaged leadership, de-centralized decision making, and a fundamental shift in priorities.

*Improve Understanding.* ISAF – military and civilian personnel alike – must acquire a far better understanding of Afghanistan and its people. ISAF personnel must be seen as guests of the Afghan people and their government, not an occupying army. Key personnel in ISAF must receive training in local languages. Tour lengths should be long enough to build continuity and ownership of success. All ISAF personnel must show respect for local cultures and customs and demonstrate intellectual curiosity about the people of Afghanistan. The United States should fully implement – and encourage other nations to emulate – the “Afghan Hands” program that recruits and maintains a cadre of military and civilian practitioners and outside experts with deep knowledge of Afghanistan.

*Build Relationships.* In order to be successful as counterinsurgents, ISAF must alter its operational culture to focus on building personal relationships with its Afghan partners and the protected population. To gain accurate information and intelligence about the local environment, ISAF must spend as much time as possible with the people and as little time as possible in armored vehicles or behind the walls of forward operating bases. ISAF personnel must seek out, understand, and act to address the needs and grievances of the people in their local environment. Strong personal relationships forged between security forces and local populations will be a key to success.

*Project Confidence.* Creating a perception of security is imperative if the local population is to “buy-in” and invest in the institutions of governance and step forward with local solutions. When ISAF forces travel through even the most secure areas of Afghanistan firmly ensconced in armored vehicles with body armor and turrets manned, they convey a sense of high risk and fear to the population. ISAF cannot expect unarmed Afghans to feel secure before heavily armed ISAF forces do. ISAF cannot succeed if it is unwilling to share risk, at least equally, with the people.

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In fact, once the risk is shared, effective force protection will come from the people, and the overall risk can actually be reduced by operating differently. The more coalition forces are seen and known by the local population, the more their threat will be reduced. Adjusting force protection measures to local conditions sends a powerful message of confidence and normalcy to the population. Subordinate commanders must have greater freedom with respect to setting force protection measures they employ in order to help close the gap between security forces and the people they protect. Arguably, giving leaders greater flexibility to adjust force protection measures could expose military personnel and civilians to greater risk in the near term; however, historical experiences in counterinsurgency warfare, coupled with the above mitigation, suggests that accepting some risk in the short term will ultimately save lives in the long run.

*Decentralize.* To be effective, commanders and their civilian partners must have authorities to use resources flexibly -- and on their own initiative -- as opportunities arise, while maintaining appropriate accountability measures. ISAF must strike the right balance between control and initiative, but err on the side of initiative. Mistakes will inevitably be made, but a culture of excessive bureaucracy designed with the best of intentions will be far more costly in blood and treasure.

*Re-integration and Reconciliation.* Insurgencies of this nature typically conclude through military operations and political efforts driving some degree of host-nation reconciliation with elements of the insurgency. In the Afghan conflict, reconciliation may involve GIRoA-led, high-level political settlements. This is not within the domain of ISAF's responsibilities, but ISAF must be in a position to support appropriate Afghan reconciliation policies.

Reintegration is a normal component of counterinsurgency warfare. It is qualitatively different from reconciliation and is a critical part of the new strategy. As coalition operations proceed, insurgents will have three choices: fight, flee, or reintegrate. ISAF must identify opportunities to reintegrate former mid- to low-level insurgent fighters into normal society by offering them a way out. To do so, ISAF requires a credible program to offer eligible insurgents reasonable incentives to stop fighting and return to normalcy, possibly including the provision of employment and protection. Such a program will require resources and focus, as appropriate, on people's future rather than past behavior. ISAF's soldiers will be required to think about COIN operations differently, in that there are now three outcomes instead of two: enemy may be killed, captured, or reintegrated.

In executing a reintegration program ISAF will necessarily assume decentralized authorities, in coordination with GIRoA, for ISAF field commanders to support the reintegration of fighters and low-level leaders. Local leaders are critical figures in any reintegration efforts and must be free to make the decisions that bind their entire community.

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*Economic Support to Counterinsurgency.* ISAF has an important asymmetric advantage; it can aid the local economy, along with its civilian counterparts, in ways that the insurgents cannot. Local development can change incentive structures and increase stability in communities. Economic opportunity, especially job creation, is a critical part of reintegrating the foot-soldier into normal life. Economic support to counterinsurgency is distinct from and cannot substitute for longer-term development initiatives. With some coordination it can lay the groundwork for, and complement, those longer-term efforts and show that the Afghan government is active at the local level. ISAF must increase the flexibility and responsiveness of funding programs to enable commanders and their civilian partners to make immediate economic and quality of life improvements in accordance with Afghan priorities.

#### **Improve Unity of Effort and Command**

ISAF's subordinate headquarters must stop fighting separate campaigns. Under the existing structure, some components are not effectively organized and multiple headquarters fail to achieve either unity of command or unity of effort.

The establishment of an intermediate operational headquarters is the first step toward rectifying these problems. This new headquarters will enable the ISAF headquarters to focus on strategic and operational matters and enhance coordination with GIRoA, UNAMA, and the international community. The intermediate headquarters will synchronize operational activities and local civil-military coordination and ensure a shared understanding of the mission throughout the force. The intermediate headquarters must be supported with increased information collection and analysis capabilities to improve significantly ISAF's understanding of the political, cultural, social, and economic dynamics.

The intermediate headquarters will also provide command and control for all ANSF mentor teams, enabling CSTC-A and the new NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) to focus on ANSF institution-building, force generation, force sustainment, and leader development. Command relationships must be clarified so that battle space owners at every echelon can synchronize operations in accordance with ISAF priorities, with effective control of all operations in their area of operations, to include theater wide forces, SOF, and mentoring teams. Mechanisms must be established at all echelons to integrate information from ISAF, ANSF, GIRoA, and other actors. Additional changes are required to address the myriad of other command and control challenges and parochial interests that have emerged over time. ISAF must continue to confront these challenges internally and in partnership with NATO and national capitals.

#### **IV. A Strategy for Success**

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Success will be achieved when GIRoA has earned the support of the powerful Afghan people and effectively controls its own territory. This will not come easily or quickly. It is realistic to expect that Afghan and coalition casualties will increase until GIRoA and ISAF regain the initiative.

ISAF's strategy to defeat the insurgency and achieve this end state, based on an in-depth analysis of the nature of the conflict, includes four major pillars:

- ISAF will become radically more integrated and partnered with the ANSF to enable a more rapid expansion of their capacity and responsibility for security.
- ISAF will place support to responsive and accountable governance, including sub-national and community governance, on par with security.
- ISAF's operations will focus first on gaining the initiative and reversing the momentum of the insurgency.
- ISAF will prioritize available resources to those critical areas where the population is most threatened.

**1. Increase partnership with the ANSF to increase size and capabilities**

*Radically Expanded and Embedded Partnering.* Success will require trust-based, expanded partnering with the ANSF with assigned relationships at all echelons to improve effectiveness of the ANSF. Neither the ANA nor the ANP is sufficiently effective. ISAF must place far more emphasis on ANSF development in every aspect of daily operations. ISAF will integrate headquarters and enablers with ANA units to execute a full partnership, with the shared goal of working together to bring security to the Afghan people. ISAF units will physically co-locate with the ANSF, establish the same battle-rhythm, and plan and execute operations together. This initiative will increase ANSF force quality and accelerate their ownership of Afghanistan's security.

*Accelerated Growth.* The Afghan National Army (ANA) must accelerate growth to the present target strength of 134,000 by Fall 2010, with the institutional flexibility to continue that growth to a new target ceiling of 240,000. The target strength of the Afghan National Police (ANP) must be raised to 160,000. This will require additional mentors, trainers, partners and funds through an expanded participation by GIRoA, the support of ISAF, and the resources of troop contributing and donor nations.

The ANP suffers from a lack of training, leaders, resources, equipment, and mentoring. Effective policing is inhibited by the absence of a working system of justice or dispute resolution; poor pay has also encouraged corruption. Substantial reform with appropriate resources -- and possibly even new authorities -- are critically important and must not be delayed.

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GIRoA and ISAF will evaluate the utility of using locally-based security initiatives such as the Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3), where appropriate conditions exist, to create village-level indigenous security in partnership with GIRoA and local shuras.

*Detainee Operations.* Effective detainee operations are essential to success. The ability to remove insurgents from the battlefield is critical to effective protection of the population. Further, the precision demanded in effective counterinsurgency operations must be intelligence-driven; detainee operations are a critical part of this. Getting the right information and evidence from those detained in military operations is also necessary to support rule of law and reintegration programs and help ensure that only insurgents are detained and civilians are not unduly affected.

Detainee operations are both complex and politically sensitive. There are strategic vulnerabilities in a non-Afghan system. By contrast, an Afghan system reinforces their sense of sovereignty and responsibility. As always, the detention process must be effective in providing key intelligence and avoid 'catch and release' approaches that endanger coalition and ANSF forces. It is therefore imperative to evolve to a more holistic model centered on an Afghan-run system. This will require a comprehensive system that addresses the entire "life-cycle" and extends from point of capture to eventual reintegration or prosecution.

ISAF has completed a full review of current detainee policies and practices with recommendations for substantial revisions to complement ISAF's revised strategy. Key elements of a new detention policy should include transferring responsibility for long-term detention of insurgents to GIRoA, establishing procedures with GIRoA for ISAF access to detainees for interrogation within the bounds of national caveats, application of counter-radicalization and disengagement practices, and training of ISAF forces to better collect intelligence for continued operations and evidence for prosecution in the Afghan judicial system. Afghanistan must develop detention capabilities and operations that respect the Afghan people. A failure to address GIRoA incapacity in this area presents a serious risk to the mission.

## **2. Facilitating Afghan governance and mitigating the effects of malign actors**

Success requires a stronger Afghan government that is seen by the Afghan people as working in their interests. Success does not require perfection – an improvement in governance that addresses the worst of today's high level abuse of power, low-level corruption, and bureaucratic incapacity will suffice.

*Learning from and leveraging the elections.* The recent Presidential and Provincial Council elections were far from perfect. From a security standpoint, they were generally executed smoothly and without major physical disruption, although the credibility of the election results remains an open question. The country-wide spike in



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violence against ISAF and ANSF, with three to four times the average number of attacks, underscores the widespread reach of insurgent influence, particularly in the south and the east and in select areas of the north and west. However, the relatively low number of effective attacks against polling centers offers some evidence that insurgents were targeting ISAF and ANSF, not the voters. The Afghans' ability to plan and execute the elections, along with the close partnering between ISAF and ANSF, and the mass deployment of security forces were notable achievements nonetheless. The elections were also an opportunity, and a forcing function, that will help to improve future coordination within the ANSF and expand ISAF's partnership with GIRoA and the international community.

*Supporting local governance.* Elements of Afghan society, particularly rural populations, have been excluded from the political process. ISAF must support UNAMA and the international community in sub-national governance reform by working directly with local communities, starting by assessing Afghan civilian needs by population center and developing partnerships to act on them. By empowering local communities, GIRoA, supported by ISAF, can encourage them to support the political system. District elections and the civilian resources deployed to Provincial Reconstruction Teams, District Support Teams, and ISAF task forces will also help build legitimate governance structures at the sub-national levels.

Efforts are underway that may address some of these issues, including those that have been cultivated through the National Solidarity Program and the Afghan Social Outreach Program. These structures will enable improvements at the community level to link communities with the national government over time. In addition, GIRoA's proposed sub-national governance policy aims to give greater authority and responsibility to the elected councils and to clarify their relationships with governors and individual line ministries. The U.S. Government Integrated Civil-Military Campaign Plan also provides a basis for improving sub-national governance at every level – provided it is appropriately staffed and resourced. Similar coordinated action is also required from other partner governments. Similarly, the request for support from the Ministry of Finance for civilian technical assistance must be welcomed and met. Indeed, ISAF and the international community must support the acceleration of these efforts, while recognizing that additional legislative initiatives may be required.

*Negative Influencers.* ISAF must understand and address underlying factors that encourage malign behavior and undermine governance. The narco- and illicit economy and the extortion associated with large-scale developmental projects undermine the economy in Afghanistan. GIRoA cannot fund its operations because of its inability to raise revenue, a situation made worse by the illicit economy. Poorly paid officials may resort to petty corruption, contributing to the people's crisis in confidence. The international community must appropriately supplement revenues until these problems are addressed. ISAF must also change its concept of the "border fight" ... REDACTION...

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to expanding GIRoA's revenue base through improved border control and customs collection.

*Discerning Support.* ISAF must develop a discerning approach that rewards competent Afghan governance and leadership, recognizes the distinction between incapacity and predatory behavior, and leverages ISAF's influence to address both challenges. ISAF and its partners must develop appropriate measures to reduce the incentives for corrupt actors that impede the mission, work around them if necessary, and develop actionable evidence of their malfeasance. Improving information collection and analysis will provide better understanding of the motivations, practices, and effects of corruption.

*Transparency and Accountability.* ISAF must work with UNAMA and the international community to build public finance mechanisms that enable GIRoA to create credible programs and allocate resources according to the needs of the Afghan people. The international community must address its own corrupt or counter-productive practices, including reducing the amount of development money that goes toward overhead and intermediaries rather than the Afghan people. A recent OXFAM report indicates that a significant percentage of such funding is diverted. ISAF must pay particular attention to how development projects are contracted and to whom. Too often these projects enrich power-brokers, corrupt officials, or international contractors and serve only limited segments of the population. Improving ISAF's knowledge of the environment and sharing this information with UNAMA and the international community will help mitigate such harmful practices.

ISAF will provide economic support to counterinsurgency operations to help provide a bridge to critical developmental projects in priority areas that UN agencies and the international community cannot reach, while working closely with UNAMA to help set conditions for NGOs to enter stabilized areas.

*Rule of Law.* Finally, ISAF must work with its civilian and international counterparts to enable justice sector reform and locate resources for formal and informal justice systems that offer swift and fair resolution of disputes, particularly at the local level. The provision of local justice, to include such initiatives as mobile courts, will be a critical enhancement of Afghan capacity in the eyes of the people. ISAF must work with GIRoA to develop a clear mandate and boundaries for local informal justice systems.

### **3. Gain the Initiative and Evolve in Stages**

ISAF's new strategy will include three stages. These stages will unfold at different rates and times in different geographic areas of Afghanistan. Most importantly, they will be led increasingly by the Afghan people and their government.

*Gain the Initiative.* First, ISAF must re-focus its operations to gain the initiative in seriously threatened, populated areas by working directly with GIRoA institutions and

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people in local communities to gain their support and to diminish insurgent access and influence. This stage is clearly decisive to the overall effort. It will require sufficient resources to gain the initiative and definitively check the insurgency. A failure to reverse the momentum of the insurgency will not only preclude success in Afghanistan, it will result in a loss of public and political support outside Afghanistan.

In this stage, ISAF will take a new approach to integrate fully with the ANSF through extensive partnering. This will enable improved effectiveness and a more rapid growth of ANSF capability. Together with UNAMA and the international community, ISAF will work with all levels of GIRoA to expand substantially responsive and accountable governance that focuses on the needs of the people. Finally, there must be full international community support and commitment to the full range of civil-military capabilities concentrated in the priority areas.

*Strategic Consolidation.* As ISAF and ANSF capabilities grow over the next 12-24 months and the insurgency diminishes in critical areas, ISAF will begin a second stage – a strategic consolidation. As ANSF and GIRoA increasingly take the lead for security operations and as new civilian and military capacity arrives, security operations will expand to wider areas while consolidating initial gains. These efforts will increase the space in which the population feels protected and served by their government, and insulate them from a return of insurgent influence. Meanwhile, ANSF and ISAF must have the capability to respond flexibly to insurgent adaptation and retain the initiative.

*Sustained Security.* When the insurgent groups no longer pose an existential threat to GIRoA, ISAF will move into a third stage of sustained security to ensure achieved gains are durable as ISAF forces begin to draw down. As ANSF demonstrate the capability to defeat remaining pockets of insurgents on their own, ISAF will transition to a train, advise, and assist role. UNAMA and the international community will have increased freedom of action to continue to help develop the Afghan state and meet the needs of the Afghan people.

In all of these stages, the insurgents will adapt, possibly moving their operations to different areas. This risk is mitigated by the fact that the insurgents are weakened when forced to relocate from their traditional areas; the burden of migration, renewed recruiting, and re-establishing a stronghold will incur a cost to the insurgents. ISAF must have the capability to respond to these adaptations.

**4. Prioritize Allocation of Resources to Threatened Populations.**

In a country as large and complex as Afghanistan, ISAF cannot be strong everywhere. ISAF must focus its full range of civilian and military resources where they will have the greatest effect on the people. This will generally be in those specific geographical areas that represent key terrain. For the counterinsurgent, the key terrain is generally where the population lives and works. This is also where the insurgents are typically focused;

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thus, it is here where the population is threatened by the enemy and that the two sides inevitably meet. ISAF will initially focus on critical high-population areas that are contested or controlled by insurgents, not because the enemy is present, but because it is here that the population is threatened by the insurgency.

The geographical deployment of forces may not be static; ISAF must retain the operational flexibility to adapt to changes in the environment. Based on current assessments, ISAF prioritizes the effort in Afghanistan into three categories to guide the allocation of resources. These priorities will evolve over time as conditions on the ground change:

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### V. Assessments: Measuring Progress

ISAF must develop effective assessment architectures, in concert with civilian partners and home nations, to measure the effects of the strategy, assess progress toward key objectives, and make necessary adjustments. ISAF must identify and refine appropriate indicators to assess progress, clarifying the difference between operational measures of effectiveness critical to practitioners on the ground and strategic measures more appropriate to national capitals. Because the mission depends on GIRoA, ISAF must also develop clear metrics to assess progress in governance.

### VI. Resources and Risk

Proper resourcing will be critical. The campaign in Afghanistan has been historically under-resourced and remains so today – ISAF is operating in a culture of poverty.

Consequently, ISAF requires more forces. This increase partially reflects previously validated, yet un-sourced, requirements. This also stems from the new mix of capabilities essential to execute the new strategy. Some efficiency will be gained through better use of ISAF's existing resources, eliminating redundancy, and the leveraging of ANSF growth, increases in GIRoA capacity, international community resources, and the population itself. Nonetheless, ISAF requires capabilities and resources well in excess of these efficiency gains. The greater resources will not be sufficient to achieve success, but will enable implementation of the new strategy. Conversely, inadequate resources will likely result in failure. However, without a new strategy, the mission should not be resourced.

A 'properly-resourced' strategy provides the means deemed necessary to accomplish the mission with *appropriate and acceptable risk*. In the case of Afghanistan, this level of resourcing is less than the amount that is required to secure the whole country. By comparison, a 'fully-resourced' strategy could achieve *low risk*, but this would be

excessive in the final analysis. Some areas are more consequential for the survival of GIRoA than others.

The determination of what constitutes 'properly-resourced' will be based on force-density doctrine applied with best military judgment of factors such as terrain, location and accessibility of the population, intensity of the threats, the effects of ISR capabilities and other enablers, logistical constraints, and historical experience. As always, assessment of risk will necessarily include subjective professional judgment. Under-resourcing COIN is perilous because the insurgent has the advantage of mobility whereas security forces become relatively fixed after securing an area. Force density doctrine is based in historical analysis and suggests that a certain presence of security forces is required to achieve a critical threshold that overmatches the insurgents ability to leverage their mobility. In short, a 'properly-resourced' strategy places enough things, in enough places, for enough time. All three are mandatory.

A 'properly-resourced' strategy is imperative. Resourcing coalition forces below this level will leave critical areas of Afghanistan open to insurgent influence while the ANSF grows. Thus, the first stage of the strategy will be unachievable, leaving GIRoA and ISAF unable to execute the decisive second stage. In addition, the international community is unlikely to have the access necessary to facilitate effective Afghan governance in contested areas. Failure to provide adequate resources also risks a longer conflict, greater casualties, higher overall costs, and ultimately, a critical loss of political support. Any of these risks, in turn, are likely to result in mission failure.

*Civilian Capacity.* ISAF cannot succeed without a corresponding cadre of civilian experts to support the change in strategy and capitalize on the expansion and acceleration of counterinsurgency efforts. Effective civilian capabilities and resourcing mechanisms are critical to achieving demonstrable progress. The relative level of civilian resources must be balanced with security forces, lest gains in security outpace civilian capacity for governance and economic improvements. In particular, ensuring alignment of resources for immediate and rapid expansion into newly secured areas will require integrated civil-military planning teams that establish mechanisms for rapid response. In addition, extensive work is required to ensure international and host nation partners are engaged and fully integrated.

ISAF's efforts in Afghanistan must be directed through its Afghan counterparts to enable them to succeed in the long-term. Working within Afghan constructs, fostering Afghan solutions, and building Afghan capacity is essential. Particular focus is required at the community level where the insurgency draws its strength through coercion and exploitation of the people's dissatisfaction with their government and local conditions. Focusing on the community can drive a wedge between the insurgents and the people, giving them the freedom and incentive to support the Afghan government.

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Some of the additional civilian experts will partner with ISAF task forces or serve on Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Others will work with new District Support Teams as necessary to support this strategy. As necessary, ISAF must facilitate performance of civil-military functions wherever civilian capacity is lacking, the arrival of the civilians is delayed, or the authorities that the civilians bring prove insufficient. ISAF will welcome the introduction of any new civilian funding streams, but must be prepared to make up the difference using military funding as necessary.

*Risks.* No strategy can guarantee success. A number of risks outside of ISAF's control could undermine the mission, to include a loss of coalition political will, insufficient ability and political will on GIRoA's part to win the support of its people and to control its territory, failure to provide effective civilian capabilities by ISAF's partners, significant improvements or adaptations by insurgent groups, and actions of external actors such as Pakistan and Iran.

**VII. Conclusion**

The situation in Afghanistan is serious. The mission can be accomplished, but this will require two fundamental changes. First, ISAF must focus on getting the basics right to achieve a new, population-centric operational culture and better unity of effort. Second, ISAF must also adopt a new strategy, one that is properly resourced, to radically increase partnership with the ANSF, emphasize governance, prioritize resources where the population is threatened, and gain the initiative from the insurgency. This will entail significant near-term cost and risk; however, the long-term risk of not executing this strategy is greater. The U.S. Strategy and NATO mission for Afghanistan both call for a committed and comprehensive approach to the strategic threat of an unsecure and unstable Afghanistan. Through proper resourcing, rigorous implementation, and sustained political will, this refocused strategy offers ISAF the best prospect for success in this important mission.

Annex A: **Military Plans**

**Background**

ISAF CJ5, Plans and Strategy, conducted an analysis of the current campaign plan<sup>1</sup>, supporting plans, and orders to determine whether the strategy and means provided are adequate to accomplish the desired endstate. Many elements ...**REDACTION**... are deemed to be adequate; however, there are gaps in the operational design.

**Scope**

A multidisciplinary Joint Operational Planning Group (JOPG) was formed to conduct a thorough assessment of the ISAF counterinsurgency campaign strategy. The JOPG conducted a detailed analysis of both the ISAF OPLAN<sup>2</sup> and OPORD<sup>3</sup>. Previous versions of these orders were also analyzed to ascertain the rationale for successive versions. Analysis was also conducted ... **REDACTION**... to confirm that the ISAF OPLAN and OPORD followed the guiding principles contained in the higher headquarters frameworks. The JOPG also reviewed the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and the UNAMA mandate. Other documents were also consulted and analyzed, including the draft U.S. Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan. These efforts were complemented by an analysis of the seasonal, agricultural, and narcotic cycles as they relate to the historic operational cycle of insurgent forces to ensure that the subsequent recommendations were situated within a real world timeline. There was significant linkage to three other work efforts being conducted under the Initial Assessment:

1. The "Troops to Task" Working Group determining the resource requirements and allocation of forces and capabilities.
2. The Initial Assessment Working Group tasked with examining the overarching strategy.
3. The ANSF Expansion Working Group tasked with determining the feasibility for rapid growth of GIRoA security capacity.

**Key Findings**

- a. **REDACTION**... This OPLAN explicitly states that it serves as the campaign plan for ISAF. Contained within this OPLAN is a clear mission and intent, supported by four Lines of Operation (LoO): Security (lead responsibility), Governance (supporting effort), Development (supporting effort), and Strategic Communications (supporting effort). Associated with these LoO are ten effects. These effects are broadly phrased and are not linked with Decisive Points (DP)/Decisive Conditions (DC). This missing element of operational design is crucial, as it should be used to generate associated actions (tasks and purposes) for the OPORD. Similarly, Measures of Effectiveness

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<sup>1</sup>**REDACTION**

<sup>2</sup>**REDACTION**

<sup>3</sup>**REDACTION**

(MOE)/Measures of Performance (MOP) should inform assessments, demonstrating progress along the various LoO. Without this linkage, it is exceptionally difficult to provide accurate advice to the commander to inform optimal decisions on forces, resources, and tasks to continue on the projected path to achieve the desired endstate.

b. **REDACTION...** The OPORD contains much detail but does not explicitly link the Regional Commands (RC) operations under a coherent, single, nationwide strategy. This is one of the critical deficiencies of the existing OPORD. The following observations are provided:

i. The mission and intent contained in the OPORD are broadly phrased, covering all lines of operation contained in the OPLAN, but it provides insufficient guidance for Regional Commanders to achieve unity of effort.

ii. The Shape/Clear/Hold/Build construct **REDACTION...** provides the rudimentary elements of an operational framework that forms the basis for the tasks contained in the OPORD.

iii. The OPORD is exceptionally detailed and complex. Within the Main Body alone, 47 tasks are directed toward the Regional Commands and ISAF Special Operations Forces (SOF). There are an additional 50 tasks found throughout the OPORD annexes. There is no clear prioritization of the tasks within the OPORD.

c. OPLAN and OPORD Development. Analysis of the successive versions of **...REDACTION...** the OPORD indicate that each refinement sought to generate increased synchronization and clarity of tasks. The various staffs that generated these modifications were attempting to refine inherited products to produce improved linkages. Viewed independently, both the OPLAN and the OPORD are good products; however, the linkage from higher strategy down to specific tasks remains tenuous. Specifically, prioritization and synchronization have become unclear. Substance exists in both the OPLAN and the OPORD, however they are now overly complex, necessitating revision and alignment.

d. Prioritization. The lack of clear prioritization of tasks in the OPORD has allowed each of the five subordinate RCs to develop OPORDs with a slightly different emphasis. Some flexibility appears to be a key part of the OPORD design, allowing for sufficient variance between RCs to align toward the specific threats faced in their region. While minor variations were anticipated, a deeper examination shows a lack of coherence within the Security LoO between RCs. The OPORD allows RCs to determine their prioritization and focus within this "lead effort" LoO, with emphasis on protecting the population, growing security capacity, and/or combating insurgents (or other Enemies of Afghanistan). The diversity of Troop Contributing Nations (TCN) further increases variance and differences of interpretation across the



force. The multiplicity of priorities (e.g. Focus Areas, Action Districts, Priority Action Districts, and Focused District Development) seemingly makes “everything” important.

e. Synchronization. Although the OPORD attempts to generate synchronization, the variation in interpretation and prioritization of effort hinders development of the necessary synergy. Synchronization across the theater should provide a greater opportunity for the generation of collective effects across all LoO, but is not currently achieved. The lack of prioritization makes synchronization exceptionally difficult.

f. Assessments. The campaign assessment construct uses a methodology to measure effectiveness of operations along the LoO described in the OPLAN. The current assessment provides a broad measure of progress that requires substantial interpretation to determine interrelationships among the various aspects within the LoO. The current campaign design does not utilize decisive points or milestones within the broad effects; accordingly, it is difficult to assess progress along a LoO. This does not assist the Commander in evaluating where changes in strategy or main effort may be required.

g. Supporting Plans and Annexes.

i. Counternarcotics (CN). It is clear that CN efforts were not fully integrated into the counterinsurgency campaign; efforts were collaborative but not centrally coordinated. Substantial intelligence points directly at the Afghanistan narcotics industry as a significant economic enabler for the insurgency. The ISAF mandate, with its clear security focus and individual TCN caveats, coupled with the ubiquitous nature of the narcotics problem, clearly limited CN efforts by ISAF forces. CN engagement has increased significantly since the Budapest Summit which called upon NATO and TCN to grant sufficient legal authority to increase ISAF assistance to GIRoA to execute the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy. With the clarification of legal authorities, Annex RR – Counter Narcotics was integrated ...**REDACTION**. The RCs are currently developing supporting plans to address the 2010 opium poppy season. Though CN efforts are improving, they must be fully integrated into the overall plan.

ii. ISAF and ANSF Partnering and Mentoring. Partnering continues to evolve. Efforts to formalize the partnership between ISAF and ANSF can be traced to June 2008. It took until Nov 2008 to develop the framework for the plan and issue the fragmentary order<sup>4</sup> (FRAGO) directing this effort. The FRAGO sought to create a baseline for both partnering operations and reporting requirements; RCs continue to progress toward the objectives described in the FRAGO,

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<sup>4</sup>**REDACTION**

however they are hampered by the lack of clarity expressed in the operational design.

h. **Operational Environment.** Elements of the operational environment dictate the operational cycle of the insurgency. It is critical to consider the seasonal, agricultural, and narcotic cycles, as well as the religious calendar and external events like Pakistani military operations in the border area, in order to refine the campaign design. Traditionally, insurgents have used the winter months to reorganize and prepare for the “fighting” season which coincides with improving weather. Generally, ISAF forces have matched the insurgent’s operational cycle each year. Without a significant change, ISAF will remain in consonance with this cycle. This winter, there is an opportunity to break our inadvertent operational synchronicity with the insurgents. The new operational design must be linked to ‘real world’ event cycles rather than being considered in abstract and place greater emphasis on non-kinetic operations, noting that the insurgency remains active within the population even when kinetic operations are greatly reduced during the winter.

i. **Command Relationships.** Although indirectly related to the analysis of the campaign design, command relationships are a key element to synchronization of efforts under the lines of operation provided in the ISAF OPORD and OPLAN. Within campaign design, the link between operational design and operational management is provided by operational command; accordingly a review of operational plans should also consider the relevant command relationships. The ISAF upper command and control arrangements are undergoing restructuring concurrently with the Initial Assessment. Clarification of the relationship between the evolving Four Star ISAF HQ and the new, Three Star ISAF Joint Command (IJC) will assist significantly in the synchronization of efforts across the campaign. The transition of CSTC-A/DATES to NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) in the same timeframe as the formation of the IJC brings an opportunity to achieve a fully coordinated new operational level command structure with associated realignment of subordinate elements (e.g. Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and Embedded Training Teams (ETTs). Realignment of these relationships necessitates an operational design that considers the new command lines provided to COMISAF. Efficient command and control alignment will enhance execution of the revised operational design.

### **Recommendations**

a. OPLAN 38302. Retain major elements of the OPLAN as the base document that frames the ISAF Campaign Plan. The document is sufficient to complement the efforts of external agencies (e.g. GIRoA and UNAMA) along the supporting LoO of Governance and Development. Significant change may be counterproductive in the short term; specifically, the Comprehensive and Integrated Approach described in Annex W of the OPLAN is procedurally understood by critical stakeholders. The OPLAN provides the framework for the “lead effort” Security LoO to guide

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development of the operational design. Within the OPLAN framework, the operational design should be revised substantially to provide the benchmarks of progress to guide prioritization and synchronization of subordinate efforts.

- b. **Revise the OPORD.** Given both the refined command relationships and anticipated direction to develop an operational design, the OPORD will require substantial revision to prioritize and synchronize the efforts across all COMISAF subordinates. The current OPORD contains elements that can be prioritized and synchronized in the short term through fragmentary orders until a new OPORD is developed and published.
- c. **Command Relationships.** The development of the operational design must incorporate the anticipated command relationships under which the order will be executed.
- d. **Resourcing.** Use the refined operational design as the basis to request additional resource capabilities that generate overmatch of insurgent forces prior to the historical operational tempo increase of insurgent operations.

**Annex B: Command and Control, and Command Relationships**

ISAF analysed the command relationships between military forces and civilian organizations operating in the Afghanistan Theater of Operations. To date, various initiatives have either been planned or are underway in order to improve unity of command and unity of effort within the Afghanistan Area of Operations (AoO).

**Status Update**

- On August 4th, NATO's North Atlantic Council officially approved the creation of an intermediate three-star command between COMISAF and the RCs. This new headquarters is on pace to reach Initial Operational Capability (IOC) by 12 October 09 and Full Operational Capability by 12 November 09.
- Along with the creation of the ISAF Joint Command (IJC), the decision was made to create NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) to unify both NATO and U.S. forces previously operating under separate command relationship lines (Directorate for Afghan National Army Training and Equipment (NATO) and Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (U.S.)) conducting advisory roles with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) throughout Afghanistan. This new headquarters will reach IOC by 10 September 09.
- Related to the creation of NTM-A is a proposal to move all of the advisory elements that reside in the Afghanistan AOO—OMLTs, POMLTs, PMTs, ETTs, OCCs, etc.—under the operational control of the Regional Commands (RC) and battlespace owners (BSO). A portion of the ...**REDACTION**... staff will migrate to the IJC to manage various resourcing functions related to the support of these advisory elements.
- HQ ISAF issued FRAGO 408-2009 directing the establishment, in coordination with GIRoA, of a National Military Coordination Center (NMCC) for the coordination and planning of joint military operations.
- The RCs have been directed to partner with the ANSF at every level within their RC AOOs in order to gain synergy of operations and improve the capability and capacity of the ANSF.
- The RCs were also tasked with further developing Operations Coordination Centers at the Regional and Provincial level to enable a comprehensive approach to planning and operating down to the tactical level and to monitor and report partner ANSF unit readiness to COMISAF.
- USFOR-A has been tasked with the following:

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- Direct CSTC-A to focus on force generation and institutional and ministerial development;
- Transfer OEF units OPCON to COMISAF and place them on the ISAF Combined Joint Statement of Requirements;
- Draft C2 guidance for command and control of special operations forces will be issued soon. This FRAGO will direct the realignment of all SOF, ...REDACTION... OPCON to COMISAF. OEF and ISAF SOF will be directed to enhance the coordination of their operations through the provision of SOF operations and planning staff, SOF advisors, and liaison officers to the RC HQs.
- In cooperation with JFC-Brunssum, Allied Transformation Command (ATC), Joint Warfare Center, and the Joint Warfighting Center (USJFCOM), and V Corps, a training plan has been developed to support the stand up of the IJC.

Remaining Challenges

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- Other challenges to unity of command lie in the variations of each troop contributing nation's Order of Battle Transfer of Authority (ORBATTOA) report. Since there is such variation in the ORBATTOA reports, it is difficult to achieve a common command authority structure throughout the theater.
- Another challenge comes from U.S. sponsored, non-NATO nations that deploy forces using U.S. Global-War-on-Terrorism (GWOT) funding under U.S. Code Title X. These nations include Georgia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Mongolia, Bahrain, and others. The unique challenge created under this process specifies that Title X funding is tied to a direct command relationship with a U.S. commander.
- Even if unity of effort is achieved with all international military forces in full partnership with the ANSF, unity of command remains a significant challenge because of the many international community and nongovernmental organizations who make significant unilateral contributions in the Governance and Development Lines of Operation. In order to address this, the BSO must be fully engaged with GIRoA, UNAMA, ANSF and any civilian capacity building entities or International Organization. Engagement and coordination is critical; de-confliction by itself is insufficient. It is important that BSOs develop relationships with these organizations that help to achieve the desired end state.
- One issue to be resolved is whether COMISAF has the authority to move personnel assigned to ISAF HQ under CE 13.0 over to the new Intermediate HQ CE 1.0. Current

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planning is based on the assumption that he has this authority; however, this issue must be resolved in writing from SHAPE prior to any personnel migration.

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**Annex C: USG Integrated Civil-Military Campaign Plan**

The Integrated Civil-Military Campaign Plan (ICMCP) represents the collaborative planning efforts of United States Government (USG) operating in Afghanistan. It was signed by the United States Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry and General Stanley McChrystal, Commander, United States Forces Afghanistan, on 15 August 2009 and forwarded to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, United States Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and General David Petraeus, Commander, United States Central Command. The USG will execute this plan from a 'whole-of-government' approach in coordination with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA).

The ICMCP aligns USG efforts on a single objective: the people of Afghanistan. It specifies that every action must focus on securing and enabling the Afghan people to resist the insurgents and engage with GIRoA and the international community to develop effective governance. Shifting focus to deliver results for the population requires comprehensive integration and synchronization of USG and ISAF civilian-military teams working across the Security, Development, and Governance Lines of Operation. The ICMCP details how this new integrated approach will be applied across 11 Counter-insurgency (COIN) Transformative Effects (see table opposite). These effects will enable tangible progress in fighting the insurgency and building stability at the local community, provincial, and national level.

ICMCP implementation is supported by two significant civilian initiatives. First, U.S. Senior Civilian Representative positions have been established in RC(E) and RC(S) at each sub-regional U.S. Brigade Task Force, and in each province and district support team to coordinate activities of civilians operating under Chief of Mission authority to execute US policy and guidance, serve as the civilian counterpart to the military commander, and integrate and coordinate civ-mil efforts. The second civilian initiative, the USG Civilian Uplift, will deploy additional USG civilians throughout Afghanistan at the regional, brigade task force, provincial, and district levels.

In summary, the ICMCP describes target activities and initiatives for our personnel on the ground. By mandating an integrated, multi-level civilian chain of command for the best partnership possible with military forces, U.S. personnel will have a sound construct within which to determine what areas of the plan to implement in their respective areas.

**11 Transformative Effects:**

- Population Security
- Claim the Information Initiative
- Access to Justice
- Expansion of Accountable and Transparent Governance
- Elections and Continuity of Governance
- Action Against Irreconcilables
- Creating Sustainable Jobs
- Agricultural Opportunity and Market Access
- Countering the Nexus of Narcotics, Corruption, Insurgency and Criminality
- Community and Government led Reintegration
- Cross-Border Access for Commerce Not Insurgents

## Annex D: Strategic Communication

### **Background**

The information domain is a battlespace, and it is one in which ISAF must take aggressive actions to win the important battle of perception. Strategic Communication (StratCom) makes a vital contribution to the overall effort, and more specifically, to the operational center of gravity: the continued support of the Afghan population. In order to achieve success we must make better use of existing assets and bolster these with new capabilities to meet the challenges ahead. To date, the Insurgents (INS) have undermined the credibility of ISAF, the International Community (IC), and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) through effective use of the information environment, albeit without a commensurate increase in their own credibility. Whilst this is a critical problem for ISAF, the consequences for GIROA are even starker. GIROA and the IC need to wrest the information initiative from the INS.

### **Scope**

ISAF has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of StratCom objectives, policies, and capability requirements which has resulted in several key recommendations in order to achieve the mission. The command also developed a StratCom Action Plan which details those tasks and activities which must be implemented in order to put the recommendations into effect. This plan is not focused on ISAF in isolation but has been derived from a variety of other planning efforts which have set the framework for this assessment. While the primary focus was on the Afghan environment, some of the actions outlined may have a wider effect in the regional context. The planning process benefitted from the participation of StratCom experts in the 'community of interest', including HQ NATO, SHAPE, and JFC-B as well as the visiting Initial Assessment Team.

### **Key Findings**

#### **DEVELOPING CAPACITY**

Apart from improving its own performance, ISAF needs to help ensure that GIROA receives the necessary partnering, assistance, training and equipment to further develop their own capacity and improve performance. In so doing, we need to be careful that we do not continue to over promise and under deliver across the lines of operation. ISAF needs to be able to support both the NATO strategic centre of gravity, (the maintenance of Alliance cohesion as specified in the ISAF OPLAN), as well as ensure that GIROA is placed at the forefront of all possible endeavors with its credibility enhanced. Over the years a consistent set of problems have been identified but not adequately addressed, primarily as a result of insufficient coordination and a lack of resources. The key for StratCom is to implement a plan based on these lessons learned. ISAF is not the sole player in the StratCom area. Success also depends on improving the currently inadequate capabilities of other non-military critical players, especially in areas outside security such as the governance, reconstruction, and development arenas.



## **NEW OBJECTIVES**

For success, the following StratCom objectives need to be accomplished in partnership with other key stakeholders:

- Discredit and diminish insurgents and their extremist allies' capability to influence attitudes and behaviour in AFG.
- In partnership, assist GIRoA and the populace in developing a sense of ownership and responsibility for countering violent extremism in order to advance their own security, stability, and development.
- Increase effectiveness of international and GIRoA communications with the Afghan people and the IC.
- Increase AFG political and popular will to counter violent extremism and protect the operational centre of gravity, namely the support of the Afghan people.
- Enhance StratCom coordination with Higher Headquarters (HHQ) and, through them, the troop contributing nations (TCN) in order to support SACEUR's strategic center of gravity which is the maintenance of Alliance cohesion.
- Promote the capability of, and confidence in, the Afghan National Security Forces as a force for good in the country.
- Maintain and increase international and public support for ISAF goals and policies in AFG.

## **MAIN EFFORT**

The StratCom main effort is to maintain and strengthen the Afghan population's positive perception of, and support for, GIRoA institutions and the constructive supporting role played by ISAF and the IC.

## **Recommendations**

### **Change of Culture**

There must be a fundamental change of culture in how ISAF approaches operations. StratCom should not be a separate Line of Operation, but rather an integral and fully embedded part of policy development, planning processes, and the execution of operations. Analyzing and maximizing StratCom effects must be central to the

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formulation of schemes of maneuver and during the execution of operations. In order to affect this paradigm shift, ISAF HQ must synchronize all StratCom stakeholders. Implicit in this change of culture is the clear recognition that modern strategic communication is about credible dialogue, not a monologue where we design our systems and resources to deliver messages to target audiences in the most effective manner. This is now a population centric campaign and no effort should be spared to ensure that the Afghan people are part of the conversation. Receiving, understanding, and amending behavior as a result of messages received from audiences can be an effective method of gaining genuine trust and credibility. This would improve the likelihood of the population accepting ISAF messages and changing their behavior as a result.

### **Win the battle of perceptions**

ISAF must act to assist GIRoA in the battle of perceptions through gaining and maintaining the Afghan population's trust and confidence in GIRoA institutions. This will help establish GIRoA as a credible government. For GIRoA and ISAF to win the battle of perceptions we must demonstrably change behavior and actions on the ground - our policies and actions must reflect this reality. StratCom should take every opportunity to highlight the protection of civilians in accordance with the revised Tactical Directive dated 1 July 2009, which is a key StratCom tool.

### **Build AFG capacity and capability**

Additional emphasis must be placed on assisting and building AFG capacity and capability so that they are better able to take the lead in StratCom related issues. Better linkages and a robust partnership must be forged with MOD and MOI spokespersons, allowing a supportive and complementary network to be developed. Increasing capacity requires an improved understanding of the environment, better procedures, and additional required equipment and training. The Government Media and Information Centre needs to be expanded to include regional nodes able to disseminate government briefings and releases throughout the region.

### **Post election engagement**

ISAF's engagement with senior GIRoA members should be reassessed following the Presidential Elections, in order to promote the effective coordination of messaging.

### **Expand reach of messaging**

ISAF must extend both the reach and propagation of its message delivery, together with determining the effectiveness of that message. Focus should be on identifying the optimum medium for propagation rather than just on the message alone. The following means will be evaluated:

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- Commercial communications systems and systems operated by ISAF and GIRoA must be further developed with the necessary protection for communications infrastructure. ISAF should partner more effectively with the Afghan commercial sector to enhance COIN effects by empowering the population through access to telecommunications and information via TV and radio.
- The use of traditional communications to disseminate messages must be better exploited using both modern technology and more orthodox methods such as word of mouth. These messages should be delivered by authoritative figures within the AFG community, both rural and urban, so that they are credible. This will include religious leaders, maliks, and tribal elders.
- There must be development and use of indigenous narratives to tap into the wider cultural pulse of Afghanistan.
- Increased cultural expertise is required in order to enhance the development and use of StratCom messaging.
- A more comprehensive and reliable system of developing metrics for Communication Measurement of Effectiveness must be developed, to inform ISAF of the perceptions and atmospherics within AFG communities.

### **Offensive Information Operations (IO)**

Offensive IO must be used to target INS networks in order to disrupt and degrade their operational effectiveness, while also offering opportunities for lower level insurgent re-integration. ISAF should continue to develop and implement a robust and proactive capability to counter hostile information activities and propaganda. A more forceful and offensive StratCom approach must be devised whereby INS are exposed continually for their cultural and religious violations, anti-Islamic and indiscriminate use of violence and terror, and by concentrating on their vulnerabilities. These include their causing of the majority of civilian casualties, attacks on education, development projects, and government institutions, and flagrant contravention of the principles of the Koran. These vulnerabilities must be expressed in a manner that exploits the cultural and ideological separation of the INS from the vast majority of the Afghan population.

### **Agile response to incidents**

ISAF, in conjunction with GIRoA, must enhance its responsiveness to incidents. Subordinate echelons must have the authority and freedom to act within an agile, transparent, and unified environment. Information must be widely shared, horizontally and vertically, including with GIRoA and the IC. New Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) must be produced to reflect a flatter command philosophy whereby subordinates are expected to act in accordance with the Commander's Intent to ensure a swift, effective response to achieve the information initiative against the enemy. In particular, risk mitigation measures in the event of CIVCAS must be widely understood and

practiced before the incident and accomplished in a timely manner so that we are 'first with the truth.'

### **Counter-IED IO focus**

The C-IED IO efforts must be fully integrated into the overall StratCom strategy and structures. StratCom must focus on encouraging the population to assist in countering the scourge of IEDs. Effective messaging and offensive Information Operations (IO) are critical to this effort.

### **StratCom capacity**

Throughout the ISAF chain of command StratCom elements must be structured and resourced appropriately, and manned at the requisite levels of expertise to achieve the desired effects. Some of these elements are known to be relatively weak in RC(N), RC(W) and RC(C) and will need augmenting. The inclusion of the critical capabilities provided by Information Operation Task Force (IOTF), Information Operation Advisory Task Force (IOATF), Media Monitoring, STRATCOM Information Fusion Network and CAPSTONE contracts within the StratCom structure should be supported as these will significantly enhance the Directorate's enabling, monitoring, and assessment efforts.

### **Unity of Command – Unity of Effort**

ISAF and USFOR-A StratCom IO and Public Affairs (PA) components must be fully integrated in order to provide unity of command and effort and enable coherent and rapid messaging. It will be necessary to promote the single ISAF "brand" to multiple internal and external stakeholders.

### **Refocus Media efforts**

ISAF must re-focus its media efforts in the following specific areas:

- Migrate to a 24/7 StratCom operation
- Delegate Public Affairs (PA) release authority to the appropriate level
- Create opportunities for Afghans to communicate as opposed to attempting to always control the message
- Link regional stories back to national Afghan ones
- Concentrate on the youth and those pursuing further education<sup>1</sup>
- Orientate the message from a struggle for the 'hearts and minds' of the Afghan population to one of giving them 'trust and confidence'
- Seek ways to reach the INS in Pakistan

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<sup>1</sup> 70% of the Afghan population are under 22 years old.

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- Focus media operations and subsequent analysis on context, characterization and accuracy
- Re-prioritize the policies governing practical support for media in terms of military airlift, credentialing, and embeds

### **Declassification Authority for ISR/WSV**

There has been consistent recognition of problems in using visual imagery, particularly ISR and weapons' system video, and other operational information for StratCom purposes. Every effort must be made to identify, declassify, and exploit such material in a timely manner.

### **StratCom links**

StratCom links to intelligence organizations must be strengthened. This will enable more effective counter-measures to hostile propaganda and provide more detailed network analysis in support of IO targeting.

### **New Media**

HQ ISAF must understand and adapt to the immediacy of the contemporary information environment through the employment of new/social media as well as cell phones, TV, and radio in order to promote interactive communication between Afghan and international audiences. This will involve a significant investment in technical architecture.

### **StratCom messengers and partners**

ISAF must develop a more widely understood internal communication strategy that enables every member of ISAF to be able to clearly articulate a short narrative of what ISAF wants to achieve in Afghanistan and how it is going to do it. Every soldier must be empowered to be a StratCom messenger for ISAF.

ISAF must strengthen its partnership with relevant IC stakeholders, both within the NATO system and internationally, to improve the flow of information and cooperation both horizontally and vertically. Specifically, in theater communication efforts to coordinate between TCNs must involve the office of the Senior Civilian Representative and HHQs in order to maximize the propagation of COMISAF's intent and help protect NATO/SHAPE's strategic center of gravity in national capitals.

NATO has had consistent problems producing trained personnel in all information disciplines. Significant investment is required to solve both a short-term problem and generate a longer term solution to producing the necessary fully-qualified personnel.

## Annex E: Civilian Casualties, Collateral Damage, and Escalation of Force

### **Background**

Civilian casualties (CIVCAS) and damage to public and private property (collateral damage), no matter how they are caused, undermine support for GIROA, ISAF, and the international community in the eyes of the Afghan population. Although the majority of CIVCAS incidents are caused by insurgents, the Afghan people hold ISAF to a higher standard. Strict comparisons of amount of damage caused by either side are unhelpful. To protect the population from harm, ISAF must take every practical precaution to avoid CIVCAS and collateral damage.

ISAF established a CIVCAS Tracking Cell in August 2008. This step was reinforced by a revised Tactical Directive (TD) issued to all troops in theatre on 1 July 2009, which, inter alia, clearly described how and when lethal force should be used. All subordinate commanders were explicitly instructed to brief their troops (to include civilian contractors) on the TD. Further, a thorough review of ISAF and USFOR-A operating procedures and processes has been ordered.

### **Scope**

The TD, in conjunction with COMISAF's COIN guidance and other supporting directives, describes how ISAF will both mitigate CIVCAS incidents, and change its approach to COIN and stability operations. These measures will improve the ability of ISAF to protect the population from harm.

This paper proposes recommendations to enhance the direction given in the TD.

### **Key Findings**

#### **Training**

Though it is not possible to prescribe the appropriate use of force for every situation on a complex battlefield, all troops must know, understand, comply, and train with the direction outlined in the TD. This implies a change in culture across the force. ISAF units and soldiers must be fully prepared to operate within the guidelines of the TD and other directives prior to deployment. Home-station training events must be nested within these directives. Training must continue in theater to ensure the guidance is being implemented correctly.

**Recommendation:** ISAF must utilize expertise resident at the Counter Insurgency Training Center-Afghanistan ("COIN Academy") and within ISAF organizations to ensure all units in theater understand and are able to apply the TD, COIN Guidance, and standing ROE. ISAF must also work together with home-station training centers and professional development schools to ensure units are properly prepared through education and pre-deployment training.

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The TD and COIN Guidance will be disseminated rapidly to U.S. Combat Training Centers and to NATO and ISAF Troop Contributing Nations (TCNs) for inclusion in scenario development and programs of instruction.

### **Troops in Contact (TIC)**

The TD stresses the necessity to avoid winning tactical victories while suffering strategic defeats. Ground commanders must fully understand the delicate balance between strategic intent and tactical necessity. Commanders must prioritize operational effectiveness within their operating areas by considering the effects of their actions on the Afghan population at every stage.

**Recommendation:** Under the direction of Task Force Commanders, sub-unit ground commanders must plan for and rehearse a full range of tactical options to include application of force in unpopulated areas, de-escalation of force within populated ones, or even breaking contact as appropriate to accomplish the mission.

### **Proportionality**

In order to minimize the risk of alienating the Afghan population, and in accordance with International Law, ISAF operations must be conducted in a manner that is both proportionate and reasonable.

**Recommendation:** When requesting Close Air Support (CAS) ground commanders and Joint Tactical Air Controllers (JTAC) must use appropriate munitions or capabilities to achieve desired effects while minimizing the risk to the Afghan people and their property. Ground commanders must exercise similar judgment in the employment of indirect fires.

### **Shaping the Environment and Preconditions**

The importance of cultural awareness during the conduct of operations is highlighted in the TD. Specifically, it notes that a significant amount of CIVCAS occur during Escalation of Force (EoF) procedures (14% of people killed and 22% of those wounded during the last recorded 6 months). These incidents tend to occur in units with less training experience and lower unit cohesion. Fear and uncertainty among ISAF soldiers contributes to escalation of force incidents. Furthermore, although ISAF has refined and enhanced the warnings that are issued, many Afghans do not understand them and consequently fail to comply. Low literacy levels and cultural differences may explain a misunderstanding of EoF procedures and the actions that ISAF troop expect them to take.

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**Recommendation:** Effective pre-deployment training and the development of unit cohesion are essential in honing the tactical judgment of soldiers and small unit leaders. Training scenarios at home station and combat training centers must improve. As ISAF reviews and modifies its escalation of force procedures to better fit the Afghan context, ISAF, and GIRoA must communicate those procedures more effectively to the Afghan people in appropriate media.

### **Press Release / Public Information**

The TD also stresses the requirement to acknowledge any CIVCAS incident in the media expeditiously and accurately; timely engagement with key leaders is also a critical element. The aim is to be 'first with the known truth', based on the information available at the time. ISAF competes with insurgents (INS) information operations (IO), and the INS IO is not hampered by the need to be truthful; moreover, any statements made by the INS are rapidly disseminated, and can be persuasive to the Afghan population. As the TD notes, it is far more effective to release a factual statement with the known details early, and then a follow-on statement with additional clarification at a later stage. This procedure is more effective than simply issuing a rebuttal of an INS version of the account. Furthermore, debating the number of people killed or injured misses the point. The fact that civilians were harmed or property was damaged needs to be acknowledged and investigated, and measures must be taken for redress.

**Recommendation:** First, ISAF and GIRoA must aim for a consistent rather than conflicting message through appropriate media, to include word of mouth in affected local communities. Be first with the known truth; be transparent in the investigation. Second, ISAF and GIRoA should follow-up on any incident with periodic press updates regarding the progress of the investigation, procedures for redress, and measures taken to ensure appropriate accountability.

### **Aircraft Video Release Procedures**

The advantage of photographic imagery to support any Battle Damage Assessment (BDA) is covered in the TD. This can be expanded to include aircraft weapon system imagery. The NATO Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan (CSPMP) for Afghanistan requires nations to establish agreed procedures for declassifying and making use of national operational imagery to reinforce NATO messages. Presently, national caveats apply to the release of aircraft BDA and weapon release imagery, and these caveats have different procedures and timelines for release. Some nations do not comply with the CSPMP.

**Recommendation:** Establish a standard procedure for all nations and services to attain the necessary release approval and delivery of the footage.

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### **Honor and "Assistance"**

Under the terms of the Military Technical Agreement between ISAF and GIRoA (dated 4 Jan 02), ISAF is not required to make compensation payments for any damage to civilian or governmental property. Contributing nations are responsible for damages caused by their soldiers. Some nations contribute to individual or collective compensation, a number do not, whilst others contribute in different ways. This creates an extremely unhelpful imbalance and undermines COIN Strategy. To address this, the NATO CSPMP for Afghanistan, encourages nations to fund the NATO Post Operations Emergency Relief Fund (POERF) to compensate or assist individuals and communities.

CIVCAS payments and compensation must be carefully considered against a large number of different factors. Whilst being sensitive to the affected families and communities, improper procedures and poor investigations and accountability may encourage subsequent exaggerated claims.

**Recommendation:** Develop and implement an equitable system of compensation for damages, whether individual or community based. ISAF TCNs must develop a common policy for compensation and redress due to injury, loss of life, and damage to property. Although compensation can never make up for such loss, appropriate measures to ensure accountability and recognition of the importance of Afghan life and property can help mitigate public anger over the incident.

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Annex F: Detainee Operations, Rule of Law, and Afghan Corrections

**Background**

Detention operations, while critical to successful counterinsurgency operations, also have the potential to become a strategic liability for the U.S. and ISAF. With the drawdown in Iraq and the closing of Guantanamo Bay, the focus on U.S. detention operations will turn to the U.S. Bagram Theater Internment Facility (BTIF). Because of the classification level of the BTIF and the lack of public transparency, the Afghan people see U.S. detention operations as secretive and lacking in due process. It is critical that we continue to develop and build capacity to empower the Afghan government to conduct all detentions operations in this country in accordance with international and national law. The desired endstate must be the eventual turnover of all detention operations in Afghanistan, to include the BTIF, to the Afghan government once they have developed the requisite sustainable capacity to run those systems properly.

Currently, Taliban and Al Qaeda insurgents represent more than 2,500 of the 14,500 inmates in the increasingly overcrowded Afghan Corrections System (ACS). These detainees are currently radicalizing non-insurgent inmates and worsening an already over-crowded prison system. Hardened, committed Islamists are indiscriminately mixed with petty criminals and sex offenders, and they are using the opportunity to radicalize and indoctrinate them. In effect, insurgents use the ACS as a sanctuary and base to conduct lethal operations against GIRoA and coalition forces (e.g., Serena Hotel bombing, GIRoA assassinations, governmental facility bombings).

The U.S. came to Afghanistan vowing to deny these same enemies safe haven in 2001. They have gone from inaccessible mountain hideouts to recruiting and indoctrinating hiding in the open, in the ACS. There are more insurgents per square foot in corrections facilities than anywhere else in Afghanistan. Unchecked, Taliban/Al Qaeda leaders patiently coordinate and plan, unconcerned with interference from prison personnel or the military.

Multiple national facilities are firmly under the control of the Taliban. The Central Prisons Directorate (CPD) accepts a lack of offensive violence there as a half-win. Within the U.S. Bagram Theater Internment Facility (BTIF), due to a lack of capacity and capability, productive interrogations and detainee intelligence collection have been reduced. As a result, hundreds are held without charge or without a defined way-ahead. This allows the enemy to radicalize them far beyond their pre-capture orientation. This problem can no longer be ignored.

**Scope**

In order to transform detention and corrections operations in theater, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) proposes the formation of a new Combined Joint Interagency Task Force, CJIAF ...**REDACTION**... to work toward the long-term goal of getting the U.S. out of the detention business. The priority for the CJIAF ... **REDACTION**... in

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cooperation with the U.S. Embassy and our interagency and international partners, will be to build the capacity of the Afghan government to take over responsibility for detention in its own country as soon as possible, to include the BTIF. The CJATF will provide two primary functions:

- Assume oversight responsibilities and Title 10 support for detention and interrogation operations of all U.S.-held detainees in Afghanistan; and
- Conduct Rule of Law (Corrections) operations, in coordination with the U.S. Embassy, working with and advising the Ministry of Defense, the Afghan Central Prison Directorate (CPD), and associated Afghan Ministries.

The CJATF will train and apply sound corrections management techniques and Rule of Law principles in all detention systems in Afghanistan, whether currently run by the U.S. government or the Afghan government. These sound corrections management techniques (“best practices”) and Rule of Law principles, applicable to all detention facilities, include: adherence to international humanitarian law; due process; vocational and technical training; de-radicalization; rehabilitation; education; and classifying and segregating detainee populations (segregating hard-core insurgents from low level fighters, juveniles from adults, women from men, common criminals from insurgents, etc.).

**Systemic Challenges in Detention and Corrections**

The CJATF ...REDACTION... will address 10 systemic challenges in the current U.S., Afghan military, and CPD detention and prison systems. These include:

- Need for a country wide, coalition supported, corrections and detention plan to help establish unity of effort.
- Need for all detainees and prisoners to be correctly classified and separated accordingly.
- Need for a GIRoA and International community supported Rule of Law program which allows for and codifies alternatives to incarceration.
- Within U.S. Detention and Afghanistan Prison systems alike, take immediate measures to counter insurgent actions and minimize the religious radicalization process of inmates.
- Need to plan and provide for Afghanistan corrections infrastructure multi-year sustainment.

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- Need to ensure meaningful corrections reform in both U.S. and Afghanistan detention/prison systems. These reforms include changing punishment from retribution to rehabilitation, purposeful and effective staff training, equity of pay, and improved alignment with law enforcement and legal systems, both formal and informal.
- Need to review and ensure the intelligence policy and procedures match the exigencies of the Government of Afghanistan and Coalition counter-insurgent activity.
- Need to address the current and projected over-crowding situation.
- Need to address the current shortage of knowledgeable, competent, and committed leadership within both U.S. and Afghanistan corrections systems and advisory groups.
- Need to address the command and control, and unity of command over both U.S. detention and Afghan advisory efforts.

**Recommendations**

**Establish a CJATF**

Establish a CJATF commanded by a General Officer, with a civilian deputy at the Ambassador level, to lead an organization of approximately 120 personnel (70 civilian, 50 military). The CJATF will be a Major Subordinate Command under USFOR-A with a coordination relationship reporting to the U.S. Ambassador Afghanistan. The CJATF will have a Command/Control Headquarters Element and the following six Lines of Operation:

- The U.S. Detention Operations Brigade will provide safe, secure, legal and humane custody, care, and control of detainees at the BTIF.
- The Intelligence Group will support the Task Force's mission to identify and defeat the insurgency through intelligence collection and analysis, and improve interrogations intelligence collection through operations at the Joint Interrogation Debriefing Center and Strategic Debriefing Center, including input from field detention sites after capture.
- The Detention and Prisons Common Program Support Group will establish and conduct a series of programs designed to move detention/corrections operations from retribution to rehabilitation. A de-radicalization process will attack the

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enemy ethos center of gravity and enable successful reintegration of inmates back to the Afghan (or home origin) population.

- The Engagement and Outreach Group will formulate and implement strategic communication and outreach as a proactive tool to protect and defend the truth of U.S. detention and interrogation practices, to further assist in the development of the Rule of Law within Afghanistan.
- The Legal Group will identify gaps in the Rule of Law framework that are inhibiting U.S. and Afghan detention/corrections operations from completing their mission and will develop solutions through consistent engagement with GIRoA elements and the International Community.
- The Afghanistan Prison Engagement Group will assist GIRoA in reforming the Central Prisons Directorate (CPD) so it can defeat the insurgency within its walls. The reformed CPD National Prison System will meet international standards, employ best correctional practices, comply with Afghan laws, and be capable of sustaining de-radicalization, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs.

### Capabilities

The CJATF Concept will be developed based on three capabilities (or phases):

- Capability 1 - Assume the U.S. detention oversight and support responsibilities ...**REDACTION**... to include the operation and management of the BTIF, to allow ...**REDACTION**... focus on the operational fight. Once the JTF stands up, and the commander and his staff are on the ground in Afghanistan, they can begin planning and further developing Capabilities 2 and 3.
- Capability 2 - Conduct corrections and Rule of Law development within the Afghan National Defense Force (ANDF) detention facilities.
- Capability 3 - In close coordination and cooperation with the U.S. Embassy, conduct corrections and Rule of Law development within the Afghan CPD system of prisons.

### Endstate

The desired endstate is the turnover of all detention operations in Afghanistan, to include the BTIF, to the Afghan government once they have developed the requisite sustainable capacity to run those detention systems in accordance with international and national law. This will empower the Afghan government, enable counterinsurgency operations, and restore the faith of the Afghan people in their government's ability to

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apply good governance and Rule of Law with respect to corrections, detention, and justice.

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**Annex G: Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) Growth and Acceleration**

**Background**

The ANSF is currently not large enough to cope with the demands of fighting the resilient insurgency in Afghanistan. Accelerating the growth and development of both the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) is a vital part of the strategy to create the conditions for sustainable security and stability in Afghanistan. Demonstrable progress by the Afghan government and its security forces in countering the insurgency over the next 12 to 18 months is critical in order to preserve the sustained commitment and support of the international community. A key component of success will be the ability of the ANSF to assume progressively greater responsibility for security operations from the deployed international forces. The requirement to expand the ANSF (both ANA and ANP) rapidly to address the challenges of the insurgency will require ISAF to provide enhanced partnering, mentoring, and enabling capabilities until parallel capabilities are developed within the ANSF.

**Key Findings**

**ANA**

The ANA has a force structure of nearly 92k and, while still nascent and dependent on enablers provided by international forces, is increasingly capable of leading or conducting independent operations; however, more COIN capable Afghan Army forces are required in order to conduct sustained COIN operations in key areas of the country.

Over the past several years, the ANA has grown in capacity and capability. Late last year a decision to increase the size of the ANA to 134k was followed by a plan from the Afghan Ministry of Defense (supported by CSTC-A) to accelerate the training of 8 Kandaks in order to enhance security in key areas, mainly in Southern Afghanistan. That acceleration is currently ongoing.

The growth of the ANA to 134k needs to be brought forward from December 2011 to October 2010 in order to create sufficient ANA capacity to create conditions for rapid and sustainable progress in the current campaign; however, there is a requirement for further substantial growth (to an estimated endstrength of 240k) of COIN capable ANA troops in order to increase pressure on the insurgency in all threatened areas in the country. Current plans provide for a start date of Oct 2009 to commence an acceleration in growth through a combination of over manning and rapid force generation of ANA infantry and combat service support units. In order to generate the required numbers of "boots on the ground," the emphasis will be on the development of maneuver units rather than enabler capabilities. The generation of previously planned and programmed enablers such as corps engineers, artillery, motorized quick

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reaction forces, and large support battalions will be deferred to enable a more rapid generation of maneuver forces that provide the operational capabilities required now. The forces generated during this phase will have sufficient training, capability and equipment to conduct effective COIN operations and to generate momentum. Tighter, restructured training programs will deliver an infantry-based, COIN capable, force in a shorter period of time with the capability of conducting "hold" operations with some "clear" capability while closely partnered with coalition forces. These forces will be equipped at a "minimally combat essential" level as determined by the Ministry of Defense, ISAF's operational requirements, and CSTC-A's ability to generate forces. Initially, facilities will be austere and temporary (including tented camps at the outset) in order to reduce construction timelines and cost.

Risks inherent in this approach such as inadequate training and a lack of organic enablers will be mitigated through close partnering and mentoring by Regional Commanders delivered through the ISAF Joint Command. More inexperienced leaders will be accepted into the junior officer and NCO ranks and the risk will be balanced by close partnering ANSF with coalition forces. In time, a "rebalancing" and generation of enabling capabilities must occur as part of subsequent ANA growth to ensure that the ANA can achieve a degree of self-sufficiency, sustainable capability, and capacity. The growth of the ANA beyond 134k will be tailored to meet operational conditions on the ground and to create the required effects desired in the regions.

Finally, the Afghan National Army Air Corps will continue to grow and develop at a measured pace, given the long lead times required for the acquisition of aircraft and development of technical skills to operate and maintain the aircraft in the inventory. In the short term, the accelerated acquisition of additional Mi-17 airframes will enable greater lift capacity for the ANSF. In parallel, dedicated training of Mi-35 aircrews will add a rotary wing attack capability in the fall of 2009. Deliveries of the first C-27 aircraft in November 2009 will dramatically increase operational capability as the first crews are trained in March 2010.

**ANP**

The Afghan National Police has grown to a current force structure of approximately 84k and is several years behind the ANA in its development. Due to a lack of overall strategic coherence and insufficient resources, the ANP has not been organized, trained, and equipped to operate effectively as a counter-insurgency force. Promising programs to reform and train police have proceeded too slowly due to a lack of training teams. To enhance the ANP's capacity and capabilities, the Focused District Development (FDD) program must be accelerated to organize, train, equip, and reform police that have not yet completed a formal program of instruction, and new police forces such as the elite Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) must be generated to prepare the ANP properly to operate in this challenging COIN environment.

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The ANP must increase in size in order to provide sufficient police needed to hold areas that have been cleared of insurgents, and to increase the capacity to secure the population. This assessment recommends further growth of the ANP to a total of 160k as soon as practicable with the right mix of capabilities that better satisfies the requirements of a counter-insurgency effort. This larger number of policemen also needs to be trained more quickly in order to “thicken” security forces in the districts, provinces, and regions. The numbers of Afghan Border Police (ABP) and Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) should also be considerably increased, and consideration should be given to expanding the Afghan Public Protection Force or other similar initiatives where appropriate.

In April 2009, a decision was made to grow the ANP by 4.8K to provide security for Kabul in advance of the Afghan National elections. This action was followed by second decision to further grow the police by 10K in order to enhance security in 14 key provinces for the upcoming elections. This 14.8K police growth is proceeding and will increase the ANP authorized strength to 96.8K while improving accountability of “non and above tashkiel” police.

Subsequent ANP growth to 160k will include doubling ANP strength at the District and Provincial levels, significantly increasing the police-to- population ratio. The growth of ANCOP will be accelerated by generating 5 national battalions in FY '10 followed by the generation of 34 new provincial battalions and 6 new regional battalions. While the number of ABP companies will remain the same, each ABP company will increase in strength by 65% to 150 men per company. Finally, the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) personnel will be absorbed into the ANP as it expands.

Over the 4 year program, special police growth will provide important niche capabilities. The national Crisis Response Unit (CRU) will provide Assault, Surveillance, and Support squadrons. Counter-Narcotics Aviation is projected to grow by over 100%. Afghan Special Narcotics forces grow by 25%. Security forces will also be provided to ensure international and non-governmental organizations' freedom of movement.

**NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A)**

On 12 June, 2009 the North Atlantic Council endorsed the creation of NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) to oversee higher level training for the ANA and for development of the ANP. CSTC-A and NTM-A will co-exist as a single HQ with fully integrated staff sections under a dual-hatted commander. As approved by the North Atlantic Council, the NTM-A will stand up in mid-September to generate forces and provide institutional training for the ANA and ANP. Once the IJC is operational, the three NATO tasks assigned to NTM-A associated directly with providing NATO OMLTs and POMLTs to the ANA and ANP will migrate to the IJC. At that time, NATO/ISAF will

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redirect responsibilities for developing fielded ANSF to the IJC. NTM-A will retain responsibility for ANSF institutional training, education, and professional development activities. CJTF Phoenix and its two subordinate Brigades will be transferred to the IJC when it establishes Initial Operating Capability.

### **Key Stakeholder Engagement**

This assessment recommends that the United States Government develop an engagement strategy to garner the international support and the multi-lateral approval required for the continued growth of the ANSF to the 400k target (240K ANA, 160K ANP). This includes the actions necessary to secure greater international funding to pay a fair share of the growth and sustainment costs of the ANSF, as well as generating the training teams required to support ANSF development. As a point of reference, the international community contributed \$25M (~7%) of the cost of the expansion of the ANP by 14.8k earlier this summer. Furthermore, the European Commission requested a parallel study to recommend the character and end strength of ANP. When the EC study is completed, the findings will be reconciled to gain consensus in the international community about the way ahead.

### **A more cost effective way to procure capabilities for the ANSF**

This initial assessment recommends that the OSD Comptroller fund CSTC-A directly, and allow CSTC-A to work directly with the appropriate contracting agency to procure required capabilities for the ANSF. The current system of executing Afghan Security Forces Funding (ASFF) must become more agile in the face of the requirement to adapt this program quickly. All procurement actions for the ANSF are handled as "pseudo" Foreign Military Sales Cases by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) and the United States Army Security Assistance Command (USASAC), each of which charge considerable fees for an "Above Standard Level of Service." These fees and the direct involvement of the DSCA apply to the procurement of most capabilities, including those that are executed by local contracting authorities as well as other actions not directly related to Foreign Military Sales such as construction. Direct authority to obligate ASFF without passing actions through the DSCA or USASAC will shorten timelines and preserve more money for the specific purpose of supporting the growth and sustainment of the ANSF.

### **Strengthen ANSF development through realigned C2**

CSTC-A is responsible for three lines of operation: ministerial and institutional development; generation of the force; and develop the fielded force. This assessment concludes that the IJC should assume responsibility for developing the fielded force. The transfer of this mission will require the reassignment of CJTF Phoenix and its subordinate elements to the IJC. CSTC-A will retain the responsibility to train, advise,

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and educate personnel in the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior, as well as those in the institutional elements of the Army and Police (national logistics, medical, facilities management, detainee operations, etc.). CSTC-A will also retain responsibility to resource the fielded ANSF.

### **Unity of effort and coherence in police development**

In an effort to streamline police development efforts and to create greater unity of effort in the development of COIN capable police, the responsibility and authority for all police training should be placed under the commander CSTC-A/NTM-A. The Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) should transfer responsibility for police training to CSTC-A. Since 2005, OSD has transferred funding to INL for developmental efforts of the ANP. CSTC-A will execute this mission and contract as appropriate for trainers with law enforcement experience to augment efforts by the IJC to develop fielded police, and to assist CSTC-A's actions for ministerial and institutional training.

### **Build and leverage Afghan ministerial capacity**

CSTC-A should take every opportunity to build and leverage ministerial capacity to shift the responsibility for the long term sustainability of a larger ANSF to the Afghan Government. One opportunity is to find an appropriate legal and accountable way to allow the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior to contract for the construction of their own facilities. Today, more than 70% of all major construction projects in support of the ANA are at least 10% behind schedule. In response to this situation, CSTC-A and the Army Corps of Engineers have already standardized and reduced the scope of future projects to mitigate costs and delays. Additionally, CSTC-A will investigate the feasibility and practicality of providing discreet funding for Afghan Ministries to contract for the construction of their own facilities to drive lower costs and improve project timeliness. This process will also provide an opportunity to develop Afghan ministerial capacity. There are inherent risks in this approach but CSTC-A will develop a construct for this proposal with CENTCOM and OSD to ensure proper program management and the required oversight of funding provided to the Afghan ministries.

### **Recommendations**

1. Grow the ANA to a target authorization of 240k. Accelerate the growth of the currently approved COIN focused infantry force of 134K by late 2010 and generate more counter-insurgency forces consistent with operational requirements.
2. Grow and develop the ANP to a total of 160k as soon as practicable to "thicken and harden" security in the districts, provinces, regions. This total will also more than

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double the size of Afghan Border Police, considerably grow ANCOP and allow for expansion of the Afghan Public Protection Force where appropriate.

3. Realign and streamline the responsibilities for ANSF generation and development:

- a. CSTC-A/NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) focuses on ANSF force generation consistent with operational requirements, develops Afghan ministerial and institutional capabilities, and resources the fielded forces.
- b. Shift responsibility for development of fielded ANSF to the IJC.
- c. Employ enhanced partnering and mentoring to more rapidly develop Afghan forces.

4. Provide CSTC-A direct authority to obligate Afghan Security Forces Funding (ASFF) without passing actions through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency to shorten capabilities procurement timelines and avoid unnecessary fees.

5. Shift the responsibility and authority for execution of all police training from the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) to CSTC-A to enhance unity of effort in police development. CSTC-A will assume operational control of INL contracted trainers as soon as possible until January 2010 when a new contract managed by CSTC-A can begin.

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**Annex H: Glossary**

**A**

ABP Afghan Border Police  
ACS Afghan Corrections System  
AFCENT Air Forces Central Command  
ANA Afghan National Army  
ANCOP Afghan National Civil Order Police  
ANP Afghan National Police  
ANSF Afghan National Security Forces  
AOO Area of Operations  
AP3 Afghan Public Protection Program  
APPF Afghan Public Protection Force  
AQAM Al Qaeda and associated movements  
ASFF Afghan Security Forces Funding  
ATC Allied Transformation Command

**B**

BDA Battle Damage Assessment  
BSO Battlespace owner  
BTIF Bagram Theater Internment Facility

**C**

C2 Command and Control  
CAS Close Air Support  
CE Crisis Establishment  
CENTCOM Central Command  
CFACC Combined Forces Air Component Commander  
CFSOCC-A Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command – Afghanistan  
CIS Communications Infrastructure  
CIVCAS Civilian Casualties  
CJIATF Combined Joint Interagency Task Force  
CJOC Coalition Joint Operations Center  
CN Counternarcotics  
COIN Counterinsurgency  
COIN TE Counterinsurgency Transformative Effects  
COMISAF Commander ISAF  
CPD Central Prisons Directorate  
CRU Crisis Response Unit  
CSPMP Comprehensive Strategic Political Military Plan  
CSTC-A Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan

**D**

DC Decisive Conditions  
DCOS Deputy Chief of Staff  
DoD Department of Defense (US)

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DP	Decisive Points
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
<b>E</b>	
EoF	Escalation of Force
ETT	Embedded Training Team
<b>F</b>	
FDD	Focused District Development
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FOC	Fully Operational Capability
FRAGO	Fragmentary Order
<b>G</b>	
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
<b>H</b>	
HiG	Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin
HHQ	Higher Headquarters
HQN	Haqqani Network
<b>I</b>	
IC	International Community
ICMCP	Integrated Civil-Military Campaign Plan
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IJC	ISAF Joint Command
INL	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (US Dept. of State)
INS	Insurgents
IO	Information Operations
IOATF	Information Operation Advisory Task Force
IOTF	Information Operations Task Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
<b>J</b>	
JFC-B	Joint Force Command - Brunssum
JIDC	Joint Interrogation Detention Center
JOPG	Joint Operational Planning Group
JOPS	Joint Operations
JTAC	Joint Tactical Air Controllers
<b>K</b>	
KAIA	Kabul International Airport
<b>L</b>	
LoO	Lines of Operation
<b>M</b>	
MARCENT	Marine Corps Central Command
MOE	Measures of Effectiveness

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MOP	Measures of Performance
<b>N</b>	
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSC	National Security Council (US)
NSE	National Support Element
NTM-A	NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan
<b>O</b>	
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OMLT	Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team
OPCOM	Operational Command
OPCON	Operational Control
OPLAN	Operational Plan
OPORD	Operational Order
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense (US)
<b>P</b>	
PA	Public Affairs
POERF	Post Operations Emergency Fund Relief
POMLT	Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Team
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
<b>Q</b>	
QST	Quetta Shura Taliban
<b>R</b>	
RC	Regional Command
RLS	Real life support
ROE	Rules of Engagement
<b>S</b>	
S/CRS	State Department Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (US)
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SDC	Strategic Debriefing Center
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SOCCENT	Special Operations Command – Central Command
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
StratCom	Strategic Communications
<b>T</b>	
TACOM	Tactical Command
TACON	Tactical Control
TCN	Troop Contributing Nation
TD	Tactical Directive

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<b>TTPs</b>	<b>Tactics, Techniques, Procedures</b>
<b>U</b>	
<b>UNAMA</b>	<b>United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan</b>
<b>USASAC</b>	<b>United States Army Security Assistance Command</b>
<b>USFOR-A</b>	<b>US Forces - Afghanistan</b>
<b>USG</b>	<b>United States Government</b>
<b>USMC</b>	<b>US Marine Corps</b>
<b>W</b>	
<b>WSV</b>	<b>Weapons Systems Video</b>

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2. Military Technical Agreement (MTA) Between the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Interim Administration of Afghanistan (31 Dec 01), 4 Jan 02; Amendment 2, 14 Mar 03.
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4. The Bonn Agreement 2004
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10. COMISAF Commander's Initial Guidance dated 13 June 2009
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13. Bucharest Summit Declaration Apr 08
14. United Nations Security Council Resolutions
  - a. Resolution 1383 (2001) of 6 December – endorses the Bonn Agreement as a first step towards the establishment of a broad-based, gender sensitive, multiethnic and fully representative government in Afghanistan.
  - b. Resolution 1386 (2001) of 20 December – authorizes the deployment for six months of an International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan (ISAF).
  - c. Resolution 1401 (2002) of 28 March – establishes for an initial period of 12 months a United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).
  - d. Resolution 1413 (2002) of 23 May – extends the authorization of ISAF for an additional 6 months.
  - e. Resolution 1419 (2002) of 26 June – welcomes the results of the Emergency Loya Jirga and commends the role of UNAMA and ISAF.
  - f. Resolution 1444 (2002) of 27 November – extends the authorization of ISAF for one year beyond 20 Dec 02.
  - g. Resolution 1453 (2002) of 24 December – recognizes the Transitional Administration (TA) as the sole legitimate government of Afghanistan and welcomes the Kabul Declaration on Good-Neighbourly Relations signed by the TA and the States neighbouring Afghanistan.

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- h. Resolution 1471 (2003) of 28 March – extends UNAMA for another 12 months.
- i. Resolution 1510 (2003) of 13 October – authorising expansion of the ISAF mandate outside of Kabul and its environs.
- j. Resolution 1776 (2007) of 19 September - extends the mandate of ISAF for 12 months beyond 13 Oct 07.
- k. Resolution 1806 (2008) of 20 March- extends UNAMA for another 12 months and designates it as the IC lead in AFG.
- l. Resolution 1817 (2008) of 11 June adopts a declaration on the global effort to combat drug trafficking
- m. Resolution 1833 (2008) of 22 September- extends the mandate of ISAF for 12 months beyond 13 Oct 08.

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