

**AFGHANISTAN - DECISION POINT 2008**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2008 is a pivotal year in the development of the Afghan state: the situation has reached a classic decision point. The Taliban are entrenched in the South, running parallel governments in several districts and controlling the majority of secondary roads. The extent of the challenges facing the country was brought into sharp focus by the bombing of the Serena Hotel in Kabul on 14 January. Should this event prove part of a consolidated drive by militants to engage in asymmetric attacks upon high profile, 'soft' Western civilian targets in the capital, then the insurgency will have entered a new and dangerous phase.

The inability of domestic and international actors to counter the entrenchment of the insurgency in Afghanistan is deeply troubling, and the failure of NATO's political masters to address the realities of the security situation in Afghanistan has taken the country and the Karzai government to a precipice.

The international community has invested significant time and money in President Karzai and his government. Unfortunately, these efforts may prove fruitless if they do not move quickly to stabilise the south and Karzai's political support base. Assistance is clearly needed on a number of security, developmental and counter-narcotics measures required to steer the country back on course.

### ***Elections due, but security lacking***

Under Article 61 of the Constitution, President Karzai's presidential tenure must end on 22 May 2009, with elections held 30-60 days prior. This gives the president just over 400 days in office to accomplish his first term goals and position himself strongly before going to the polls.

The lack of security nationwide could make the aspiration to hold elections a wholly unachievable one; indeed, if the current security situation in the South does not improve dramatically there is no possibility of holding the next presidential election.

The very act of casting a vote is fraught with danger in many areas, and would be impossible in some southern and eastern districts. The Taliban have pledged to bring widespread disruption to the elections, and given the extent of the movement's geographic spread, this could spell disaster for the entire process. The scenes of disciplined queues of Afghans waiting patiently to vote in October 2004 will be difficult to replicate in 2009.

***"If the security situation is this bad we will not have the opportunity to hold an election. How can people go and cast their vote in such an environment?"***

Afghan doctor, Mirwais Hospital  
26 January 2008

The country's ability to hold free and fair elections is a key benchmark of its progress. Only a significant ramping-up of indigenous and international forces can start to provide a suitably benign security environment. NATO-ISAF is presently overstretched fighting a tenacious insurgency, and is hampered by a lack of political combined will (in particular from those not committing sufficient troops to Southern Afghanistan). Only the four countries with troops actually fighting in the South – the US, Canada, Netherlands and UK - are making the necessary contributions. Meanwhile, the Afghan army remains in a state of transition, and is unable to take a lead without substantial support from international forces.

***“Whoever votes will be tortured by the Taliban.”***

Kandahar villager  
January 2008

So the task of securing elections must fall elsewhere. It was the United Nations Security Council that initially gave approval for the US to launch a military action in Afghanistan, and eventually delegated that responsibility to NATO. NATO is in a political logjam in responding to the actual realities of the situation, and is either unable or unwilling to respond properly.

The UN and the Security Council must address this failure and bring the issue of stabilising Afghanistan and the Karzai government back to the UN table, and broaden the forces deployed in the country. This it can do through the deployment of member-states' forces to take the lead on election security within an expanded 'NATO Plus' international force. Given the glacial pace of decision-making in the UN, the body needs to act with urgency when looking at a fresh approach to Afghanistan, given that the presidential elections are just over a year away.

*(See Appendix I for a full breakdown of the UN's legal justification for military action in Afghanistan)*

### ***Mixed signals***

The seed of democracy has clearly been sown in Afghanistan. Interviews carried out by The Senlis Council in southern Afghanistan throughout January 2008 revealed a pleasing lack of concern for a president's ethnicity, a willingness to countenance a female candidate, and an overall desire to engage in the country's democratic discourse.

Unfortunately, at a federal political level, old ethnic rivalries are proving tough to break. Where other minorities will vote en masse for their unchallenged leader (Uzbeks have Abdul Rashid Dostum, and Shia Hazaras Haji Mohammed Mohaqqiq), the key challenge for Tajiks is their ability to back one candidate. Should the right man emerge, then Karzai can expect a tough campaign.

The country's modern history is littered with a number of self-interested figures that have intermittently sought to control the reins of power at the cost of their rivals. There are indicators that such forces are once again aligning themselves to undermine the president in 2008 with the aim of ensuring his defeat at 2009's poll.

### ***A way forward***

Karzai is entering a critical stage of his presidency. As parliamentary enemies old and new start to coalesce against him, and the security situation throughout Afghanistan shows little sign of improvement, it is crucial that he starts to inch his way towards controlling the state, initiating a progressive programme of change in the process.

He must make the link, however slight, between the country's outlying provinces and the seat of government, although it must be recognised that the barriers preventing his ability to forge this link are perhaps more substantial in Afghanistan than in any other state in the world.

#### ***THE SENLIS COUNCIL METHODOLOGY***

The sample of people interviewed is not intended to represent national quantitative averages. The interviews focussed on the security situation, and the upcoming Presidential elections.

Findings taken from case reports should be viewed as a tool that underpins new policy hypotheses.

Comments are based on a series of interviews undertaken primarily in the south of Afghanistan, in Kandahar and Helmand provinces.

These include several groups of refugees from areas that were, or are, under Taliban control regarding life under the Taliban.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of initiatives are available to President Karzai in 2008. Although some clearly require international backing and implementation, others can be viewed as part of a coherent domestic policy platform aimed at guiding Afghanistan towards stability. These can be split into political, military and developmental recommendations.

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>Security</b>		
<b>'NATO Plus' expanded to include UN forces for election security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase number of forces</li> <li>- Remove national caveats</li> <li>- Limited missions into Pakistan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unwillingness to deploy additional troops/lift national caveats</li> <li>- inertia at United Nations</li> </ul>
<b>International Special Forces into Pakistan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase number</li> <li>- Support Pakistan Army</li> <li>- Train local militias</li> <li>- Backed by economic programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of assets</li> <li>- Level of deployment</li> <li>- Blowback in Pakistan</li> <li>- War-weariness in US election year</li> </ul>
<b>Afg-Pak border points controlled by NATO-ISAF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key border crossings under NATO-ISAF control</li> <li>- Handover to ANA/ANP as soon as operationally viable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Admitting ANA weakness</li> <li>- Magnet to militants</li> <li>- Which NATO states would contribute</li> <li>- Increased tension between Kabul and Islamabad</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbourhood Security Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local committees to oversee security</li> <li>- Arbitration capability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remit issues</li> <li>- Lack of authority</li> </ul>
<b>Political</b>		
<b>Grassroots Democracy Campaign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bottom-up democratic process</li> <li>- Public education campaigns</li> <li>- Peace Jirgas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Top-down system in place</li> <li>- Chronic institutional weakness</li> <li>- Taliban's political momentum</li> <li>- Border tensions and local interests</li> </ul>
<b>Referendum on Poppy for Medicine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inform Afghans of alternative counter-narcotics policies</li> <li>- Hold a referendum parallel to the 2009 presidential elections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insecurity</li> <li>- Misinformation and political rhetoric</li> </ul>
<b>Developmental</b>		
<b>Tax credit scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer tax credit to foreign investors</li> <li>- Domestic tax breaks</li> <li>- Eligibility criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political sensitivity</li> <li>- Poor infrastructure</li> <li>- Insecurity</li> </ul>
<b>Tax breaks and targeted microcredit programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer tax credit to Afghan entrepreneurs and local businesses</li> <li>- Targeted microcredit programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor infrastructure</li> <li>- Economic climate and regulatory framework</li> </ul>
<b>Establish Afghan Family / Community Funds; prepare next generation of leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reward positive actions in Afghan communities by investing in education, infrastructure and healthcare</li> <li>- Leadership training for young Afghans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insecurity</li> <li>- Public distrust and discord</li> </ul>

## Security

The necessity for more troops on the ground in Afghanistan formed a core element of The Senlis Council's last major report (*Stumbling into Chaos – Afghanistan on the Brink; November 2007*). This recommendation stands, and the announcement that the US will deploy an additional 3,200 marines into Afghanistan is a welcome one. This increase must be matched by a commensurate rise in forces from all NATO states, and moreover the national caveats that prevent a significant proportion of troops from engaging in active combat needs to be lifted urgently.

The 'NATO Plus' concept must be expanded beyond its original parameters to encompass support from United Nations forces for the specific task of providing security for the elections. The threat of state failure in Afghanistan has global ramifications, and the burden of mitigating this risk cannot be borne by NATO alone.

To the east of Afghanistan, it is becoming increasingly clear that several parts of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province are morphing into semi-autonomous statelets beyond the reach of Islamabad. Militants once trained by Pakistan as part of their strategic arsenal against India have now fallen outside of their mentor's control. These loose cannons are posing a security risk to the people of Afghanistan and the forces of NATO-ISAF alike, and more direct preventative measures aimed at blocking their passage to, and egress from, Afghanistan must now be implemented.

The failure of Western policy planning vis-a-vis the growth of militant extremism in Pakistan's hinterlands is so acute that the Afghan terrorist training camps destroyed in the aftermath of 9/11 have simply been allowed to reinvent themselves a few hundred kilometres eastward. The blowback for Pakistan was evident throughout 2007, and with the Serena Hotel bombing it started to reach Afghanistan. How long before this rejuvenated movement demonstrates its capacity to strike in the West?

Although the will to disrupt these movements must foremost come from Pakistan, the international community and Afghan government can implement a number of measures to prevent them from acting with impunity:

- i. 'NATO Plus' for Afghanistan expanded to incorporate UN security forces to provide election security**
- ii. Key posts on the Afghan-Pakistan border to be run by NATO-ISAF until ANA/ANP reach sufficient strength and experience**
- iii. International Special Forces should increase their presence in Pakistan, in support of efforts to disrupt the militants**
- iv. Neighbourhood Security Groups for Afghanistan**

## Political

The Taliban's political sophistication in the south and east is now beyond question. The movement is now the de facto authority in a number of villages, ruling with a blend of coercion and clemency.

Through an apparently clever process of reinvention, the Taliban are tapping into the population's legitimate political grievances in a way that eludes both central government and the international community alike. As a result, the movement has gained genuine political traction.

In order to prevent this development from becoming entrenched within Afghanistan, two key policies need to be introduced in 2008:

- i. Grassroots campaign to sell the concept of democracy in the south**
- ii. Afghans to have a direct voice on counter-narcotics policy**
- iii. A number of regional 'Peace Jirgas' to be held**
- iv. Neighbourhood Security Groups also feed into the political process**



**The Afghan government must secure a future for the young generation**

## **Developmental**

The failure to recognise the centrality of societal and development aspects of Afghanistan to its lack of stability must be addressed in 2008.

Since the removal of the Taliban in autumn 2001, the international community led has vigorously proclaimed its promise to re-build Afghanistan. Despite six years of international goodwill and presence in the country, Afghanistan's human development and poverty indices remain far behind those of neighbouring countries and living standards are among the worst in the world.

The Afghan government does not have the means to control security, or the flow of people and money across its borders. Currently it is not capable of providing security and basic social provisions, neither through its national institutions, nor by cooperation with international institutions. Nascent state architecture has yet to reach a degree of maturity, meaning aid has to be channeled through international humanitarian actors rather than the ministries of Kabul.

Research undertaken by The Senlis Council since 2005 shows conclusively that aid destined for the south is not reaching the people; moreover, the government lacks the funds required to provide for its citizens and is unable to create sustainable job opportunities for a large proportion of the population. Therefore, the south is a rapidly growing recruitment ground for the Taliban.

There is now widespread impatience with the international community's inability to kick start real national governance in Kabul, despite the billions of dollars that have flooded the capital since 2002.

The link between a lack of basic human factors and expedient membership of the Taliban is well established. Breaking this link through the delivery of essential aid projects is an essential facet of building trust between the Karzai Government/international community and the impoverished villages of the south and east.

The Senlis Council has offered a number of developmental recommendations over the last three years, and such has been the lack of progress in this field that they all remain of relevance today. Key additional recommendations covered by this report focus upon the state's economy:

- i. Tax credit scheme**
- ii. Tax breaks and targeted microcredit programmes**
- iii. Establish Afghan Family/Community Funds; prepare next generation of leaders**

## Wishes and Expectations of the Afghan People

***In January 2008, fourteen months before the constitutionally mandated presidential elections, Afghans living in the southern part of the country were asked to express their wishes and expectations of the future president of the country.***

"I don't care if our next president is Pashtun, Tajik or Hazara – just as long as it is someone who will help the country. The first task of our president should be to bring security and offer jobs to the poor people."

*Ahmad*

"It does not matter which language our next president is speaking but that he will serve and care for his people. Our next president must strengthen the security and education.

*Akhtar*

"From my next president I want security and for him to build schools, clinics and roads for us.

*Jaweed*

"All we want is someone to bring the rule of law, security and peace in the country. A president who serves and cares for his people."

*Zahir*

"I want someone who will be a representative of all the Afghans, someone who will work to improve his people's lives. Someone who will serve his people and country with honesty"

*Rostam*

"I want our next president to rebuild our country and bring peace."

*Mohammad*



# Chapter I

## Security Update



Local soldiers in Kandahar cleaning their weapons

*"Every time there are bombings so many innocent people die. So far thousands of innocent people have died because of the bombings. The situation in Oruzgan is no different from that in Kandahar and Helmand provinces.*

*You cannot go to Terin Kot by road; traveling is very dangerous. Even the supply convoys have a hard time using that road. The Taliban have regular checkpoints and road blocks. Last year you could easily travel by road between Kandahar and Helmand, but this year you can't. If the situation is this bad in Kandahar, you can imagine what the situation is in Qalat. I do not know the exact number of the Taliban, but you hear that they control most parts of the important high ways like the one to Qalat and Helmand."*

Kandahar Mullah  
January 2008





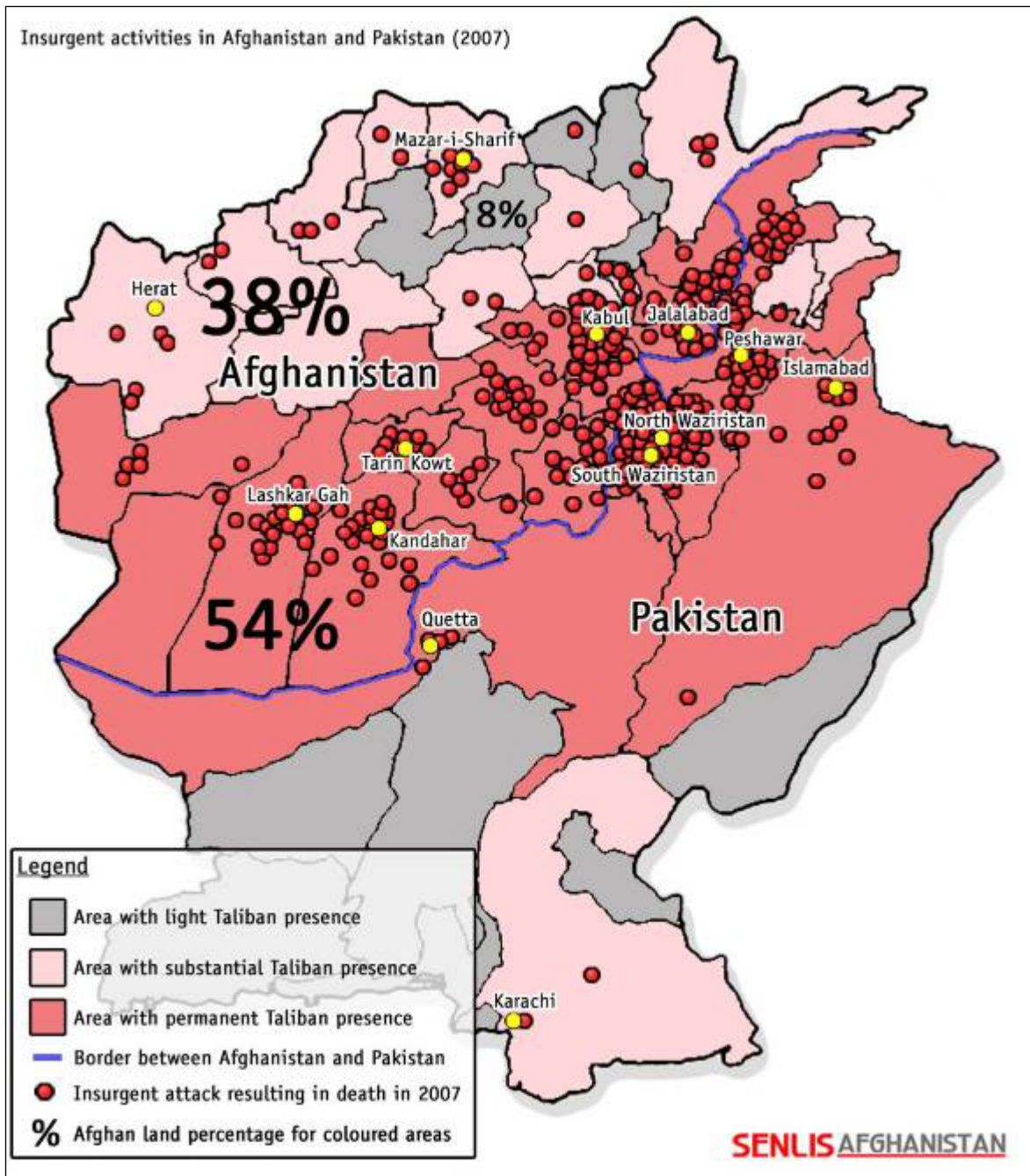
## **Taliban: Entrenched and Running Parallel Governments**

A significant proportion of Afghans are becoming more and more alienated in their own land, severely threatening the international community with the impending burden of a failed state for many years to come.

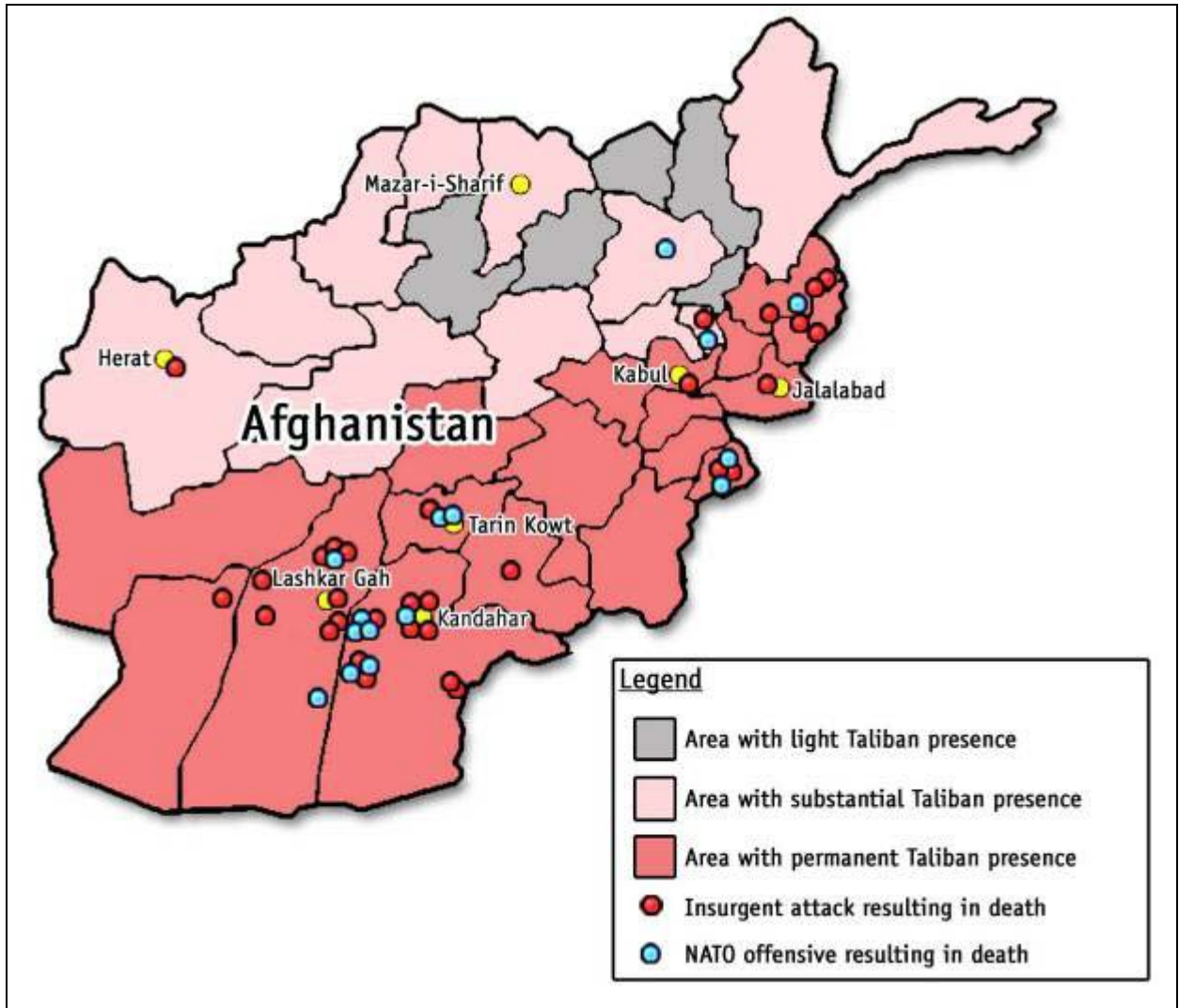
A rise in support for the Taliban – be it active, tacit or coerced – shows little sign of slowing, particularly as the movement frequently appears to be the most efficient benefactor of the disenfranchised.

Establishing a centre-periphery link remains a key challenge for President Karzai in 2008, particularly in light of the Taliban's capacity to fill the political space in many parts of Afghanistan. The Taliban is without doubt the biggest obstacle to stability faced by international and indigenous actors. In November 2007, The Senlis Council concluded that the Taliban has a permanent presence in 54 per cent of Afghanistan.

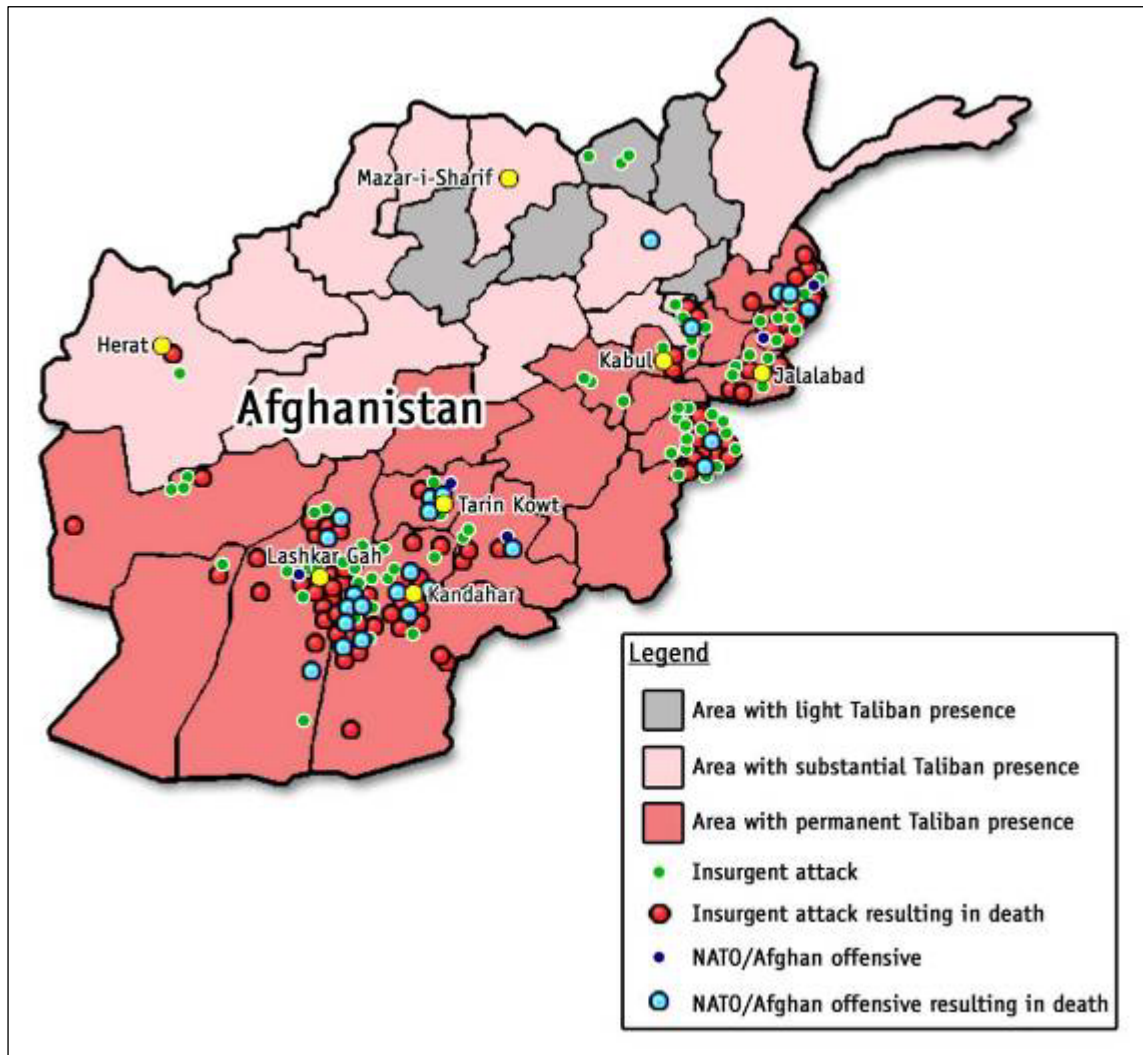
Updated research undertaken in January 2008 reveals the extent of their disruptive influence in key southern and eastern provinces.



Map 1: Fatal attacks in Afghanistan in 2007



Map 2: Afghanistan violence and NATO offensive resulting in death (1-31 January 2008)



Map 3: Insurgent attacks and NATO/Afghan offensive (1-31 January 2008)

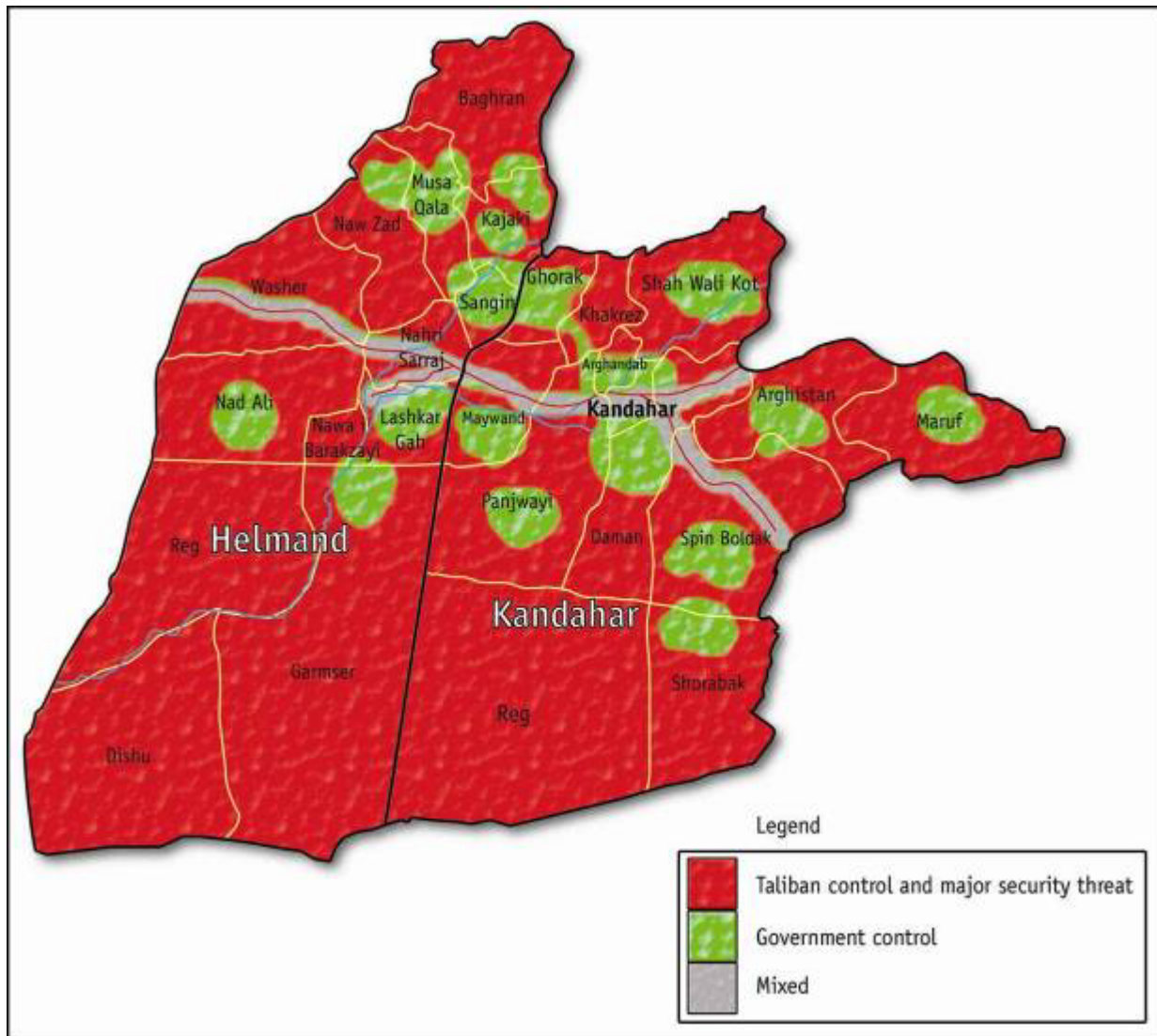
*“The Taliban are responsible for all of the deaths. They fire gunshots from our village, then hide or run away. After that, American planes bomb the whole place, killing innocent people.”*

Villager, originally from Musa Qala  
January 2008

Average prices of weapons in selected Afghan cities, USD						
	June 2006	January 2007	August 2007	January 2008		
Type of weapon/ammo	Kandahar city Lashkar Gah, and Kabul	Kandahar city and Lashkar Gah	Kandahar city and Lashkar Gah	Kandahar	Lashkar Gah	Kabul
Kalashnikov (AK-47)	363	380	325	275	400	600
Single 7.62/39mm round (for AK-47)	0.32	1.00	0.50	0.08	0.20	0.29
Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) Launcher	1,000	1,250	500	400	700	1,000
RPG Rocket	N/A	N/A	150	N/A	35	50
PK Machine Gun	N/A	N/A	1,500	1,700	2,000	2,000
Single 7,62/54mm round (for PK machine gun)	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.29	0.40	0.40
Makarov Pistol	708	583	600	650	600	750
Tokarev Pistol	547	333	300	300	350	500
Mortar 82mm	333	1,000	4,000	1,550	1,000	1,500
Hand Grenade	2.5	17	20	10	16	20

#### ISAF fatalities in Afghanistan (as of 4 February 2008)

Country	Casualties
<b>Total</b>	<b>766</b>
US	481
UK	87
Canada	78
Germany	29
Spain	23
The Netherlands	14
France	12
Italy	11
Denmark	9
Romania	5
Australia	4
Norway	3
Estonia	2
Sweden	2
Portugal	2
Czech Republic	1
Finland	1
Poland	1
South Korea	1



Map 4: Strategic landscape in Helmand, Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces (January 2008)

*“If I am with the government then I am being bothered by the Taliban, and if I am with the Taliban then I am troubled by the government.”*

Villager, originally from Musa Qala  
January 2008

Another example of a push factor for Afghans in areas subject to Taliban influence is ineffective aid administration. Kabul and the international community's consistent promises of aid are simply not materialising in vast swathes of the country: in an already uncertain and tense environment, this sort of breach of trust breeds anger and resentment. Many Afghans are seeing no improvements in living conditions, and often they are seeing things grow worse.

Where the government is failing to provide basic services, often the Taliban are filling the gap with more radical alternatives. This means that sought-after trust from the Afghan people is going to the radical militants rather than the elected government.



**Civilian house in Musa Qala destroyed by NATO aerial raid**

Ironically for those who are trying to implement a Western-style electoral system, democracy has been played out in its rawest form: the people are not satisfied with the leaders on offer, and so have not vested their confidence therein. Although the Taliban have frequently made recourse to brutal powers of persuasion, they have succeeded in permeating the south.

***"In Sangin district Taliban have a very organized structure. The current governor for Sangin is Mullah Abdul Ali Akhund, before him it was Mullah Torjan Akhund....Afghan National Police are treating the local people very badly, but the Taliban are in a very good relationship with them. When there is a dispute between people in the village they don't come to the government authorities, but they go to the Taliban governor and judicial system to solve their problem."***

Villager, Sangin District  
January 2008

It is easy for the Taliban to rally popular support if they focus on commonplace grievances. For most, a more coherent reconstruction and aid program would go a long way to solving the problem. Despite having lived in a conflict zone now for nearly thirty years, many families have seen their livelihoods destroyed swiftly in the last six.

An obvious example is enforced poppy crop eradication. Aside from not making sense on a global or regional economic scale, this type of aggressive policy does not work for those farming families whose income is dependent on the crop. Where the government razes a season's crop, the Taliban would have paid a fair sum, thereby sustaining the local area. Of course, there are instances where Taliban support is extracted by coercion, but increasingly they do not need to intimidate or use violence because they can simply provide a necessity.

***"In Kandahar, [the Taliban] were even reported to have offered financial assistance to farmers whose fields were being eradicated, in exchange for support in fighting against the government."***

Antonio Giustozzi<sup>1</sup>

These deceptive tactics have helped engender a certain amount of positive feeling for the Taliban since their fall from power in 2001. They have managed to manipulate the failures of NATO and Afghan government policies by playing good cop/bad cop. Where the foreigners and Afghan government fail they swoop in and pick up the pieces. To the innocent, undiscerning beneficiary, this pure spin could be mistaken for a sincere attempt at peace-building. Either way it creates long-term problems for coalition forces and their Afghan comrades.

For instance, in 2001, tens of thousands of civilians lost their lives in the sustained bombing campaign aimed at 9/11 perpetrators. Interviews conducted at the time discovered that the people who had lost family members in the assaults received compensation from two sources: the US army and the Taliban. However, where the US sum was minimal, the Taliban's much larger offering was combined with prayers for the family. In one instance, an Afghan woman lost her husband and all but one of her children. She was given USD15 by the US, but visited by the Taliban who said prayers with her and presented her with a cloth bag containing USD400.<sup>2</sup>

***"NATO should set up a special compensation fund for civilian deaths, injuries or property damage resulting from its military operations in Afghanistan, to which all NATO member states should contribute."***

General James L. Jones (USMC, ret.) and Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering  
Afghan Study Group, 31 January 2008<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Antonio Giustozzi, "Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop – The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan", London 2007, p.87

<sup>2</sup> John Pilger, "Freedom Next Time", 2006, pp.377-378

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.thepresidency.org/pubs/Afghan\\_Study\\_Group\\_final.pdf](http://www.thepresidency.org/pubs/Afghan_Study_Group_final.pdf), p.25





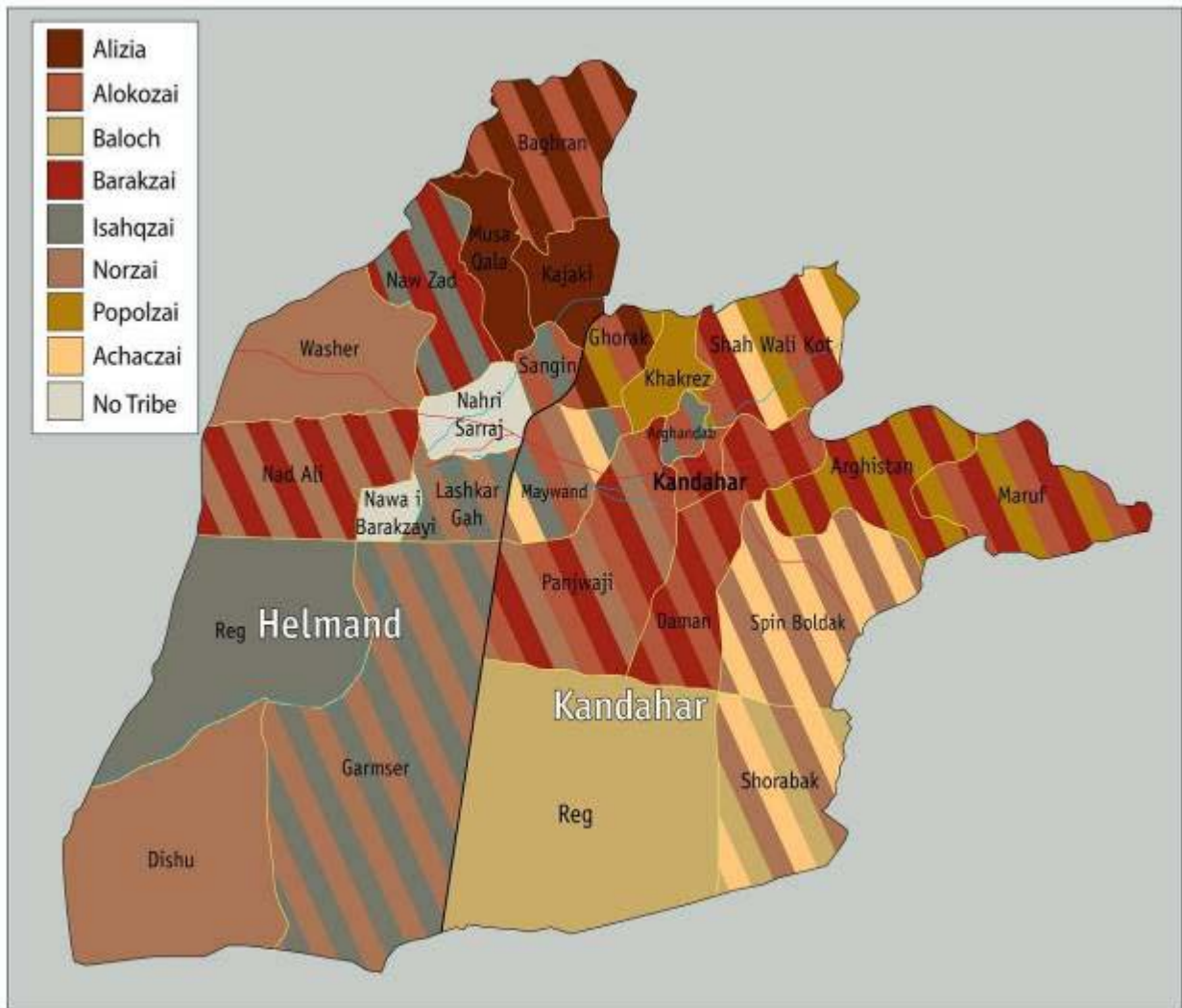
The once thriving bazaar in Sangin district is now derelict

***"Quite often it is the enemy that triggers the information, with the intention of weakening the alliance's cohesion and national support for ongoing operations. To overcome this disquieting state of public relations affairs, NATO must urgently develop an information strategy that will get it and its nations back into the driving."***

"Toward a Grand Strategy in an Uncertain World: Renewing Transatlantic Partnership",  
2007<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The paper "Toward a Grand Strategy in an Uncertain World: Renewing Transatlantic Partnership" is written by five distinguished military personnel: General Dr Klaus Naumann (former Chief of the Defence Staff of Germany and former Chairman of the Military Committee of NATO), Field Marshal The Lord Inge (former Chief of the Defence Staff of the United Kingdom), General John Shalikashvili (former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the United States of America, Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe), Admiral Jacques Lanxade (former Chief of the Defence Staff of France and former Ambassador to Tunisia) and General Henk van den Breemen (former Chief of the Defence Staff of the Netherlands). The authors have all served together in NATO. p. 129. Available online at [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/events/080110\\_grand\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/events/080110_grand_strategy.pdf)



Map 5: Tribal groups in the Afghan provinces of Helmand and Kandahar

**Perceptions in Musa Qala, 18-20 January 2008**

***"I joined the Taliban out of fear. I was a shopkeeper in Musa Qala and they would come and harass us, saying 'why are you not fighting the Jihad?'. It is the obligation of each Muslim to take part in Jihad. We lived there with our families, so I had to join them."***

Former Taliban fighter explaining why he joined the Taliban

***"The Taliban said that the foreigners are here to destroy our country and our religion; that they are not here to build our country, they are here to cut Afghanistan to pieces."***

Former Taliban fighter from Musa Qala

***"The Taliban told local people that there is Jihad going on in Afghanistan and you can't just sit at home and do nothing."***

Former Taliban fighter from Musa Qala

***"I was a shopkeeper in Musa Qala. At that time there were not that many Taliban present in Musa Qala. And I was busy with my work. Then the Taliban presence grew: they offered money to some people to join, and told others that refusal meant they were cooperating with the infidels."***

Former Taliban fighter from Musa Qala

***"They didn't have a police service or clinics, but they would hold trials and opened many madrassas, but only for the boys."***

Male Afghan answering the question:

'Did the Taliban have a public administration system in Musa Qala?'

***"During the day they are in the mountains, and at night they come down to the villages and carry on their operations and attacks."***

Former Taliban fighter from Musa Qala

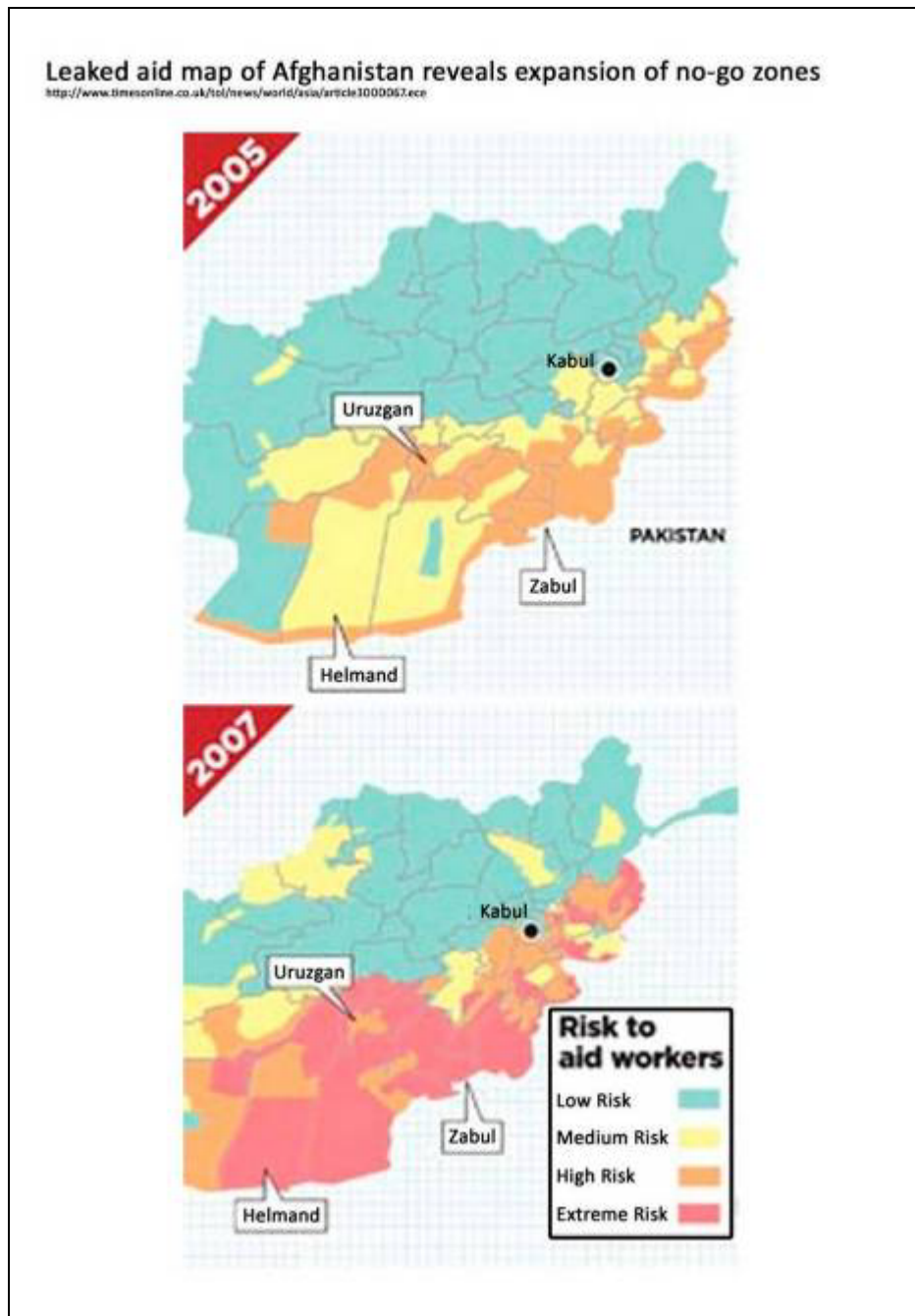
Talking about Taliban strategy



Police forces heading to Maiwand district

## Election Security

There are fundamental concerns regarding the logistical viability of holding elections next year. As a leaked United Nations map of December 2007 revealed, the areas considered of 'extreme risk' to aid workers have increased considerably since 2005; when taken alongside the country's dilapidated infrastructure, then the challenge of holding a viable nationwide poll can be regarded as almost insurmountable in many parts of the country.



Map 6: Leaked United Nations Risk Map (December 2007)

As the situation currently stands, it would almost certainly fall upon the already overburdened shoulders of NATO and the ANA to provide security for elections in many districts. Given the lack of unified political will in NATO to deploy more troops within the ISAF construct, an alternative strategy for election security needs to be implemented. The 'NATO Plus' concept must be expanded beyond its original parameters to encompass support from United Nations forces for the specific task of providing security for the elections. The threat of state failure in Afghanistan has global ramifications, and the burden of mitigating this risk cannot be borne by NATO alone, particularly as it was the UN Security Council that initially sanctioned military intervention in Afghanistan.

***“Even if you pay me USD5,000 to go to Garmser to assist the Afghan government in running the elections I wouldn’t accept. I am originally from there and even so I would surely be killed if I went there for that purpose.”***

Male Afghan, Kandahar  
20 January 2008

In monetary terms, such an expanded force will inflate the cost of holding elections to well over the USD159 million needed to stage parliamentary elections in 2004.<sup>5</sup> Given difficulties faced by the Kabul-based Election Commission in raising this money from the international community four years ago, it would be prudent to start requesting donations as soon as possible in advance of 2009.

Even if international election capital flows freely, and a bolstered, UN-driven security force is installed, then there is the problem of circumventing Taliban checkpoints and minimising the vulnerability of local election staff. This will require a monumental effort from indigenous and international security forces alike, and will simply not be possible should NATO-ISAF force numbers not increase substantially this year.

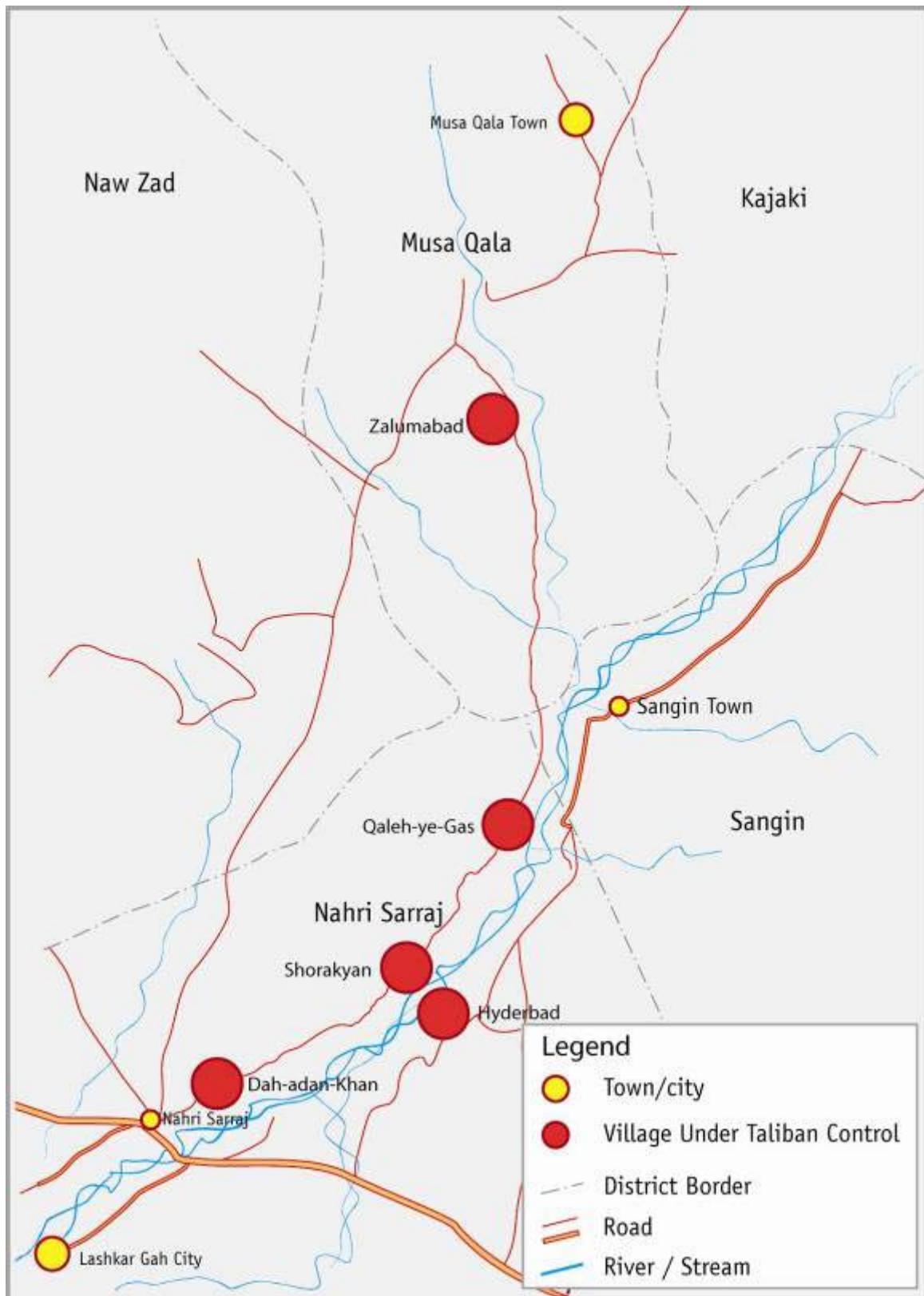
Were the elections to be held today, then it is apparent that several areas of the south would be out-of-bounds. Being under direct control of the Taliban, they would not enjoy levels of security sufficient to allow a free and fair ballot (*see Maps 4 and 5*). Ideally, the ANA and ANP will oversee the bulk of election security duties, but are unlikely to be at a suitable level of preparedness by April 2009.

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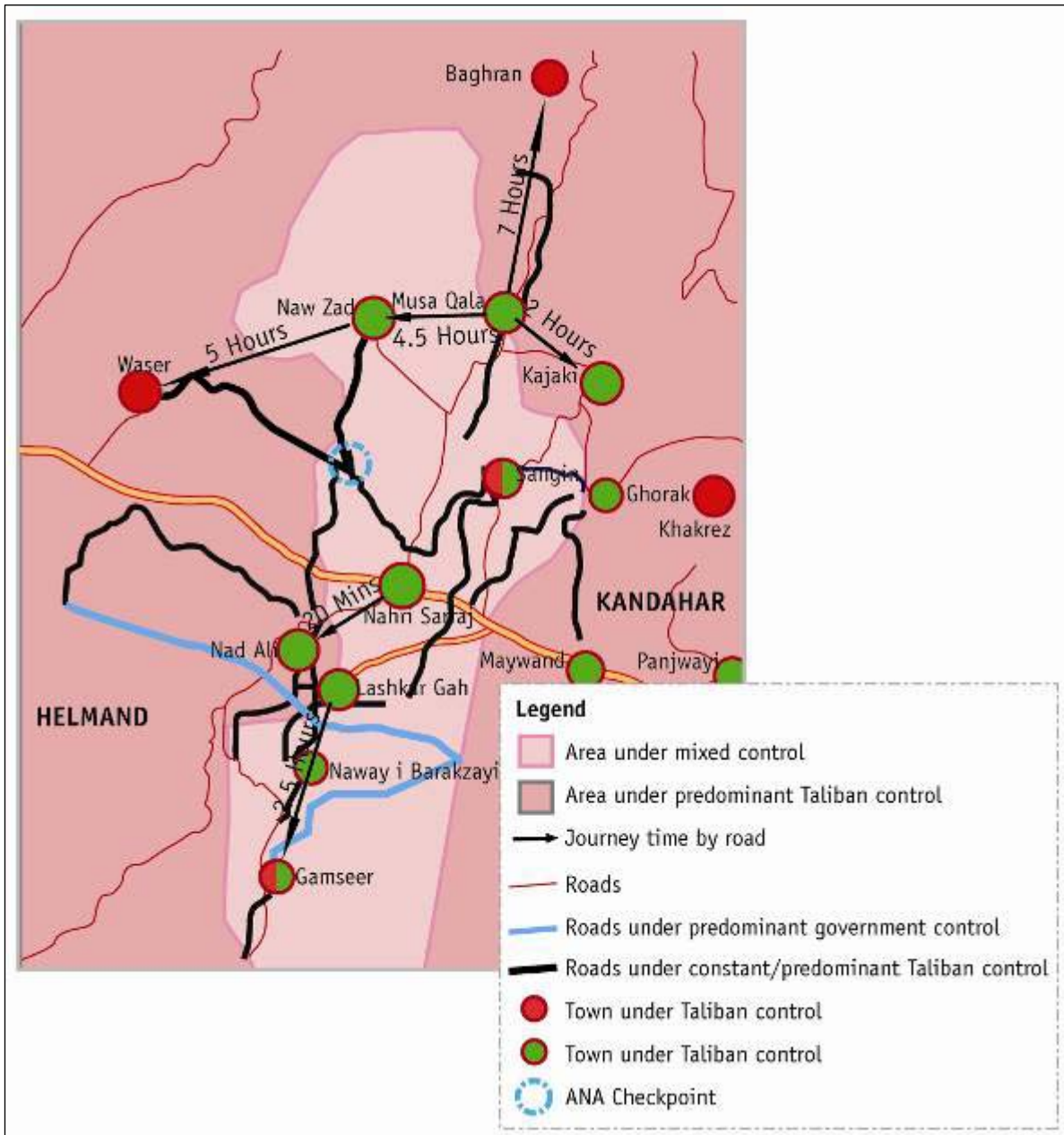
<sup>5</sup> One hundred per cent of these funds came from international donors. Kenneth Katzman, CRS Report for Congress RS21922, 'Afghanistan: Elections, Constitution and Government', p.4



ANP on duty in southern Afghanistan. Will they be able to secure the country's elections?



Map 7: Villages under Taliban control between Musa Qala and Lashkar Gah (January 2008)



Map 8: Examples of Taliban control of secondary roads in southern Afghanistan (January 2008)



## Chapter II

### 2008 Afghan Action Plan



Top: Makeshift refugee camp in Sangin District

Bottom: Refugees from Musa Qala have an uncertain fate



## Security Recommendations

### 1. Expanded 'NATO Plus UN' Formula for Afghanistan

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>UN forces to provide election security; NATO Plus implemented</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase number of forces</li> <li>- Remove national caveats</li> <li>- UN states to support NATO in ensuring election security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unwillingness to deploy additional troops/lift national caveats</li> <li>- inertia in United Nations</li> </ul>

#### Proposal

##### **Background**

Endless in-fighting amongst NATO member states regarding the future of their deployment in Afghanistan shows little sign of abating in 2008. Those states engaged in active combat implore others to share the war-fighting burden, while those operating under a developmental remit have little desire to alter that focus.

With this impasse firmly rooted, it is now clear that the alliance does not have the political will to resolve the multifaceted security problems facing Afghanistan.

***"If NATO cannot provide new forces to fight in the south, its credibility will be dealt a powerful blow, throwing into doubt its future cohesion and hence viability [...] Urgency is the watchword. The international community must act, and it must act now."***

The Atlantic Council of the United States  
January 2008<sup>6</sup>

##### **Recommendations**

*For more details on the NATO Plus Concept, see 'Stumbling Into Chaos – Afghanistan on the Brink' (The Senlis Council: November 2007).*

In order for presidential elections to stand a chance of taking place, the 'NATO Plus' concept must be expanded beyond its original parameters to include the United Nations. The threat of state failure in Afghanistan has global ramifications, and the burden of mitigating this risk cannot be borne by NATO alone.

<sup>6</sup> The Atlantic Council of the United States issue brief (International Security Paper) "Saving Afghanistan: An Appeal and Plan for Urgent Action", January 2008, pp.7-8,10. For a copy of the full report, see: <http://www.acus.org/index.asp>

Hence, every NATO state should contribute to an expanded force, with a firm level of commitment that will provide a total force size of 80,000.

Contributions should primarily come from those NATO states presently underrepresented in the coalition's total deployment. The remainder of 'NATO Plus' would be formed from contributions by non-NATO countries, in particular from states with significant Muslim population. Canada's threat to pull out of Afghanistan in February 2009 unless other NATO states start to increase their combat-ready deployments points to the urgency with which 'NATO Plus' needs to be established.<sup>7</sup>

NATO's ability to undertake a successful mission in Afghanistan is hamstrung by restrictive caveats. If NATO is to truly be able to project itself on a global scale, then its member states must bear the war fighting burden in equal measure, and national caveats must be lifted.

### Obstacles

**NATO's unwillingness:** The key obstacle to 'NATO Plus' is the unwillingness of several NATO governments to either increase their capacity on-the-ground in Afghanistan or allow their troops to fight the militants.

**UN inertia and political in-fighting:** Can the states of the UN Security Council put aside their regular complaints and implement a strategy truly focussed upon preventing the spread of global terrorism?

*"The operations in Afghanistan (and Iraq) lack a comprehensive strategy, because there is insufficient clarity about the aims and direction of the missions. Will it be possible for our institutions to formulate a strategic concept to deal with the set of challenges? A broad range of capabilities and a new flexibility will be required to respond to unpredictable crises. Our present capabilities fall short in many respects."*

*"NATO faces serious challenges in Afghanistan and has lost the momentum required for transformation of its forces. NATO is, therefore, in danger of losing its credibility... Sustainability will never be achieved if nations continue to regard operations such as those in Afghanistan as a fringe activity, imposing caveats on their national contingents that prove a serious impediment to an efficient operation."*

"Toward a Grand Strategy in an Uncertain World: Renewing Transatlantic Partnership", 2007<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> [http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5jtNwGC273e1n8X\\_lmcpK14irQhSQ](http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5jtNwGC273e1n8X_lmcpK14irQhSQ)

<sup>8</sup> Paper "Toward a Grand Strategy in an Uncertain World: Renewing Transatlantic Partnership", pp.28, 75. Available online at [http://www.csis.org/media/isis/events/080110\\_grand\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/isis/events/080110_grand_strategy.pdf)

## 2. Special Forces into Pakistan

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>Bolster efforts at choking key source of insurgency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase number</li> <li>- Support Pakistan Army</li> <li>- Train local militias</li> <li>- Backed by economic programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of assets</li> <li>- Level of deployment</li> <li>- Blowback in Pakistan</li> <li>- War-weariness in US election year</li> </ul>

### Proposal

Pakistan must launch systematic raids upon Taliban elements on its soil. In 2008, Pakistan should invite military assistance from external states with the aim of:

- i) increasing the quantity of Special Forces on its soil.
- ii) assisting in the counter-insurgency training of local paramilitaries (Frontier Corps and police) to fight militant Islamists.
- iii) launching highly targeted raids against core militant infrastructure.

An important caveat to this recommendation is that military operations alone cannot solve this problem. A significant package of economic assistance for the Tribal Areas of Pakistan must be introduced once sufficient security is in place.

***“Pakistan is encouraging all these fights, nobody else, most of the fighters are Pakistanis. There were some Pakistanis arrested a few days ago.”***

Male Afghan, Charsoo

Answering the question ‘Who is fighting in Afghanistan?’, 10 January 2008

### Background

The depth and breadth of militant Islamism in Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is now beyond question. It is also clear that Pakistan’s conventional and paramilitary forces alone do not possess the inclination or capability required to address this issue over the long term.

Furthermore, the state of governance in the country following the assassination of Benazir Bhutto is at a nadir, even by Pakistan’s low standards. This leaves civil-military relations in an uncertain state, making clear direction of state forces in the NWFP impossible.

Should Pakistan's presidential elections of 18 February provoke serious civil unrest in the country's major urban centres, then the army faces overstretch, leaving the situation in NWFP more perilous.

These factors combine to give Pakistan's burgeoning militant Islamists a strategic advantage, and this situation is having a direct impact upon security in Afghanistan.

In order for the problem to be confronted at its source, the assistance of external military forces is pivotal although tremendously sensitive, and the international community must inch towards a carefully-crafted direct intervention in 2008.

***"Afghanistan and Pakistan are joined at the hip. There can be no successful outcome for Afghanistan if Pakistan is not a part of the solution."***

Karl Inderfurth  
Former Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, 23 Jan 2008<sup>9</sup>

### **Key Actors**

Should external forces play a greater role in assisting Pakistan's fight against extremism, then President Musharraf's successor as Chief of Army is a potentially pivotal figure. Western-educated and pro-US, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani would make an instant impact in the role by inviting a limited number of external forces into the country in support of his armed forces' efforts in the borderlands. The President would still have to support such a move, but the clearer split between civil-military elements of Pakistan's polity ensure that he can use Kayani as a smokescreen.

### **Obstacles**

**Availability of assets:** The speed of military drawdown from Iraq will be pivotal in releasing sufficient assets for Afghanistan. To this end, the announcement that 3,200 additional US Marines are to be sent to Afghanistan in 2008 is a positive move.

**Level of deployment:** A heavy external presence in the sensitive areas of Pakistan would ignite the militancy. It is crucial to ensure that assets in the NWFP do not become a magnet for insurgents, endangering the operation in the process. Yet insufficient forces would not have a demonstrable impact upon the situation, and striking this most difficult of balances is essential.

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<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/23/AR2008012302308.html>



**Canadian forces in Kandahar. Other NATO states need to bolster their deployments**

**Blowback in Pakistan:** Can all elements of Pakistan's army and paramilitary forces be expected to support incoming forces? The Frontier Corps are composed entirely of Pashtun, and hence are extremely reluctant to engage in direct combat against their fellow Pashtun of NWFP. Centuries-old feudal factors involving sub-tribes provide an additional complication.

**War-weariness:** Would publics of external states stomach another significant deployment and potential loss of life in the seemingly endless 'war on terror'? For instance, could US Presidential candidates make political capital by advocating a streamlined, rather than expanded, role for the US military around the world?



The aftermath of a suicide bombing in Lashkar Gah  
- an increasingly favoured tactic of militant Islamists



### 3. NATO-ISAF to run Key Crossing Points along Afghan-Pakistan Border

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>Afg-Pak border points controlled by NATO-ISAF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- key border crossings under NATO-ISAF control</li> <li>- handover to ANA/ANP as soon as operationally viable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Admitting ANA weakness</li> <li>- Magnet to militants</li> <li>- Which NATO states would contribute</li> <li>- Increased tension between Kabul and Islamabad</li> </ul>

#### Proposal

In 2008, President Karzai should invite NATO-ISAF to:

- i) deploy specialised border patrol forces at key strategic locations along the border with Pakistan.
- ii) withdraw those forces at a point when the ANA/ANP could perform the task.

Evidence collected by The Senlis Council throughout 2007 and into 2008 points to the ability of militants to traverse from Pakistan to Afghanistan unchallenged.

Although impossible to lock down this most porous of borders, more must be done by NATO to introduce greater security at key points of egress from Pakistan.

The Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) should form a part of NATO's interim border deployment, supporting NATO forces at these key border points, pending the handover of operational responsibility in the shortest possible timeframe. Responsibility would be handed over to indigenous forces when sufficient levels of skill and experience had been accrued.

#### Obstacles

**Admitting ANA/ANP weakness:** Such a move by President Karzai could be interpreted as a tacit acceptance of ANA weakness. Instead, it should be depicted as a positive development aimed at encouraging the state's armed forces to develop additional capabilities in real time.

**Magnet to militants:** Militants would almost certainly be drawn to these NATO-ISAF border positions. This should be factored into NATO's operational planning, and sufficient intelligence and man assets deployed to ensure minimal disruption.

**Who would contribute:** A significant proportion of NATO member states have been reluctant to send their forces into direct combat against the Taliban. Deploying additional forces to key border crossings would be a halfway house between inertia and full combat, and send the right signal to fellow NATO states and the Afghan people alike. As such, forces from NATO states other than those fighting in the south and east should be encouraged to deploy.

**Increased tension between Kabul and Islamabad:** Publically, Islamabad can be expected to react badly to this initiative, but the evidence that militants cross into Afghanistan from Pakistan with impunity is compelling. However, it is incumbent upon all parties with an interest in creating a stable Afghan state to prevent this 'traffic of terror' from increasing in frequency, and hence privately Pakistan could be persuaded of the virtue of NATO's interim border force.



**This police checkpoint on the Kandahar-Lashkar Gah road was overrun by Taliban in December 2007, resulting in the death of 16 policemen. External assistance is needed to prevent a repeat**

## 4. Neighbourhood Security Groups

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>Ad hoc bodies aimed at providing a forum for security grievances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local committees to oversee security</li> <li>- Arbitration capability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remit issues</li> <li>- Lack of authority</li> </ul>

### Proposal

This programme aims to offer local populations an outlet to discuss their concerns regarding security issues. Composed of village elders, indigenous and international security forces, and representatives from regional and central government, neighbourhood security groups (NSGs) will host 'security *jirgas*', building confidence among local communities that their voice is being heard by key local, regional and international players. If utilised correctly, they will establish a grassroots information channel that will capture additional intelligence about Taliban operations at the village level.

Local actors are central to the success of this scheme. Whereas village elders and tribal leaders presently hold regular meetings in the form of *jirgas*, this scheme would have wider participation through the inclusion of local security forces and regional NATO-ISAF commanders.

### Background

Alongside nascent state institutions, a semi institutional form of governance is already represented by traditional local systems. The social system in many unstable southern and eastern provinces is based on traditional groups such as the communal group, village, extended family tribe or ethnic group.

At present, these are quasi-autonomous, localised 'governmental' units with no link to the centre. NSGs would bolster the country's already strong village control systems, but crucially establish another link to regional and central government.

Small villages (*kalay*) and large villages (*qaria*) are considered the informal institutions contributing to social order through informal processes and the exercise of traditional authority. Local assemblies (*jirga/shura*) operate as the central traditional structures and local mechanisms of collective decision-making and dispute settlement.

The leaders of the *jirga/shura* are usually elders from the district who command the respect and support of their villages. These mechanisms incorporate institutionalised rituals and customary laws, and their decisions are binding and fully respected by the local population.

Although these local social structures are informal in nature, in most areas they are more influential than the central government.

### Obstacles

**Establishing the right remit:** Should NSGs contain a disproportionate level of external influence, then they will fail. It is essential that local players and interests constitute the bulk of their membership, although also important that NATO-ISAF offer their active support.

**Lack of authority:** The NSG would have no direct power, instead acting as arbitrators of local disputes, de facto intelligence gatherers, and as a bridge between civilians and security forces. There is a danger that they are simply circumvented, but local control mechanisms should prevent this from occurring.



Village Elders, such as this leader of refugees from Sangin, need to play a key role in Neighbourhood Security Groups

## Political Recommendations

### 1. Grassroots Democracy Campaign

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>Take democracy to the villages and build upwards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bottom-up democratic process</li> <li>- Public education campaigns</li> <li>- Peace Jirgas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Top-down system in place</li> <li>- Chronic institutional weakness</li> <li>- Taliban's political momentum</li> <li>- Border tensions and local interests</li> </ul>

#### Proposal

The introduction of a grassroots democracy campaign to promote democratic principles and practices, coupled with structural reforms to devolve power to the local communities and sustained development aid, will help to curb the spread of Taliban influence and at last make a real contribution to winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.

#### Background

Grassroots democracy is a vital component of any democratic system, but its role is frequently overlooked in favour of showpiece general elections, which are more readily associated with the concept of democracy. This tendency becomes even more evident in the cases of post-conflict state-building efforts, such as Iraq or Afghanistan. This is a mistake.

Grassroots democracy is usually the first point of contact between citizens and the polity, and manifests itself in a clear hierarchy of governance from central/federal to provincial to local levels. This system can only work when the population understands what democracy means and how it works.

In states where democracy has never existed, populations need to be taught its basic theoretical and practical elements to be able to put it into practice. Democracy is not a process that spontaneously develops when the former system disappears.

A wide-ranging grassroots democracy campaign is the best way to address two problems that are ultimately complementary: an almost universal lack of knowledge about democracy among common Afghans and the failure to empower local villages and city neighbourhoods. In conciliating and resolving these issues lies the key to real democracy in Afghanistan.

A key component of this campaign will be the organisation of 'peace *jirgas*'. The meetings are attended by political leaders and tribal elders and vary in size; *loya jirgas*, or "grand councils", can gather hundreds of representatives. The elders must reach a decision through consensus and thus these gatherings can be a very time consuming process.

*Jirgas* are an especially well suited way of promoting grassroots democracy using native mechanisms and have also been useful in promoting better relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as last year's bilateral peace *jirga* demonstrated. This first gathering was held in August 2007 in Kabul, drawing together about 700 delegates from both countries, including tribal elders, religious leaders and politicians. It resulted in the issuing of general expressions of goodwill to end violence and foster better relations.



**Grassroots campaign is necessary to build a democratic and stable environment for Afghanistan's children**

**Recommendations**

A complete overhaul of the Afghan political system is not a viable or realistic option. A solution can be achieved by the comprehension and assimilation of grassroots democratic politics within current local Afghan administrative structures.

For this to happen, the political leadership in Kabul should open up the decision-making process in 2008 by implementing the following:

- i) allow the holding of meetings at all levels of local government;
- ii) encourage direct elections in a progressive sequence - small groups elect a board or council, with regional leadership being chosen by these councils.

Local electoral efforts should be matched by regular public education campaigns about democracy:

- i) "information *jirgas*" in which tribal members can ask questions about matters of local politics;
- ii) visible and repeated shows of support from key Afghan officials (for example by presiding over local councils);
- iii) the organisation of mock elections to illustrate the process;
- iv) mass media events to encourage participation in the political process.

Because of its wide acceptance both in Pakistan and Afghanistan (especially in the border region) as a way to come together and settle common issues, the *jirga* is an invaluable tool and therefore should continue to be used to consolidate the democratic process in Afghanistan:

- i) a planned second *peace jirga*, to be held in Islamabad, should go ahead as promised;
- ii) smaller scale councils in both countries, but especially in southeastern Afghanistan provinces, should be held to allow the population to air their grievances and, by doing so, letting the Government prioritise which are the problems that need solving;
- iii) *jirgas* can play a valuable role in the upcoming elections as a convenient way of gathering the population and engaging them in a dialogue with the candidates;
- iv) when hosting these *jirgas*, women should increasingly be allowed to participate, as part of a gradual process to empower women and boost their participation in local and national politics.

Evidence in other countries shows that successful grassroots campaigns have stimulated mass participation in decision-making and regulation of local power structures. The devolution of power to the local level will not only help to improve the overall social and political situation but also ensure that the Afghan people can participate in the process in a real way.

## Obstacles

**International failings post-October 2001:** A country such as Afghanistan, deeply divided along sectarian, ethnic and religious lines and struggling to recover from decades of conflict that have destroyed the political and social structures, was effectively a blank canvas upon which the international community could have implemented a “bottom-to-top” political system.

Such a style of governance would have taken advantage of the existing local social structures and blend traditional forms of government with liberal democratic institutions. Such a hybrid, if introduced following a carefully organized mass education program, would have created more loyalty to the central government.

Instead, the International Community established a conventional model of democracy, legitimized the procedure with elections that meant little or nothing to the average Afghan, and declared the process largely complete. Because of this approach, people never really understood what they were voting for or why this new political system was superior to its predecessor.

**Institutional weakness:** The inadequacy of this purely “electoral” approach to democracy in Afghanistan has been demonstrated by the widespread failure of elected officials to deliver on policy pledges. By establishing an electoral process without simultaneously creating the institutions necessary for the rule of law, the electorate has effectively chosen candidates that rule as *de facto* dictators for the duration of their mandate.

In addition, holding elections in a country such as Afghanistan without first developing strong legal and political structures to ensure truly fair and free polls, means that electoral contests will always be determined by the ethnic and sectarian lines that characterise the nation.

**Political space for the Taliban:** The top-to-bottom system facilitates the development of another dangerous situation. As central government is so weak and local communities so powerless to govern themselves, the Taliban are often the only movement capable and willing to address the grievances of the population, thus becoming *de facto* political representatives.

As detailed elsewhere in this report, this is a serious phenomenon which threatens to empower the Taliban even further and extend their survival.



**Bilateral tensions and local interests:** Taking into account recent developments in Pakistan, the mutual and enduring mistrust between president Musharraf and president Karzai, and the string of elections that will take place in both countries in the next two years it is very unlikely that the planned second peace *jirga* to be held in Islamabad will take place anytime soon. Also, the smaller scale peace *jirgas* raise the question of what is the real interest of the Afghan political elite in holding these tribal councils and whether the Taliban should be invited to participate.



The aftermath of a Taliban raid outside of Sangin district

## 2. Giving Voice to the Afghan People: Holding a Referendum on Counter-narcotics Policies

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>Referendum on Poppy for Medicine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inform Afghans of alternative counter-narcotics policies</li> <li>- Hold a referendum parallel to the 2009 presidential elections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insecurity</li> <li>- Misinformation and political rhetoric</li> </ul>

### Proposal

#### Background

The people of Afghanistan must have a greater stake in decisions and actions directly affecting their lives. Decades of conflict and civil strife have paralysed the Afghan state; today, President Karzai has the opportunity to give voice to the Afghan people and formulate a strategy which responds to their real concerns and needs. Implementing policies consonant with the aspirations of the people of Afghanistan would contribute significantly to the country's unity and stability.

The Afghan Constitution acknowledges the importance of promoting Afghan ownership and explicitly gives power to the President to call for a referendum on vital issues that have a durable impact upon the lives of ordinary Afghans.

#### Article 65 [Call for Referendum]

(1) The President can call for a referendum on important national, political, social or economic issues.

(2) Call for referendum shall not be contrary to the provisions of this constitution or for the amendment of it.

#### Article 156 [Election and Referendum]

The Independent Electoral Commission will be established to organise and supervise any election and to hold a referendum within the country based on the provisions of the law.

Central to Afghanistan's hardships and growing insurgency is the booming opium trade. With opium production having doubled to 8,200 tons over the past two years, Afghanistan's illegal opium economy is currently larger than ever before, accounting for 93 per cent of global opium production.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The total domestic value of Afghanistan's illegal opium economy has now reached unprecedented levels and is estimated at a staggering sum of USD 4 billion, equivalent to 53 per cent of the country's licit GDP. UNODC bases this figure on a 90 per cent confidence interval of USD 3.5 – USD 4.5 billion. In total, approximately 35 per cent of the combined legal and illegal Afghan economy is directly derived from illegal opium.

More than three million Afghans are directly dependent on illegal poppy cultivation though, given the inextricable link between narcotics and the insurgency with the Taliban extracting from the drug economy significant resources and having a strong interest in maintaining lawlessness and instability, opium has an adverse effect on the lives of all Afghans.

***“All the problems are because of poppy...for example if someone has money the thieves will make a problem for him, if someone has opium the thieves will make problem for him too...the opium has destroyed Afghanistan.”***

Displaced male, originally from Sangin  
Answering the question ‘Was there poppy cultivation in Sangin?’  
12 January 2008

Current policies, as identified and being implemented by President Karzai and the international community, focus on poppy eradication and the provision of alternative livelihoods. Nevertheless, these efforts have failed to bring about a substantial and lasting reduction to the illegal opium production.

On the contrary, forced poppy eradication has added to the cycle of poverty and violence that has gripped the southern part of the country. In the absence of immediate and sustainable economic alternatives to poppy cultivation in most areas of Afghanistan, combined with the lack of effective government control and the corruptive manner in which eradication campaigns take place, this misguided policy has compromised reconstruction and security efforts as well as undermined the public trust in the Afghan Government.

***“The drug issue must be addressed now in a comprehensive and effective way if Afghanistan is to become a successful state. Bold thinking and a holistic approach combining development and enforcement tools are essential.”***

***“Elimination through eradication of the poppies would create massive economic hardship and disruption that would turn a substantial portion of the population against the Karzai government and the NATO forces as more insurgents would now be recruited if only to derive income [...] Also, the possibility of limited use of legal opium purchases should be explored by the international community, beginning in Helmand province, to see if limited purchases can become part of the comprehensive approach to fighting the drug problem.”***

The Atlantic Council of the United States  
January 2008<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The Atlantic Council of the United States issue brief (International Security Paper) “Saving Afghanistan: An Appeal and Plan for Urgent Action”, January 2008, pp.6, 9-10. For a copy of the full report, see: <http://www.acus.org/index.asp>

The Afghan Government together with the international community must deliver on their promises to create economically sustainable opportunities and involve community participation during the planning, implementation and evaluation stages.

**Recommendations**

Faced with an escalating narcotics crisis which affects the lives of Afghans across the country and considering how ineffective, and often counter-productive, current policies have proved to be, there is a pressing need for genuine accountability.

President Karzai, with the power vested in him by the Constitution, is urged to give the opportunity to the people of Afghanistan to voice their concerns and their vision for Afghanistan's future.

Calling for a referendum on an issue of such political, social and economic importance would require the Afghan public is well-informed of the particulars of current policies pursued and, importantly, the specifications of new approaches proposed.

Recognising the unique circumstances characterizing Afghanistan's unrelenting poppy production, The Senlis Council has developed a Poppy for Medicine scheme for Afghanistan as a means of bringing illegal cultivation under control in an immediate yet sustainable manner. The model has been developed and fine-tuned to Afghanistan's security and development realities over the past three years.

The key feature of the proposed model is that the opium poppy would be transformed to essential pain-killing medicine such as morphine. Poppy for Medicine will generate economic profits and secure livelihoods which will, in turn, provide the necessary leverage to farming communities to diversify their economic activities.

Furthermore, the profits as a result of exporting morphine tablets would accommodate all stakeholders, including middle-men and power-holders. Building on Afghanistan's valuable assets and producing internationally tradable commodities, Poppy for Medicine projects would also benefit the central government and be conducive to building support for both the government and its international partners.

The implementation of scientific Pilot Projects in Afghanistan would further test the parameters and specifications of the village-based Poppy for Medicine model.

***“Coherent counter-narcotics strategies need to be adopted by all relevant authorities. These approaches must include justice-sector reforms to tighten the prosecution of traffickers. And they must offer effective economic provisions to induce would-be poppy farmers and middlemen to prefer and find alternative lines of work. As one possibility, a limited poppy-for-medicine project might be worth pursuing.”***

The Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan (‘Manley Commission’)<sup>12</sup>  
January 2008

As part of the efforts to promote Afghan ownership of such a vital issue for Afghanistan’s future, President Karzai is urged to call for a referendum on the alternative counter-narcotics approach of Poppy for Medicine:

- i. The central government, with the support of provincial governors and the international community, must embark upon a concerted effort to circulate comprehensive information on Afghanistan’s drugs crisis, providing analysis of the link between narcotics and the insurgency, and the regulatory framework regarding poppy cultivation. Particular emphasis should be given to the objectives of current policies pursued, including forced poppy eradication, and the impact these efforts have had on poppy production and farmers’ livelihoods.
- ii. Prior to the referendum, the Afghan public should be adequately informed of the specifications of the proposed counter-narcotics policy. Information regarding the objectives, timeframe and consequences of the Poppy for Medicine model at the village, provincial and national levels must be impartial. Conclusions drawn following the implementation of Pilot Projects must also be disseminated amongst Afghans throughout the country.
- iii. A referendum should coincide with the 2009 presidential elections for logistical purposes and to allow adequate time for the information campaigns. Importantly, the referendum would also give a mandate to Afghanistan’s new president to encompass the people’s ruling and implement the appropriate strategy during his five-year tenure.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www3.thestar.com/static/PDF/080122\\_afghan\\_report.pdf](http://www3.thestar.com/static/PDF/080122_afghan_report.pdf)

## **Obstacles**

**Insecurity:** Escalating violence particularly in the southern half of the country poses a significant impediment to holding a referendum on such a crucial issue for Afghanistan's reconstruction and security. It is also worth considering the strong interest of the insurgency in maintaining high levels of illegal poppy production and lawlessness. National and international forces must be well equipped to cope with security concerns, similar to those anticipated when holding the 2009 presidential elections.

**Misinformation and political rhetoric:** Thus far, counter-narcotics efforts have revolved around proclamations against pragmatic and innovative approaches to Afghanistan's drugs crisis and promises of swift results based on the implementation of forceful policies. Politically expedient eradication-focused policies have been futile and threaten to damage irreparably the Afghan Government's legitimacy, leading to social unrest.

The Afghan public must be given the opportunity to explore the various counter-narcotics approaches and be informed in an unbiased manner of the specifications of new alternatives. It is imperative that political rhetoric is replaced by genuine accountability.

## Developmental Recommendations

### 1. Economic Incentives for Attracting Foreign Investment

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>Tax credit scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer tax credit</li> <li>- Domestic tax breaks</li> <li>- Eligibility criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political sensitivity</li> <li>- Poor infrastructure</li> <li>- Insecurity</li> </ul>

#### Proposal

##### **Background**

International financial assistance must have a more substantial and sustainable impact on the lives of ordinary Afghans. This must be the core economic principle underpinning international development efforts in Afghanistan. Foreign direct investment (FDI) is urgently required in order to generate jobs and economic opportunities, and to sustain economic growth. FDI in Afghanistan would also encourage economic integration between Afghanistan and the developed world, fostering closer cooperation and trust.

President Karzai and his administration should aim to maximize Afghanistan's position as a bridge between Central/South Asia and the Far East, and attract FDI through the development of an efficient system for international trade and transit.

***"Afghanistan needs investment in every walk of life."***

President Karzai  
June 2006

***"We live in the shops, we don't have shelter and we are suffering from the cold. We are hungry and desperate; we have suffered many problems but nobody has helped us."***

Displaced male, Lashkar Gah  
Giving details of aid as he has experienced it  
12 January 2008

As in any post-conflict zone, democracy in Afghanistan is fragile. In order for the first nationally elected government to weather the storm, it must install better safeguards for the administration of aid.

It is futile for foreign donors to spend billions on humanitarian assistance if it becomes bottlenecked. If the government fails to satisfy, then regardless of who leads officially there will be a power vacuum ready for exploitation by the Taliban.



**Sangin and Musa Qala refugees in Kabul, 9 January 2008**

Both the Afghan Government and international community must recognize the key impact of tax policies on promoting FDI and development in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's donor governments, such as the US, the UK and European Union states, should enact a law on tax breaks for those companies investing in Afghanistan. The lost tax revenue as a result of the tax credit schemes would be offset by reducing direct foreign aid to Afghanistan by the same amount.

In the final year of his current presidential term, President Karzai has the opportunity to implement a realistic and durable economic programme that will entrench long-term growth within Afghanistan's economy. His ability to attract foreign investors, enact major infrastructure improvements and develop Afghanistan's private sector will determine the success of his economic legacy.



### **Recommendations**

The major underpinning of this developmental proposal is that tax credit would result in investment, with Afghanistan receiving more resources and creating new markets as a result. This scheme would contribute to alleviating the circumstances conducive to public support for the insurgency, and would starve the Taliban of many economically-driven recruits.<sup>13</sup>

The core principle of the tax credit scheme relates to foreign investors helping Afghanistan's economic growth, employment and poverty alleviation. Foreign governments would reallocate a portion of the direct foreign aid ring fenced for Afghanistan into tax breaks provided to companies that invest in the country. Notably, with companies generally being more protective of their investment, especially in unstable environments, this can ensure efficient, fast dispersal.

As regards direct foreign aid in Afghanistan, international governments are often criticized that the taxpayers' money does not always reach the Afghan people in real need. Tax credits could prove a solution to the mismanagement of aid funds, circumventing institutional weakness, ineffectiveness and inability to deliver.

***“Donor programmes have in many cases failed to build institutional capacities or establish proper systems of governance. Incoherent, wasteful and short-term programmes, with weak financial oversight, have to some degree accentuated problems of [...] inefficiency and lack of coordination.”***

Oxfam, January 2008<sup>14</sup>

Reducing the potential risk of investing in the emergent post-conflict state is key to attracting foreign investment from international companies.

Both the Afghan Government and international donors should establish special, favourable conditions for foreign investors in the country:

- i. International governments must adopt tax breaks for foreign investors, including a reduction of the corporate tax rate on Afghan income and modifying transfer pricing rules to allow more profit to be allocated to Afghanistan.

<sup>13</sup> The recommendation is consonant with the proposal put forward by Justin Muzinich and Professor Eric Werker, in which they argue for a global tax credit for companies investing in sufficiently impoverished developing countries.

<sup>14</sup> OXFAM report “Afghanistan: Development and Humanitarian Priorities”, 2008, p.6. For a copy of the full report, see:

[http://publications.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam/display.asp?K=e2008020115493741&sf\\_20=oxfam\\_archive\\_flag&st\\_20=NOT+Y&sf\\_01=CTITLE&st\\_01=afghanistan&sort=SORT\\_DATE%2FD&m=1&dc=19](http://publications.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam/display.asp?K=e2008020115493741&sf_20=oxfam_archive_flag&st_20=NOT+Y&sf_01=CTITLE&st_01=afghanistan&sort=SORT_DATE%2FD&m=1&dc=19)

- ii. The Afghan government must develop a legal and regulatory framework offering tax incentives to foreign companies, with additional tax breaks for those investors engaged in significant infrastructure projects such as road building and power stations as these facilitate access to market.
- iii. In order to maximise the benefits of foreign investment, the Afghan government should encourage foreign investors to look for reliable Afghan partners and employ from the local workforce, thus developing indigenous technical and professional capacity. Where necessary, eligibility could be restricted to new investment, with the Afghan government imposing preconditions for training and employing locals, fostering closer cooperation with local communities, generating jobs, transferring know-how and promoting sustainable growth.

***“We want them to provide us work facilities; to provide an organization so we can get jobs. We are refugees and are worried about the rent of the house and about feeding our children.”***

Displaced male

Answering the question ‘What assistance should the government of Afghanistan and the international community provide to you?’

12 January 2008



**“Fighting the cold”:** Barefoot children in refugee camps in Kabul, 10 January 2008

## Obstacles

**Political sensitivity:** In view of forthcoming US presidential elections, the espousal of such a developmental proposal by a presidential candidate is likely to provoke considerable opposition for outsourcing American jobs to Afghanistan. In parallel, should the Afghan Government support such a scheme without imposing eligibility criteria to ensure economic growth in local communities, President Karzai will face resistance from political rivals, accusing him of growing dependency upon foreign actors and capital. Progressively, the Afghan public will lose confidence in the motives of international business and their government.

**Feeble infrastructure:** Afghanistan's frail, and frequently non-existent, infrastructure poses a significant impediment to foreign investors. For instance, power shortages have prevented significant FDI projects from ever eventuating. Major infrastructure needs include road building, electricity and water projects.

**Deteriorating security situation:** Growing violence and insecurity across southern Afghanistan and in other parts of the country is a key risk factor that deters multinational investors. Notably, according to the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency<sup>15</sup>, private investment in Afghanistan dropped to USD500million in 2007, compared to USD1 billion invested in 2006 and USD570million invested in 2005, as a result of the deteriorating security situation in the country. How can the Afghan Government offset the risk of investing in unstable environments and attract FDI? A combination of favourable conditions for foreign investment, good governance and a substantial improvement in the commercial infrastructure may be enough to counterbalance this risk.



**Ruins as a result of insurgency attacks in southern Afghanistan, January 2008**

<sup>15</sup> The Afghanistan Investment Support Agency is an independent business group established by the Afghan Government to support local and international investors. Since its creation in 2003, the Agency has registered over 11,000 private companies, including more than 1,200 foreign investments.

## 2. Developing Afghanistan's private sector

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>Tax breaks and targeted microcredit programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer tax credit to Afghan entrepreneurs and local businesses</li> <li>- Targeted microcredit programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor infrastructure</li> <li>- Economic climate and regulatory framework</li> </ul>

### Proposal

#### Background

As ample evidence in the last few years has shown, Afghanistan's extreme poverty and growing unemployment will not be ended by the provision of direct foreign aid alone. Broad-based development in Afghanistan will depend on large-scale investment, investment in small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and the creation of new markets.

The presence and activity of Afghan enterprises as well as employment and unemployment rates are key indicators of developmental progress.<sup>16</sup> A growing private sector is central to Afghanistan's development and poverty reduction. It will generate essential tax revenues for the Afghan government, which can be re-invested in new development projects.

***"The people of Afghanistan are looking for a government that creates an enabling environment for the private sector."***

Hedayat Amin Arsala, Senior advisor to President Karzai  
Afghanistan Development Forum, Kabul, April 2005

Notwithstanding proclamations of GDP growth, at present, Afghanistan's private sector development and overall economic indicators remain low. In *Doing Business 2008*, an economic report of the World Bank Group, Afghanistan ranks 159 out of 178 economies; the country ranks at the very bottom of the key indicators relating to the ease of getting credit and protecting investors.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> In the US Army and US Marine Corps's US Counter-Insurgency Manual published in December 2006, planners are urged to assess progress "with broad measures of social and economic health or weakness" including job opportunities and economic activities such as industry presence of small- and medium-sized enterprises and industry exports. According to the Manual, "trends over time are the true indicators of progress".

<sup>17</sup> *Doing Business 2008* provides objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 178 economies. Key indicators include the ease of starting a business, employing workers, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors and paying taxes. Available online at: [www.doingbusiness.org](http://www.doingbusiness.org)

The Afghan government headed by President Karzai must focus its efforts on securing real and sustained income by creating an enabling environment for the private sector. The development of local business is central to tackling unemployment and poverty, and promoting robust growth.

***“We go to the town in the morning and we come back home in the evening, we can find work some days but we can't find work every day and we survive on that basis. We don't have anything else, we lost all our cattle. We are living in other people's land and you can see the mud here, everybody has dug a ditch around their houses to keep the water away from their place.”***

Afghan in Kochi Camp, Kandahar  
18 January 2008

### ***Recommendation***

This developmental recommendation is based on the premise that offering targeted microcredit programmes and tax breaks to Afghan entrepreneurs and local enterprises would contribute immensely to the development of Afghanistan's private sector.

Ensuring a favourable climate for enterprise and an economic governance framework must be a priority for the Afghan Government and its donor partners. Considering Afghanistan's fragile south, incentives should be given to those businesses wishing to invest and operate in poorer and less secure areas.

***“Millions of Afghans, particularly in rural areas, still face severe hardship comparable with sub-Saharan Africa. Conditions of persistent poverty have been a significant factor in the spread of insecurity.”***

Oxfam, January 2008<sup>18</sup>

Supporting Afghan entrepreneurs in impoverished areas, in conjunction with developing essential infrastructure and services, would have a demonstrable and sustainable impact upon employment and growth rates. In turn, the provision of a real and sustained income, the expansion of the labour market and assisting the country's reconstruction process would be conducive to building public confidence and trust towards the Afghan Government, thus alleviating the conditions that may encourage insurgency recruitment.

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<sup>18</sup> OXFAM report “Afghanistan: Development and Humanitarian Priorities”, 2008, p.2

The Afghan Government should facilitate investment in SMEs focusing on sectors key to the country's economic development. President Karzai is urged to create an enabling environment for the private sector, providing incentives and favourable conditions to Afghanistan's entrepreneurs:

- i. Carefully targeted microcredit programmes should be offered to Afghan labourers and local entrepreneurs who have exemplified creativity and vigour in the midst of violence and insecurity. Microcredit programmes can be targeted to either expand or start local businesses.
- ii. Promote economic reforms and approve tax breaks for Afghan SMEs, including a reduction of the corporate tax rate. Further tax breaks should be provided to young entrepreneurs and businesses investing in impoverished and insecure Afghan communities, thus offsetting potential risks.<sup>19</sup> Lucrative sectors that are regarded as key to Afghanistan's economic growth include extraction of natural resources, agribusiness, telecommunications and transportation. Notably Afghanistan is rich in precious minerals such as copper, iron ore, gold, marble and gems. In March 2007, research by the US Geological Survey indicated an 18-fold increase in the country's potential oil and a tripling of estimated natural gas resources.



**Power supply to Sangin: Afghanistan's landscape needs to be punctuated by more such landmarks**

<sup>19</sup> It is noteworthy looking at past experiences regarding tax incentives given to businesses for investing in impoverished areas. In Brazil as of the early 1960s firms had been allowed to reduce their tax liability by 50 per cent if they invest their tax savings in projects in specific poor regions. This investment tax credit scheme is said to have transformed a market of twenty million people with a very little purchasing power into an important market. An additional percentage of investment tax credit for firms in underdeveloped regions was given in other countries including Pakistan and Malaysia. In India, if a company was to sell its existing business in an urban area to move to an underdeveloped region it was given a tax credit. See "Taxation and Economic Development: Twelve Critical Studies", edited by J.F.J. Toye, 1<sup>st</sup> edition November 1978

- iii. Facilitate the development of essential physical infrastructure required by the private sector including water supply and management, power generation, roads and railways. Where feasible, the Afghan government should urge enterprises to become partners in the construction and reconstruction of Afghanistan's infrastructure. In addition, the Afghan government should ensure the delivery of essential health and education services as well as vocational training for Afghanistan's youth.

## Obstacles

**Physical and commercial infrastructure:** The absence of essential infrastructure hinders significantly the development of enterprises, discouraging young entrepreneurs from investing in a new business. It is imperative that an economic infrastructure, along with the delivery of essential services, is available. Furthermore, the Industrial Parks Authority had initiated the development of business facilities in safer parts of the country, additional sites across Afghanistan's impoverished communities is necessary for the creation and expansion of SMEs.

**Economic climate:** Afghan entrepreneurs must have a greater stake in their country's economic development. The Afghan government should enact economic governance reforms, including legislation governing the market, which facilitate the development of local businesses and larger-scale investments by Afghan entrepreneurs. Setting a favourable economic climate and counterbalancing potential risk factors for new investment is central for the development of the private sector, particularly in unstable environments.

**Insecurity thwarts public confidence:** A surge in violence now extending beyond Afghanistan's southern provinces alongside extreme levels of poverty has undermined public support towards the Afghan government. How can the Afghan government regain public trust and provide a real, sustained income and a secure environment to its people?



Sangin bazaar district in ruins

### 3. Investment in Community Funds and preparing Afghanistan's Future Leaders

Recommendation	Proposal	Obstacles
<b>Establish Afghan Family / Community Funds; prepare young generation to take leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reward positive actions in Afghan communities by investing in education, infrastructure and healthcare</li> <li>- Leadership training for young Afghans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insecurity</li> <li>- Public distrust and discord</li> </ul>

#### Proposal

##### *Background*

The Afghan Government, with the support of the international community, must lay the foundations of a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Bringing about the conditions for social and economic development requires the creation of necessary infrastructure and communications, improving healthcare services and education, and promoting activities in which Afghans will be directly involved.

It is imperative that the people of Afghanistan have a greater stake in their future; local capacities should be built and Afghan ownership strengthened. A basis for future economic growth is being created as schools (re)open and proper vocational training is provided.

Improving literacy and education as well as providing economic choice through licit sources of revenue are essential to Afghanistan becoming a robust state, capable of democratic self-governance. It is essential that Afghan communities become partners in the reconstruction process. Notably, Afghan ownership of the development efforts is a politic way forward as it contributes to building public confidence and trust in President Karzai and the central government.

Securing Afghanistan's future and helping the conflict-ridden state to flourish also requires a young generation of well-educated, peace-driven Afghans to assume leadership from current stakeholders, who are the victims of (and sometimes key protagonists in) decades of conflict, civil strife and tribal tension. It is essential that President Karzai does not allow the conflict to impact on the future of Afghanistan's youth.



**Recommendations**

The recommendation follows on the experiences of Brazil's *Bolsa Familia* project, whereby positive actions from the people and communities are rewarded with mutual investment on the part of the government.

**Brazil's *Bolsa Familia***

Faced with economic deprivation and in order to prevent poverty transmitting to the next generation, the Brazilian Government initiated the *Bolsa Familia* family fund, whereby it awards positive actions from the public (such as families sending their children to school) with mutual investment.

The Brazilian project is one of the biggest of its kind, targeting around 45 million people. *Bolsa Familia's* success is evidenced in evaluations which have shown increases in consumption rates, school attendance, immunization and a fall in child labour.

Afghanistan's realities would essentially dictate the specifications of a similar project seeking to coordinate aid programmes. Undoubtedly, an Afghan *Family/Community Fund* would have to invest heavily in the supply-side to cope with increased service utilization and infrastructure, such as hospitals and schools; training of teachers and doctors; and stimulating local food and produce markets.

Central to the project is the investment in locally supported delivery systems. The international community also has an important role to play in building local capacities by providing financial and logistical support necessary for the Afghan Government to formulate and implement an Afghan *Family/Community Fund* project.

Central to the reconstruction process and the efforts to build a secure future for the people of Afghanistan is to also empower the young generation to take the leadership. By investing in local communities, President Karzai with the support of his international partners will strengthen Afghan ownership and help secure the future of his country.

President Karzai is urged to initiate and invest in *Afghan Family/Community Funds* seeking to build local capacities:

- i. The central government should reward Afghan families and communities for their positive actions, such as encourage children to attend school in contrast to child labour. Rewards would be in the form of mutual investment on the part of the Afghan Government, mainly focusing on the supply-side and investing in essential social services and infrastructure.
- ii. Efforts should be concerted in those communities where the Karzai Government has a relatively weak presence and public disillusionment over economic hardships and social inequalities is on the rise.

- iii. Organise vocational and leadership training for the young unemployed and conflict-ravaged Afghans across the country. Emphasis should be put on providing training in the southern part of Afghanistan where a young generation of competent, nonviolent Afghans must take the leadership.



**Young boys looking for work**

## Chapter III

### Presidential Elections 2009



The scene overlooking a local commander's workplace in Kandahar captures the violence that has blighted the Afghan state for thirty years



## Overview

2008 marks President Hamid Karzai's final full calendar year in office, and as such is a crucial one for Afghanistan's future development. Five years after the landmark presidential election of 2004, the Afghan electorate will once again be called upon to elect its head of state. However, next time around, they will have five years of presidential performance to guide their decision-making process. The efficacy of Karzai's strategy will be under scrutiny like never before, and although he may not need to face the Afghan electorate again until Spring 2009, his achievements in 2008 will set the country's future course.

In December 2004, Hamid Karzai became Afghanistan's first democratically-elected president, securing 55.4 per cent of valid votes in a widely contested ballot. Today's reality is that Karzai can expect to face at least two serious contenders in 2009; challengers that will try to demonstrate his inability to introduce sustainable development and security in Afghanistan.

Whilst this scenario of a perfectly-functioning electoral process could easily apply to an entrenched Western democracy, a number of crucial caveats apply in the Afghan electoral context. For instance, an individual's vote will not be cast following close scrutiny of presidential performance and campaigning style.

Only a tiny percentage of the electorate will have any concept of Karzai's record, as such has been the failure of reconstruction in Afghanistan that a significant proportion are forced to concentrate upon their day-to-day existence. The well worn axiom 'all politics is local' could have been said about Afghanistan, and in this regard, the incumbent's prospects for re-election look uncertain.

***"Whoever the Americans decide."***

Male Afghan, Kandahar  
Answering the question 'Who will be the next president of Afghanistan?'  
20 January 2008

Also, the very act of casting a vote is fraught with danger in many areas, and may actually be impossible in some southern and eastern districts. The Taliban have pledged to bring widespread disruption to the elections, and given the extent of the movement's geographic spread, this could spell disaster for the entire process. The scenes of disciplined queues of Afghans waiting patiently to vote in October 2004 will be difficult to replicate in 2009.

The future course of efforts to rebuild Afghanistan hangs finely in the balance; in 2008, President Karzai must start to establish a stronger link between the centre and periphery, demonstrate success in the battle with poverty and the opium economy, and stand firm in the face of a mounting insurgency. Alongside the international community, he has a year to demonstrate to the people of Afghanistan that he can deliver.

### ***Electorate's perceptions***

The majority of people questioned by The Senlis Council in January 2008 were likely to select a candidate according to their ability to bring security and development to the south; ethnicity was low on interviewees' priority lists. A significant proportion was also keen to see the government enter into negotiations with moderate elements of the Taliban, believing that this would be the only way to bring peace to the Afghan state.

***"The government should provide people with jobs, schools, clinics and also build bridges, because Musa Qala district is a mountainous area. If they do this they will gain 100 per cent of the people's support."***

Male Afghan, Musa Qala  
18 January 2008



**Appalling living conditions undermine people's confidence in the Afghan government**

## Countdown to 2009 – Context

### 1. The Afghan Constitution: Provisions on Presidency<sup>20</sup>

The President is the head of state of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and conducts his authorities in executive, legislative, and judiciary branches in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. According to Article 63, the President-elect must:

- obey and safeguard the provisions of the sacred religion of Islam;
- observe and supervise the implementation of the Constitution and other laws;
- safeguard the independence, national sovereignty, the territorial integrity of Afghanistan and the fundamental rights and interests of the people of Afghanistan;
- make great and sincere efforts for the happiness and progress of the people of Afghanistan.

The President is elected by direct vote to serve a five-year term. Presidential elections shall be held under the supervision of the Independent Commission.

#### Direct Election

According to Article 61 –

- (1) The President is elected by receiving more than 50 per cent of the votes cast through free, general, secret, and direct voting.
- (2) The presidential term is expired at the first of Jawza of the fifth years after the elections.
- (3) Elections for the new president are held within thirty, to sixty days before the end of the presidential term.
- (4) If none of the candidates succeeds to receive more than 50 per cent of the votes in the first round, a run-off election shall be held within two weeks.

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<sup>20</sup> Please note that only the most relevant Articles and points of Articles are listed in this report. The Afghan Constitution is available online at:  
[http://www.jemb.org/eng/Legal%20Framework/Legislation%20of%20Reference/Constitution/Constitution%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.jemb.org/eng/Legal%20Framework/Legislation%20of%20Reference/Constitution/Constitution%20(English).pdf)

## Qualifications

Presidential candidates are explicitly required to fulfil a series of age and citizenship requirements. Notably, the Constitution does not impose gender restrictions; hence both male and female Afghan citizens over forty years are eligible to stand for President.

According to Article 62 –

(1) Presidential candidates should possess the following qualification:

- Should be citizen of Afghanistan, Muslim and born of Afghan parents, and should not have citizenship of another country.
- On the day of becoming a candidate, his age should not be less than forty years.
- Should not have been convicted of crimes against humanity, criminal act, or deprivation of the civil rights by a court.

(2) No one can be elected as president for more than two terms.

## 2. Electoral Calendar

According to Article 61 of the Afghan Constitution, "The presidential term is expired at the first *Jawza* of the fifth year after the last elections. Elections for the new president are held within thirty to sixty days before the end of the presidential term." The first of *Jawza* falls on 21 May 2009, which means that President Karzai will have to call elections by 21 April 2009 at the latest.

According to the 2005 Electoral Law, the Independent Electoral Commission shall announce the election date at least 140 days in advance.<sup>21</sup>

Additionally to the Presidential elections scheduled for spring 2009, the Constitution calls for Provincial Council elections in the fall of 2009 and National Assembly elections in the spring of 2010. Accordingly, Afghanistan is expected to have nationwide elections almost every year. Given Afghanistan's lack of adequate legal and electoral capacity, it has been suggested that Presidential elections should coincide with the Provincial Council elections.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> 2005 Electoral Law of Afghanistan is available online at <http://www.jemb.org/eng/Legal%20Framework/Basic%20Legislation/Electoral%20law/English%20Decre.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Please see United Nations Development Programme Afghanistan, Quarterly Project Report "Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow", Quarter 2 and 3, 2007



### 3. Presidential Election Results, 2004

In the historic presidential elections held in October 2004, more than eight million Afghans cast their ballot for the country's first democratically-elected President. In a straightforward election seventeen rivals failed to provide any real competition for Interim President Hamid Karzai.

#### Presidential Election Results as of 3 November 2004

*100 per cent of ballots counted*

Candidate	Political Party	Votes	Percentage of Valid Votes
Hamid Karzai	Independent	4,443,029	55.4%
Yunus Qanuni	Hezb-e-Nuhzhat-e-Mili	1,306,503	16.3%
Haji Mohammad Mohaqiq	Independent	935,325	11.7%
Abdul Rashid Dostum	Independent	804,861	10.0%
Abdul Latif Pedram	Hezb-e-Congra-e-Mili	110,160	1.4%
Massooda Jalal	Independent	91,415	1.1%
Syed Ishaq Gilani	Nuhzat-e-Hambastagee Mili	80,081	1.0%
Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai	Independent	60,199	0.8%
Abdul Satar Serat	Independent	30,201	0.4%
Hamayon Shah Asifi	Independent	26,224	0.3%
Ghulam Farooq Nijrabi	Hezb-e-Istiqlal-e-Afghanistan	24,232	0.3%
Syed Abdul Hadi Dabir	Independent	24,057	0.3%
Abdul Hafiz Mansoor	Independent	19,728	0.2%
Abdul Hadi Khalilzai	Independent	18,082	0.2%
Mir Mohammad Mahfouz Nedae	Independent	16,054	0.2%
Mohammad Ebrahim Rashid	Independent	14,242	0.2%
Wakil Mangal	Independent	11,770	0.1%
Abdul Haseb Aryan	Independent	8,373	0.1%
<b>Valid Votes</b>		<b>8,024,536</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>Invalid Votes</i> **		104,404	
<i>Total Votes</i>		<b>8,128,940</b>	

\*\* Invalid ballots account for 1.3 per cent of total votes

## Countdown to 2009 – Actors

### 1. Major Political Parties

#### National United Front of Afghanistan (UNF)

In March 2007, in a significant political development, several influential figures of the last thirty years in Afghanistan decided to form a new coalition called the National United Front of Afghanistan (Jabhe-ye-Motahed-e-Milli: UNF).

#### Members and Objectives

The Party is comprised of the following key members:

- Former Commerce Minister, Sayed Mustafa Kazimi
- Former President, Burhanuddin Rabbani
- Speaker of the Lower House, Yunus Qanuni
- Minister for Energy and Water, Ismail Khan
- Communist-era Minister, (Sayed) Mohammad Gulabzoy
- Military aide to President Hamid Karzai, Abdul Rashid Dostum

Former communist-party leader turned Parliamentarian Noor-ul-Haq Ulumi was added to the list in a recent announcement and so were First Vice President Zia Masood, former Afghan Defense Minister Marshal Mohammad Qasim Fahim and Mustafa Zahir, the grandson of Afghanistan's former king Zahir Shah.

From President Karzai's perspective, perhaps the most troubling inclusion within this alliance is that of Mustafa Zahir. Karzai has gone to great lengths to ensure cordial relations with the royal legacy, mindful of its enduring domestic and international popularity. The inclusion of high profile figures in this coalition signals significant opposition towards the Karzai administration.

The key stated aim of the new coalition is to bring changes to the Constitution in order to diminish presidential powers and enhance the role of Parliament, thereby allowing the UNF more means to preserve its local interests. Other objectives include:

- Direct election of provincial governors
- Afghan governmental oversight of the actions of foreign forces in the country
- Enabling the possibility of negotiations with the Taliban as a last resort;
- Recognition of the Durand Line.

## Political Dynamics

Despite the influential figures it has brought together, there are serious doubts over the disparate UNF's ability to work together and over how long such an eclectic group will remain united. The military weight of the UNF is of particular interest as the sum of all the different militias represents a 40,000 strong force which can easily complicate the already fragile security situation. The group includes all of Afghanistan's warring ethnic groups of the past two decades and it is believed that many of its members are only in it to gain political leverage over President Karzai. It is very hard to see how this odd grouping of political actors can bring any improvements to the Afghan political landscape. The effectiveness of President Karzai's response to its formation will be a crucial indicator of the confidence that he has of overcoming powerful domestic opponents.

## National Democratic Front (NDF)

### Members

Based on the former National Front for Democracy, the NDF is composed of some 13 parties, some of which are of secular inclination. As of mid-2005 these were:

- Afghanistan Work and Development Party
- Afghanistan Liberal Party
- Afghanistan People's Welfare Party
- Afghanistan People's Prosperity Party
- Afghanistan Understanding and Democracy Party
- National Unity of Afghanistan Party
- Freedom and Democracy Movement
- Afghanistan People's Ideal Party
- Afghanistan National Progress Party
- Afghanistan Ethnic Groups' Solidarity Party
- Afghanistan Republican Party
- Young Afghanistan Islamic Party
- Afghanistan People's Liberation Party

### International and Local Support

The National Democratic Front has received Western backing, most particularly US support. However, it is argued that the Front is unlikely to find much support in rural areas and other sectarian strongholds.

## **Payman-e Kabul (Kabul Accord)**

### **Establishment and Objectives**

In 2002, the Revolutionary Organisation of the Toilers of Afghanistan and five other former leftist and Maoist groups forged an alliance called Payman-e Kabul (Kabul Accord). The members of the alliance envision the creation of a modern political party with a social democrat ideology.

### **Current composition**

Nowadays the Payman-e Kabul represents a grouping of leftist liberal parties. There is no visible dominant leader and the constituent parties are wary of each other's power base and appeal to urban youth.

## **Afghan Mellat (Afghan Social Democratic Party)**

### **Establishment and Objectives**

The Afghan Social Democratic Party or Afghan Mellat (Afghan Nation) is an officially registered social democratic party created in the sixties by Ghulam Mohammad Farhad, a German educated ethnic Pashtun who defended the superior rights of the Pashtun people over a 'Greater Afghanistan' (which includes the Pashtun regions of Pakistan) and advocated the '*Pashtunisation*' of the country. It is regularly branded as an ultranationalist or crypto-fascist group.

### **Current composition**

Since its creation the party has been through many internal splits and struggles over its ideological principles, but after Anwar al-Haq Ahadi assumed the leadership in 1995, the party abandoned most of its most hardline rhetoric and has presented a relatively united front. Despite attempts to reach out to other groups, the Mellat Party still maintains that the Pashtuns deserve special rights.

Since the fall of the Taliban the party has supported president Karzai, even endorsing his 2004 candidacy and in turn the president has rewarded Ahadi with the Ministry of Finance. It also has a reduced presence in the Lower House of Parliament.

## 2. Key figures and potential presidential candidates

### Overview

In contrast to the 2004 presidential elections in which Hamid Karzai dominated the poll, there is growing speculation that he will face fierce opposition in 2009. Potential presidential challengers are starting to jostle for position (usually through rhetorical attacks upon the president), and an array of political actors can be expected to raise their profile as President Karzai's first term draws to a close.

*NOTE: The list below was created through a series of interviews with ordinary Afghans, and the comments are broadly reflective of the sentiments expressed by those interviewed. Age and citizenship can provide stumbling blocks to candidacy, so some of those listed below may be prohibited from standing.*

Political actor	Current position	Strength/Comments
<b>Tajik</b>		
<b>Dr. Abdullah Abdullah</b> <i>(NOTE: half Tajik, half Pashtun)</i>	MP; former Minister of Foreign Affairs; Massoud Foundation Director	A viable candidate - if he does not run his backing of a candidate will be important both inside Afghanistan and internationally.
<b>Ahmad Zia Massoud</b>	Vice President	Strong symbolic value as Ahmad Shah Massoud's brother, but little interest in the presidency.
<b>Burhanuddin Rabbani</b>	MP; Former president; leader of UNF	Poorly supported, considered part of Afghanistan's history not its future.
<b>Ismail Khan</b>	Energy Minister (a post that he initially turned down)	An ever-present threat given strong, loyal militia in Herat: will control votes in that region.
<b>Malalai Joya (F)</b> <i>(NOTE: Cannot stand for presidency as is too young)</i>	MP from Farah	Controversial candidate in Kabul itself, but interestingly her name was mentioned repeatedly by young Afghan men in the South, well known internationally.
<b>Mohammed Fahim</b>	Military commander	Strong support in military but little desire to pursue an outright career in politics
<b>Yunus Qanuni</b>	Speaker of the Lower House; former Minister of the Interior and Minister of Education	Very strong candidate and like to run again, one of the few figures with the potential to unite Uzbeks, Hazara and Tajiks.

<b>Uzbek</b>		
<b>Abdul Rashid Dostum</b>	Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief	Very low national support –not supported by Tajiks, but retains stronghold in Mazar-i-Sharif and will direct many votes from the South to candidate he supports
<b>Hazara</b>		
<b>Haji Mohammed Mohaqiq</b>	MP; Hazara leader	Strong support from Hazara and former mujahideen, and performed well in 2004 election. His endorsement will be important.
<b>Karim Khalili</b>	Vice President	Close to Karzai and will apparently will not run against him
<b>Pashtun</b>		
<b>Ali Ahmad Jalali</b>	Former Minister of the Interior; now lecturing in US	Well-regarded in the international community and nationally, being urged to return; strong support from US government. Would be a strong candidate.
<b>Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi</b>	Minister of Finance; Head of Mellat Party	Strong support in Kabul elites, believed to be a supporter of Karzai's re-election.
<b>Dr. Ashraf Ghani</b>	Former Finance Minister; now head of Kabul University, head of Economic Commission	Well regarded by average Afghans and international community, but suffers from poor health
<b>Ehsanullah Bayat</b>	Founder, Bayat Foundation	Business and philanthropic activities have made him popular at local levels.
<b>Fatima Gailani (F)</b>	Head of Afghan Red Crescent Society	Well respected nationally and internationally, from a distinguished Afghan family. (Married to Anwar Ahadi, Minister of Finance)
<b>Gul Agha Sherzai</b>	Governor of Nangarhar	Very strong popular support, especially in the south, but unlikely to appeal outside of the south.
<b>Hazrat Ali</b> (NOTE: he is Pashai rather than Pashtun)	MP from Nangarhar	Minimal support base outside of areas of Nangarhar.
<b>Kabir Ranjbar</b>	MP; Head of Afghan Lawyers Association	Western-looking technocrat, minimal support base

<b>Masoula Jalal (F)</b>	MP; former Minister of Women's Affairs	Support amongst educated women
<b>Mohammad Atmar</b>	Minister of Education	From a powerful political family, his voice is an important one Believed to be a strong supporter of Karzai
<b>Prince Mustapha Zahir</b>	Member of UNF	Could launch a strong campaign if selected as figurehead of UNF, playing on residue of nostalgia for monarchy.
<b>Sayed Mohammed Gulabzoy</b>	MP	Has local support, can influence some voters.
<b>Sigbatullah Mojadeddi</b>	Former president; leader of Parliament's Upper House	Vastly experienced, his backing carries enormous weight. Currently supporter of Karzai
<b>Zalmai Khalilzad</b>	US Ambassador to the UN	Often mentioned as a candidate/ US choice but no recognition at grassroots level; not well known outside Kabul elite

*"It does not matter if our next president is a Pashtun, Tajik or Hazara, just someone who will care for his country and his people."*

Mehdi

*"I do not care about the ethnicity of our next president, but I want someone who will bring security and peace to the country."*

Mohammed

*"All that matters is that our president is a Muslim, ethnicity does not matter."*

Attah

*"Ethnicity does not matter to me as long as he is someone who cares for his people."*

Aimal

*"It does not matter for me which language my president is speaking"*

Rostam

## I. Tajik

### **Abdullah Abdullah**

Despite having a Pashtun mother, Dr Abdullah is a Tajik veteran of the Northern Alliance. His medical career was halted in the run up to the Soviet war when he joined the Panjshir Resistance Front. His position as a trusted advisor to Ahmed Shah Massoud lasted through the second half of the jihad and subsequent governments of the 1990s.

He acted as the Foreign Minister for the Afghan United Front from 1998. Upon Massoud's death in September 2001, Abdullah went on to run the United Islamic Front alongside Mohammed Fahim and Yunus Qanuni. He served as President Karzai's first Foreign Affairs Minister, and is considered by many Afghans as an honourable man dedicated to the country's future.

While many former Northern Alliance members lost their ministerial positions in 2004, Dr. Abdullah remained in government until 2006. If he does not run his own presidential campaign, his support will be highly sought-after.

### **Ahmad Zia Massoud**

As the brother of prominent mujahideen leader Ahmad Shah Massoud, Zia Massoud has an important symbolism in Afghan culture. He interrupted his studies in Kabul to join the fight against the Soviets in the 1970s, spending his two years of active service in the Panjshir Valley. At the will of his brother, he also represented the Jamiat-e-Islami party in Peshawar. This was an important appointment as it was where the main parties of the mujahideen held their meetings.

He also used this time to travel abroad, forging important diplomatic links, while advocating the cause of the mujahideen. This relationship-building would prove invaluable later, as some of these figures were to become influential in national politics. When Rabbani came to power, he appointed his son-in-law Massoud as special representative and advisor. This post was cut short by the arrival of the Taliban, a development that prompted him to join the resistance once more.

The beginning of Karzai's presidency in 2001 saw Massoud's reinstatement in diplomatic circles, this time as Ambassador to the Russian Federation. Armenia was added to his responsibilities in 2004, followed swiftly by Georgia, Moldova and Belarus.

Massoud has been Karzai's Vice President since 2005. He is held in regard as Massoud's brother but is considered much more low key than his famous late brother and does not have a significant political following of his own.



## **Burhanuddin Rabbani**

Born 1940 in Badakhshan, Rabbani studied theology at Kabul and Cairo, where his main Islamist influences were the radical Egyptian Sayyid Qutb and Pakistani Abul Ala Maududi. As a Kabul University professor he was influential in organising the clandestine Jamiat-i-Islami (Islamic Society), leading the party's inner council from 1972. Following Daoud's coup and suppression of the Islamist underground, he left for Pakistan in 1974. He ran the Jamiat party from Peshawar while the Soviets occupied Afghanistan during the 1980s.

With President Najibullah's downfall in 1992, he took up the presidency in Kabul, but was largely a symbolic leader. Among various factions unhappy with his leadership was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. In 1996, before the Taliban captured Kabul, he left for Taloqan in the northeast. The UN recognised him as the legitimate president throughout the entirety of the Taliban's rule, despite his lack of control over the country.

As the Taliban were removed from Kabul, he returned to the capital and took up the presidency once more. There was dissatisfaction among several ethnic groups regarding Rabbani's apparent reluctance to enter into negotiations with the UN concerning the formation of a broad-based government.

Succumbing to pressure from his party, he stepped down from the presidency, and his significance was reduced further with the establishment of the UF-dominated Interim Government in December 2001.

An opportunity to represent conservative religious views reappeared in September 2005 when he was voted into parliament. The newly formed 'National United Front' emerged in April 2007, with Rabbani at the helm.

It is of note that his daughter is married to Ahmed Shah Massoud's brother.

## **Mohammed Fahim**

A student in Islamic law, Mohammed Fahim directed the Afghan intelligence service during the war against the Soviets. He joined forces with Ahmad Shah Massoud during the 1970s - the significance of which became apparent decades later - as he fought with the mujahedeen under him and led his forces into Kabul following Soviet withdrawal.

He stayed in the city after 1989, defending it against both Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and the Taliban. Although forced out as Taliban took control, he kept a close alliance to Massoud from his home amongst the northeastern Tajiks.

With the Taliban out of Kabul by the end of 2001, Fahim took up a post in the Interim Government. Over the next couple of years as Defence Minister, he spared no time in

fostering important international relationships by visiting Russia, France, India, and the UK.

Fahim has refused to dissolve completely his private militia; this may be partially understood when taken in the context of omnipresent ethnic tensions in Afghanistan, and the murder of his most senior security staffer by a suicide bomber. Despite this, he has ceded part of his arsenal to the Afghan National Army.

It appears that Fahim is in favour of a national government for his country. He has shown much public support for Yunus Qanuni, but this attempt to keep Tajiks in power is not purely self-interested; as Defence Minister he replaced many Tajik army generals with representatives from the Uzbeks, Hazaras and Pashtuns.

A constitutional technicality prevented him from being nominated by Karzai for election to the role of vice president in 2004. However, he has held the rank of marshal since 2004, and will enjoy the accompanying privileges for life. This loyalty from Karzai has continued, returning Fahim to a central role of advisor in the face of a strengthening insurgency.

### **Yunus Qanuni**

In recent years Yunus Qanuni has been seen as a spokesperson for the Tajik contingent in the Afghan government; this position was hard earned. Another Northern Alliance veteran and close advisor of Massoud, Qanuni became Interior Minister under the Soviet-backed President Rabbani.

He was a strong presence at UN talks in Bonn in 2001 that led to the establishment of the first post-Taliban government. Returning as Interior Minister once more, he was soon removed to post of Minister for Education, a reappointment that did not sit well with this important figure. To the dismay of his Tajik followers, the 2004 election left presidential candidate Qanuni with no further place in the government, but since then he has been far from inactive.

He established the Afghan National Party, has been Speaker of the Lower House since the end of 2005, and seems determined to hold a position of influence once more. This ambition is shared with other members of the National United Front, which he joined in mid-2007. He is certain to figure in the upcoming presidential elections.

### **Ismail Khan**

Ismail Khan came to prominence in 1978, leading a brutal uprising against Soviet political advisors in Herat. He went on to become a key figure during the 1980s, forming close ties to Rabbani and Massoud.

His alliance to the anti-Soviet movement awarded him the position of Governor of Herat in 1992 under Rabbani's government. He played a positive role in Herat's social development. His work in developing small business, the building of schools, and increasing external trade is reflected in his popularity amongst Heratis today. His work in commercial development has brought about good relationships with, inter alia, Iran and Turkmenistan.

Although Khan ran Herat successfully again after the Taliban, he ran it in isolation, making leaders nervous in Kabul. Attempts by the Afghan National Army to assert control on the region led to clashes in 2004. Riots followed his dismissal from the post in September 2004, before he was appointed as Karzai's Energy Minister. His time in office has seen significant positive changes in Afghanistan's energy sector. He is well respected but considered from a past generation of leaders. He is a member of the National United Front.

### **Malalai Joya**

Malalai Joya is arguably the most controversial woman in Afghanistan, and certainly one of the best known. She has used her seat in parliament to speak out against former warlords, whom she has blamed for 60,000 deaths and the destruction of the country.

A famous two minute speech in the Afghan parliament outlining these claims was not well-received, provoking a stunned silence followed by chaotic scenes of verbal abuse and attempted physical assault.

It is this sort of toughness that has framed her young political career. The daughter of a mujahideen fighter, she spent most of her childhood in Iran and Pakistan, after her family fled the Soviet war. She decided to return in the middle of the Taliban reign. Conditions of poverty and oppression evidently had a strong impact, as when speaking publicly since she refers often to 'barefoot Afghans' and fights fervently for women's rights. To this end she is the director of NGO Organisation of Promoting Afghan Women's Capabilities (OPAWC).

She is currently under a three year suspension from the parliament, and is a frequent traveller speaking for the cause of her country all over the world. She has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, a European Parliament Freedom of Thought prize, and was one of 250 Young Global Leaders for 2007 selected by the World Economic Forum.

She has a following amongst young Afghans and will be a lively commentator on the presidential elections.

## Prince Mustapha Zahir

Born in Kabul 1964, the Prince was educated in Rome, Vienna, London and Ontario. He is the co-founder of AMRO (Afghan Medical Relief Organisation), served as diplomatic assistant to his grandfather King Muhammed Zahir Shah from 1991 to 2000, special assistant and Chief of Staff between 2000 and 2002, Ambassador to Italy from 2002 to 2005, and Director-General of NEPA (National Environmental Protection Agency) since 2005. He is a member of the International Committee for the Afghan World Foundation.

In 2001, the US and UK realised that the return of the King would be a good option for a post-Taliban Afghanistan. The UN conducted a poll which showed overwhelming support for his homecoming. However, despite wanting to return to Afghanistan and bring democracy, the King was not easily convinced, and only ever went so far as to say that any return would bring him as an ordinary Afghan, not a monarch. The King died on 22 July 2007, aged 92.

The Prince has been known to criticise the Karzai administration, claiming there was less corruption under the Soviets, mujahedeen and Taliban combined. He has expressed concern regarding uncertainty of the destination of billions in foreign aid.

There remains a lingering monarchist sentiment in Afghanistan that is interested in promoting Prince Mustapha as a presidential candidate.

<i>"If Malalai Joya (female politician) was a candidate I would vote for her."</i>	<i>Ali</i>
<i>"I don't think we could have a woman president now because the security situation is very bad."</i>	<i>Abdul</i>
<i>"The Friday prayer cannot be offered if our President is a woman."</i>	<i>Sakhey</i>

## **II. Uzbek**

### **Abdul Rashid Dostum**

Dostum is a typical of a certain type commander in recent Afghan history in that his ability to shift allegiance appears to know no bounds. His record began at the end of the 1970s, when he enlisted with the Afghan Army, proceeding to fight with the Soviets against the mujahideen. He joined a local militia in the north, and his leadership skills were quick to emerge. By the end of the Cold War he was a significant figure on the Afghan battlefield. He was of high value to President Najibullah during his Soviet-backed presidency, until switching sides in 1992 to support the mujahideen with Massoud. Their bid for control of Kabul was successful, with the nature of Najibullah's enforced downfall causing much alarm amongst human rights groups.

Switching sides again, in 1994 Dostum joined forces with his former enemy Hekmatyar to force Massoud and new leader Rabbani out of power. Two years later, he reinstated his confidence in Rabbani, against the Taliban, who claimed Kabul. He formed the Northern Alliance with Ismail Khan and Mohammed Fahim before fleeing to Turkey to avoid capture by the Taliban.

There was also infighting within Dostum's own militia, the most prominent of which being the defection of Malik to the Taliban, a power transfer that Dostum could do little to prevent in absentia.

In 2001 he took advantage of weaknesses in the Taliban due to American bombardments, by taking control of Mazar-e-Sharif. Karzai made him Deputy Defence Minister of the Interim Administration. He was reappointed in 2003, as the presidential security and defence advisor, and reappointed again in 2005 as Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief of the Afghan National Army. This latest move occurred amid much controversy, as Dostum's human rights record is disputed. Despite encouraging the education of women, as well as the promotion of arts, literature, music and other cultural education, he is thought to have ruled Mazar with an iron fist.

He is a member of the National United Front.

### **III. Hazara**

#### **Vice President Karim Khalili**

Karim Khalili has led the Iranian-backed Hizb-i-Wahdat party since 1995. A Shia Hazara, he is known for a willingness to negotiate and compromise with Sunni Muslims. (Although genuine, this more moderate approach does not necessarily pervade his fighters.) Wahdat has at various times controlled sections of Hazarajat and Bamiyan.

The Hazara were subjected to terrible persecution at the hands of the Taliban. Following their downfall, Khalili purported to be in favour of the Interim Cabinet, but his views were shared by very few of his men. Nevertheless, he was made Deputy President in the Afghan Islamic Transitional Government, which is recognised, at least in name, by Wahdat.

Despite reports of his apparently keeping a fairly sizeable militia, he currently works as the second vice-president to Hamid Karzai. Understanding the implication of any such relationship, he keeps Tehran at a distance, at least publicly.

He is a member of the National United Front.

#### **Haji Mohammed Mohaqiq**

One of only two prominent Hazara politicians, Mohaqiq's loyalty to Afghan national resistance had him fighting against both the Soviets and the Taliban. In early 2001, he joined forces with Mohammed Atta and Abdul Rashid Dostum against the Taliban, capturing Mazar-e-Sharif. This accomplishment constituted the height of Northern Alliance success. When the Taliban were defeated in 2001, he took up a post as Minister of Planning in the transitional government. Whether this post was terminated in 2004 by dismissal or resignation remains disputed, but he did run as a presidential candidate in the contemporaneous elections, being placed third.

He currently has a seat in parliament running his own party, Wahdat-e-Mardum, and is a member of Khalili's Wahdat.

## IV. Pashtun

***"I don't want a Tajik or Hazara president. I want a Pashtun like Hamid Karzai, someone who cares about his people and his country."***

Male Afghan, Kandahar province

Answering the question 'Does the ethnicity of the president matter to you?'

17 January 2008

### Ali Ahmad Jalali

A US citizen since 1987, Ali Ahmad Jalali was Afghanistan's Minister of the Interior from 2003 to 2005. He has a military background, having served as a colonel in the Afghan National Army. His military training is said to have been acquired internationally in the US and the UK.

He fought with the mujahideen during the Soviet war, but had left before its conclusion. He moved to the US to work as a broadcaster for Voice of America, a job he kept for nearly twenty years. He returned to Afghanistan in 2003 as a Minister in President Karzai's government. His responsibilities included the immigration service, the national identification and registration system and the Afghan National Police. Those two crucial years being crucial in Afghanistan's development, he oversaw nationwide security operations from the protection of the new parliament, as well as voters' registration and the elections in 2004 and 2005. Jalali also chaired the Executive Steering Committee of Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

It is claimed that he made progress in bringing the provinces within the ambit of Kabul's control. This required cleansing the system of local warlord leaders and incompetent government officials.

Having covered Afghanistan and Asia as a journalist, he has contributed to several publications in each of English, Pashtun and Dari. He is widely respected in Afghanistan and often implored to return as a presidential candidate.

### Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi

A highly qualified individual, Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi has had an academic career as a professor of political science at Providence University and Carleton College in the US. He has also worked in the commercial sector, with a two year stint as banking director of Continental Elona of Chicago from 1985 to 1987.

He became governor of Afghanistan's central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank, in 2002, and is currently Finance Minister in President Karzai's administration.

He has argued that efficient management of aid necessitates the allocation of stronger budgeting powers to the Afghan government. Among his priority issues is finding a solution to the illegal opium economy.

His stance on various issues reflects this theme of sovereignty; in mid 2007 he called for 'Afghanisation' of security, meaning better training and space to grow for the Afghan army.

He is the head of the Afghan Mellat, a Pashtun nationalist party.

### **Dr Ashraf Ghani**

Ashraf Ghani is an anomaly in that prior to the demise of the Taliban in 2001, he was absent from the country for 24 years.

His higher education is largely American, something that may well alienate him from rural Afghans whose experience of foreigners in the last twenty years has not been a positive one. However, Ghani's presence abroad was undoubtedly productive. He is highly qualified in state development, and his views are widely held to be sensible and realistic.

His report *Securing Afghanistan's Future (2005)* received critical acclaim from the high-profile delegates present at its release. It established a framework within which the budget of Afghanistan could be managed in order to maximise the country's strength.

He was the first post-Taliban finance minister, from 2002 until 2004. In 2002 he was appointed as a chief advisor to Karzai. His indispensability in modern Afghanistan is illustrated by his appointment in 2002 to the post of Special Advisor to the UN, assisting Lakhdar Brahimi in the preparation of the Bonn agreement, providing the constitutional basis for Afghanistan's fledgling democracy.

In 2004 he decided not to join the cabinet, instead taking the post of chancellor at Kabul University. His name was mentioned regarding two high profile leadership roles; the UN in 2006 and the World Bank in 2007. He is widely known for his strong personality and critical intelligence.

### **Ehsanullah Bayat**

Trained as an engineer in the US, Ehsanullah Bayat is now one of the richest men in Afghanistan. His fortune came when he started the first Afghan mobile phone company in 2001.

He is the Founder of the Bayat Foundation, which is the largest private donor organisation operating in the country.



As the chairman of Afghan Wireless, he recently handed out 400 handsets to media representatives, providing them with connection to Afghan Wireless.

He launched the Ariana television network in the summer of 2005, broadcast in many countries around the world including Afghanistan.

### **Fatima Gailani**

Fatima Gailani is known in Afghanistan as an outspoken character, with a firm optimism for the future of Afghan women.

She worked in London as a spokesperson for the mujahideen during the Soviet war of the 1980s. She was present at the 2001 Bonn conference as an observer, and in 2002 was a delegate at the Emergency Loya Jirga. In 2003, President Karzai appointed her as a constitution drafting and ratifying commissioner.

Educated in Afghanistan, Iran and London, she is currently the Secretary General of the Afghan Red Crescent Society. She is widely regarded as ethical and intelligent. Her husband is Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi.

### **Gul Agha Sherzai**

A Pashtun from Kandahar, Sherzai is one of the most prominent political and military figures in Afghanistan. He was governor of Kandahar during the turbulent period between 1992 and 1994 that saw the Taliban come to prominence in the region, before fleeing to Quetta in 1994.

In 2001 he was asked by the US to mobilise his forces to retake Kandahar from the Taliban. He took his men across the border and moved into Kandahar with help from American special forces and airstrikes. Hamid Karzai negotiated the Taliban's surrender of Kandahar, and included within Karzai's terms Sherzai as governor, assisted by Naqibullah who would oversee administrative affairs. The relationship between Sherzai's men and Naqibullah's supporters was not good. Naqibullah later stood down, quoting reasons of age.

Sherzai was replaced as governor of Kandahar by Yousef Pashtun in 2003, due to Karzai's ruling that officials could no longer hold both military and civil posts. However, after extensive lobbying, he resumed his post temporarily. He was made 'special advisor' to Karzai, and in 2004 was appointed governor of Nangarhar province.

He is extremely popular with local communities in Southern Afghanistan and often mentioned as a choice for president of Afghanistan.

### **Hazrat Ali**

Born in 1964, he is a member of the Pashai minority. His emergence as an important leader came during the Soviet occupation. He was an Afghan army commander under the Soviet puppet regime. During war against the Taliban he is said to have aligned with Ahmad Shah Massoud. Following the fall of the Taliban he set up the Eastern Shura (local provisional government) in the Jalalabad / Tora Bora area, where he was the 'Minister of Law and Order'. In 2001, the Pentagon is said to have asked the Shura for military help in finding Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda.

He was appointed as police chief for Jalalabad by Karzai. In the late 2005 Wolesi Jirga election he won a seat for Nangarhar. He has a following in Nangarhar province but remains a controversial figure in many areas.

### **Kabir Ranjbar**

Regarded as an expert in Afghan affairs, he is the currently head of the Afghan Lawyers association. He worked for a time as an advisor to President Najibullah before his downfall in 1992. This may have been the guiding influence for his political conviction that a responsible government truly distributes wealth of the country evenly amongst the disadvantaged.

He is well-versed in Afghan public law. He promotes the ideal that powerful roles in internal affairs, such as the chief prosecutor and the director of the central bank, should be chosen by the president, and ratified by the Wolesi Jirga (of which he is a member).

### **Mohammad Atmar**

Mohammed Atmar comes from a professional Afghan family. After completing his basic education, he travelled to the UK to undertake a Masters in International Relations and Public Policy, for which he was awarded a distinction. Over the last few years he has released many publications on humanitarian aid for Afghanistan.

He used his qualifications to work in NGO humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan and Pakistan, before being appointed as the Minister for Rural Rehabilitation and Development in the first post-Taliban government.

He was successful in this post, managing to extend its influence across all of the provinces, many of which had previously been ostracised. In 2006, parliament demonstrated huge levels of support for Atmar's appointment as Minister for Education.

He had the job of expanding opportunities for the Afghan youth, many of whom had been denied access to schools through either Taliban repression or the security hazards of recent conflict. He has worked smartly, impressing observers and voters.

Atmar also sits on the Presidential Oversight Committee, which aims to guide national strategy, and track the progress of the Afghanistan Compact (an agreement on Afghanistan's development, to replace the Bonn Agreement).

### **Sibghatullah Mojadeddi**

Born 1926 in Kabul, Professor Mojadeddi has been a well-regarded Islamic scholar and promoter of Afghan independence since the 1950s. He has a history of protest against the Soviets. He founded the Afghan National Liberation Front in 1979, and became a highly respected mujahideen leader. He became President of the AIG (an interim government) in 1989 during which time he met the contemporary American president George Bush senior. When the mujahideen captured Kabul in 1992 he became the first President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. He stepped down after two months in accordance with an agreement made within mujahideen factions. This arrangement provoked Hekmatyar to begin his offensive campaign on Kabul.

An important legacy left by his short presidency was the decision to declare a general state of amnesty for all citizens regardless of their political ties until the legal system of the country stabilised. Following departure from office he settled in Pakistan during the Taliban's reign.

He was one of the first world leaders to condemn Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, and sent mujahideen troops to Saudi Arabia to defend holy sites. He was popular amongst other Gulf states for his readiness to provide troops for their defence. He also strongly condemned the civilians lives lost in 9/11.

In December 2003 he was elected to chair Afghanistan's grand council (*Loya Jirga*), the body that approved the country's new constitution. He named the female Malalai Joya as one of his three deputies. There was controversy when he switched off her microphone during the 2003 Loya Jirga; his reasoning was that her choice of time to speak out against warlords was tactically inopportune, as the aim of the debate was to form an Afghan government.

In March 2005, Karzai appointed him to the post of chairman of the National Commission for Peace in Afghanistan, which works independently to encourage former Taliban to come forward and join the peace process. In December 2005 he was elected by the Afghan parliament as leader of the legislature's 102-seat upper house (the Meshrano Jirga) for a five year term.

In March 2006 he survived an assassination attempt. He is quoted as blaming the Pakistani intelligence service (ISI), an allegation denied by Pakistan. In 2006 he was also head of the Afghan Reconciliation Commission which, inter alia, is concerned with the release of innocent Afghan detainees from Bagram and Guantanamo Bay prisons.

### **Zalmay Khalilzad**

An Afghan-American, Khalilzad is one of the original members of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), Khalilzad's voice has held weight in American politics for over twenty years, and he recently replaced John Bolton as the permanent US Ambassador to the United Nations. During his career he has worked closely with George Bush (senior and junior), Zbigniew Brzezinski, Albert Wohlstetter, Paul Wolfowitz, Michael Armacost and Donald Rumsfeld.

In his position as advisor in the White House during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, he was a key influence in policy-making regarding US financial support for the mujahideen. This support was later criticised, as many factions of the mujahideen would go on to become Islamic extremists, such as Osama Bin Laden's Afghan Arabs. There is little dispute as to the provenance of their funding.

During the 1990s, Khalilzad worked for the RAND Corporation. He also consulted on a risk analysis for major oil company Unocal, who were planning a pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan, ending in Pakistan. The project proposal was not successful.

In his capacity as a member of PNAC, he signed the 1998 letter to Bill Clinton, concerning the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime. Some time spent in the Department of Defence from 2001 had Khalilzad working closely with Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. Later he was responsible for preparing policy for a post-Hussein Iraqi future. Having helped to overthrow the Taliban, President Bush appointed him as Special Presidential Envoy to Afghanistan.

He became US Ambassador to the country in 2003, playing a part in the running of the elections, and drafting of the new constitution. He is currently the US Ambassador to the UN. He is well known internationally and to Kabul elites but not known at the grassroots level outside of Kabul.

### **Mohseni Brothers**

Saad, Zaid and Jahid Mohseni are the sons of Yassin Mohseni, a diplomat posted to Tokyo under the Daoud regime of the 1970s. The family left for Australia in 1979.

After the US arrived in Kabul in 2001 and the Taliban's tight control was released, investment banker Saad saw the gap in the media market.

In 2003, he and his brother Zahid, who was a lawyer, flew to Kabul and set up a youth radio station called Arman FM. They have since opened a commercial television station called Tolo, which broadcasts in Dari and Pashtu. The radio and TV stations reach all of Afghanistan, as well as limited numbers in Iran, Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

The Mohseni brothers later started Afghan Scene, a monthly magazine for English-speaking expatriates in Kabul. Moby Media Group, with Saad Mohseni as director, can now boast two of the most-watched TV networks in Afghanistan, as well as an FM radio station, a video production house, an ad agency, a music label and a small magazine.

They are influential in Kabul and are considered talented communicators dedicated to the future of Afghanistan. Their voice will be an influential one during the presidential campaign.



## APPENDIX I

When Operation Enduring Freedom was launched on 7 October 2001, the US and the UK notified the United Nations Security Council that Operation Enduring Freedom was an exercise of individual and collective self-defence in compliance with the terms of United Nations Charter Article 51, which permits the use of force in self-defence against an armed attack.

In September 2001 the Security Council of the United Nations issued two resolutions setting out the methods by which member states could respond to terrorism, and reaffirming the right of member states to individual and collective self-defence. In October 2001 NATO also invoked Article Five of the Treaty of Washington, which states that any attack on a NATO nation launched from outside that nation shall be interpreted as an attack on all NATO nations.

### Post 9/11 UN Resolutions legitimising Operation Enduring Freedom

#### **UN Security Council Resolution 1368:**

In this Resolution, September 11 is regarded 'like any act of international terrorism'. Such acts are all considered to represent 'a threat to international peace and security'. The Resolution continues by saying that 'those responsible for aiding, supporting or harbouring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of these acts will be held accountable' (in this case the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in the last months of 2001).

#### **UN Security Council Resolution 1373:**

Resolution 1373 calls on States to take all necessary measures to fight terrorism in their own territory. This Resolution is placed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, which entails that any failure to meet these obligations will lead to coercive actions including the use of force.

Although it is widely accepted that the UN Security Council action following the 9/11 attacks supports anticipatory self-defence where an armed attack has occurred and convincing evidence exists that more attacks are planned, though not yet underway, it is argued that international law prohibits pre-emptive self-defence or even anticipatory self-defence, where these are different from responding to incipient attacks or ongoing campaigns.

The right to use force in self-defence is qualified in various ways. The most widely held criteria are that it must be necessary and proportionate. In 2001 the US and the UK argued that their action was necessary because Al Qaeda had the means and motivation to conduct further attacks (a validation that exists today). Proportionality is judged in terms of the need to repel those attacks against which an act of self-defence is directed. Consequently, there was an initial operational emphasis on military operations targeted against terrorist training camps and infrastructure which supported the Al Qaeda network, and on breaking the Taliban's capacity to control territory where Al Qaeda may find sanctuary.

However, the current legality of Operation Enduring Freedom is open to debate. The international coalition allies have argued that the 11 September 2001 attacks were part of a series of attacks on the US which began in 1993 and that more attacks were planned. In 2001, Afghanistan's ruling Taliban regime clearly supported and harboured the Al Qaeda movement

responsible for the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States. Hence, the US invoked the NATO Treaty's Article 5 self-defence clause as its basis for invading Afghanistan: Operation Enduring Freedom was designed to remove the Taliban regime and Al Qaeda from Afghanistan in order to preclude similar attacks in the future.

After September 11, as many legal experts thought that Article 51 of the UN Charter did not provide a sufficient legal basis to enable the US to invade Afghanistan, the Security Council adopted resolutions 1368 and 1373, which recognised the US 'right of self-defence'. Had the 9/11 terrorist acts been considered 'armed attacks', which is the terminology used in Article 51, no additional Security Council resolutions would have been required.

### Legal justifications for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan

#### **Article 51 of the 1945 United Nations Charter:**

"Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security."

#### **Article 5 of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty:**

"The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area."

Strictly speaking, according to Article 51, the right of self-defence can only be exercised should an armed attack occur against one of the members of the United Nations. Furthermore, the original concept of self-defence addresses armed attacks by a state against the sovereignty of another. September 11 could fall under Article 51 only if evidence was given that this terrorist attack (aggression by a 'private person' or 'entity') had been mandated by a state.

The international community generally accepted this interpretation of the facts. It believed the US' rightful claims that the Taliban regime held power in Afghanistan at the time of the attacks and that it voluntarily allowed terrorists to prepare their attacks from within its borders. Indeed, the general line of thought in such matters is that states are increasingly considered responsible for the activities of terrorists within their borders.

Article 51 further states that the right of self-defence is valid until the United Nations Security Council has taken appropriate measures to restore peace and security. In the case of Afghanistan, the deployment and expansion of the NATO-ISAF mission operating under a UN mandate could be regarded as such a measure.



In short, although self-defence was seen by many legal experts and policy makers as a solid legal basis for the US to put together a coalition to overthrow the Taliban, the question now should be whether this right to self-defence has not been extended beyond its original scope as envisaged in Article 51 and in light of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council.

NATO-ISAF was initially established as a peace-keeping mission focused on achieving stabilisation in a limited area around Kabul. Five years on, NATO-ISAF is now under NATO command, operating in all Afghan provinces except those located in the eastern part of the country. Assuming the control of the southern provinces in July 2006, NATO-ISAF is actively engaged in combat with the insurgents.

In December 2001, the UN Security Council endorsed the Bonn Agreement, which authorised the creation of NATO-ISAF to operate only in Kabul and its surroundings (including the Bagram Airbase).<sup>23</sup> NATO-ISAF was established to enable "the Afghan Interim Authority as well as the personnel of the United Nations to operate in a secure environment".<sup>24</sup>

In August 2003, NATO assumed command of ISAF. After the US withdrew its opposition to an expansion of NATO-ISAF,<sup>25</sup> the UN Security Council resolution 1510 enabled ISAF to evolve from a largely symbolic international presence in Kabul into a more active reconstruction and development force in northern and western Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The Bonn Agreement was signed on 5 December 2001 by representatives of several different Afghan anti-Taliban factions and political groups. It established a roadmap and timetable for establishing peace and security in Afghanistan, reconstructing the country, re-establishing some key institutions, and protecting human rights. The agreement contained provisions addressing military demobilisation and integration, international peace-keeping, and human rights monitoring.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386. However, before the Security Council resolution was passed the incoming Minister of Defence of Afghanistan, Mohammed Fahim, noted that the interim Afghan government insisted that the UN peacekeepers not be authorised to use force, disarm fighters or interfere in Afghan affairs. He called the NATO-ISAF mission "symbolic" and said Afghans should be responsible for security.

<sup>25</sup> When asked about expanding NATO-ISAF, US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld remarked "Another school of thought, which is where my brain is, is that why put all the time and money and effort in that? Why not put it into helping them develop a national army, so that they can look out for themselves over time?" (Quoted in "Rumsfeld Stakeout at the Hart Senate Building", United States Department of Defense News Transcript, 5 February 2002). The Bush Administration did not relent on their opposition to a broader role for NATO-ISAF until mid-2003.

<sup>26</sup> Maloney, S., 'Afghanistan, Four Years On: An Assessment', in *Parameters: US Army War College*, Autumn 2005.

## APPENDIX II

*In January 2008, Senlis Afghanistan travelled to the southern Afghan provinces of Helmand and Kandahar to conduct on-the-ground research. As part of its field research, Senlis Afghanistan members of staff carried out a series of interviews across the provinces. Below is a selection of the interviews conducted.*

### Interview 1: Male Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah (former resident of Sangin district)

**Q:** Why did you come to Lashkar Gah?

**A:** We came here from Sangin because of the bombings and the fighting between the Taliban and government forces; we couldn't coexist with any side there. We came here to keep ourselves safe. We travelled in vehicles but could not bring all of our belongings. We have been here for almost ten months, living in the old shops of Kart-e-Lagaan. I can't find a job but our boys work as day labourers.

**Q:** Have the international community and the government of Afghanistan helped you at all?

**A:** We haven't received any food aid or other help from anyone. Our people are really struggling especially now because of the cold. We have no shelter, we live in the shops.

**Q:** Can you tell us when and how the fight started in Sangin?

**A:** The fight started after Amir Dad Mohammad Khan's brother was killed. The situation worsened with more than fifty supporters of Amir Dad Mohammad killed in one day. The district office was seized forcing the District Governor to leave. Soon after there was general fighting and bombings.

**Q:** Why do the Taliban fight the government?

**A:** I don't know why the Taliban fight the government but one thing I know is that the non Muslims and the "British" (NATO troops) came to our country so the Taliban are obliged to fight against them (Jihad). Peace is the best solution. There has been fighting in Afghanistan for 30 years and too many people have died. The warring parties should settle matters with each other, we are all brothers, we are all from the same country. Afghanistan must be rebuilt, the schools restored, the Army reorganized, the law applied and justice served.

**Q:** What arguments do the Taliban use to gain public support?

**A:** The Taliban tell the people that the non Muslims came to our country and that they shouldn't work with or help the non Muslims, but instead help Islam.

**Q:** Have you lost any member of your family during the fighting?

**A:** The Taliban killed two members of my family. When a person was found guilty of a crime, the Taliban killed him.

**Q:** Were you alerted by the government before the attack in Sangin?

**A:** Yes, the government did tell the people "don't come to the bazaar because there will be fighting and we don't want the civilians to die".

**Q:** What should the government do to win people's support?

**A:** The government should talk with the Mullah, with the Taliban, me and you. We want from the government to talk with everyone and find a solution. The innocent, poor and devastated people of Afghanistan must be heard.

- Q:** What do you want the international community and the Afghan government to do for you?
- A:** Whatever I want for myself I also want it for the people of Afghanistan. We have suffered a lot. Whatever help is provided by the UN or aid organisations should reach the poor and starving people. The Afghans who live with us in the shops are extremely poor; when it gets dark we ask each other for food and wood but everyone is deprived. Our biggest problem is that our leaders and the rich people do not offer help to the poor. Whenever there is fighting it is the poor people who get killed.
- Q:** Where do you take your children if they get sick?
- A:** If our children get sick, there is nothing we can do but to wait for them to get better. If we take them to the hospital, the hospital prescribes medicines to buy from the bazaar but we cannot afford them.
- Q:** In Sangin under the Taliban, were there schools and clinics? Were there a judiciary system and a police force in place?
- A:** There were no schools but there were Madrassas. The Taliban did not offer any healthcare but we were free to go to other clinics. Yes, there was local police stationed in a mosque; if someone committed a crime then the Taliban would investigate and punish the person should he was found guilty. There was no court but if the Taliban caught someone spying, they would kill him.
- Q:** Was there poppy cultivation in Sangin?
- A:** Yes, there was poppy cultivation in our district.
- Q:** Were there also drug traffickers and factories?
- A:** The drug traffickers and factories are everywhere, it is not only in Sangin; there is poppy cultivation and drug trafficking in each corner of Afghanistan. Opium has destroyed Afghanistan.
- Q:** What do you think of the Taliban now?
- A:** The Taliban are very powerful. If I say they are bad, they will kill me.
- Q:** What is the difference between the Taliban and the Afghan government?
- A:** Essentially there is no difference between them - they have the same government structure. However, if someone kills another person the Taliban will execute the murderer, whereas the government will imprison the killer.
- Q:** What is the difference between the Taliban and NATO?
- A:** NATO are non-Muslims. We have Afghan soldiers, so why are the NATO soldiers here? Why are the French here? The Afghan soldiers should be protecting us, not NATO.

## **Interview 2: Male Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah (originally from Sangin district)**

- Q:** Why did you come here to Lashkar Gah?
- A:** We were not safe in our village, there was fighting and bombings. Our children couldn't suffer anymore so we fled together with more than forty other families. My family has been here for one year. I now live in Kart-e-Lagaan and work as a day labourer.
- Q:** Have you received any government or international aid here in Lashkar Gah?
- A:** No, we haven't received any help.
- Q:** Were you warned by the government before the fighting in Sangin?
- A:** Yes, they told us to leave before the fighting started and so we did.
- Q:** What should the government do to win public support?
- A:** We left behind our jobs and all of our belongings, our houses are destroyed, our bazaar is destroyed, everything is ruined. The government must help us.

- Q:** What do you tell your children when there is no food to feed them?
- A:** What can we do? We all survive without food. How can we buy food if there are no jobs? In Sangin we had really nice houses, we had electricity and water wells but we were forced to flee.
- Q:** Where do you take your children if they are sick?
- A:** There is no place that we can take our children when they get sick.
- Q:** Do you have drinking water?
- A:** We bring water from other places in wheelbarrows. We are refugees and we live in the markets, we don't have the ability to live in a house and have drinking water.
- Q:** Was there poppy cultivation and drug trafficking in Sangin while you were living there?
- A:** Yes, there was poppy cultivation and drug trafficking in Sangin. Poppy is the only crop, there are no other crops. What should people do? There are no jobs, so what should we do? If we had a job, why should we grow poppy?
- Q:** Do you see any difference in living conditions under the government and under the Taliban?
- A:** We don't see the difference. There were bombings yesterday. Just yesterday we were talking to the people in Sangin on the phone - but they cut off the phone and said that there was fighting in our village. The situation changes so quickly.
- Q:** Who do you blame for the fighting and the bombing?
- A:** God knows who is guilty, we don't know about it.
- Q:** Why do the Taliban fight?
- A:** The Taliban say they fight against the foreigners who came to our country.
- Q:** Why is NATO fighting?
- A:** I don't know why NATO is fighting.
- Q:** Did the Taliban hurt anyone in Sangin?
- A:** If the Taliban would know that someone is against them, then they would hurt that person. But they didn't hurt other people.
- Q:** What is your advice to NATO and the Afghan government?
- A:** They should not bomb the villages but protect the people and help solve our problems. We are displaced from our villages because of the bombings.
- Q:** How can NATO prevent bombings and how would the Taliban be prevented from using the villages in the fighting?
- A:** NATO should talk and consult with the elders of each village and district to bring peace in the country. I don't know how long this will going on but fighting is not the solution.
- Q:** How would you describe the government and the Taliban?
- A:** If only the government would talk with the people. The government must talk with tribal elders and the people. They must make peace with each other.
- Q:** Do you think you will return to your home in Sangin?
- A:** If there is peace in my village, I will go there right now. I won't stay even for another night in this place, no one has helped us here. Only the rich people get help, nobody helps the poor.

### **Interview 3: Male Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah (originally from Musa Qala)**

- Q:** Why did you leave Musa Qala?
- A:** In Musa Qala there was fighting between the Taliban and the government and our house was bombed. We couldn't survive, there was no security – we had to flee. We've been here for the past seven months. We live in a rental house which is in a very bad condition. I don't have a job to provide for my family.
- Q:** How did the fighting start in Musa Qala?
- A:** The government was in Musa Qala and everything was fine. But then the Taliban attacked the district office and the police station, and took control over the areas around the Musa Qala

bazaar. There was fighting everyday. Some of our relatives were killed and wounded.

**Q:** How many families fled from Musa Qala to Lashkar Gah?

**A:** More than 1000 families emigrated, I think almost all the people from the area fled.

**Q:** What arguments were the Taliban using to gain public support?

**A:** The Taliban were telling the people "Americans came to our country and we are fighting for our freedom". But all this fighting has forced us to flee our homes, we are now displaced.

**Q:** What do you think the government should do to win the support of its people?

**A:** The government should help the people, provide them a safe place to live in, jobs and food. If the government assists its people, it will regain public support.

#### **Interview 4: Male Afghan, Kochi Camp, Kandahar (originally from Badghis province)**

**Q:** What is the main reason you came here?

**A:** I came here for work but in fact it is very difficult to find a job here. I work around ten days in a month, earning very little. If I manage to find a job for a day the wage is very low. How can I support my family? What should we do?

**Q:** What would you ask President Karzai and the international community to do?

**A:** We want the security situation to improve, we want factories to be built and more job opportunities. More reconstruction projects must take place in our towns.

**Q:** How is the security situation in Kandahar province?

**A:** There is no security outside Kandahar City.

#### **Interview 5: Male Afghan, Kochi Camp, Kandahar (originally from Loya Wala)**

**Q:** Why did you come here?

**A:** I came here to look for a job. I work as a day labourer.

**Q:** Can you find work every day?

**A:** No, today is my seventh day looking and I haven't found anything yet.

**Q:** How much money do you make per day when you do find work?

**A:** I get 200 AFS per day.

**Q:** How many days do you normally work in a month?

**A:** I work around seven days in a month, not more than that.

**Q:** So you make 1400 AFS per month, is this enough to support your family?

**A:** No, of course it is not enough. I have to pay the rent and also buy food for my family. What can we do? We accept God's decision.

**Q:** What would you ask the Afghan government and the international community to do?

**A:** I want them to bring peace. Also, we need jobs, factories to be built and wheat prices to drop.

**Q:** How is the security situation in Kandahar City?

**A:** It is very calm and safe in the City, but there is fighting and problems just outside of the City. The Taliban are there, attacking us.

**Q:** Who do you think is responsible for the fighting?

**A:** Pakistan is encouraging all the fighting. There were even some Pakistanis arrested a few days ago.

### **Interview 6: Male Afghan, Kochi Camp, Kandahar (originally from Ghazni province)**

- Q:** How long have you been living here?
- A:** We have been living here since Hamid Karzai was appointed the President.
- Q:** Are there any families of refugees who fled to this camp from other areas including Helmand, Sangin and Musa Qala?
- A:** Definitely some of them came here - some of them live in the rental houses in the city and the rest of them are living in the camps, and we have been living here since the Taliban government was overthrown.
- Q:** How is the security situation?
- A:** There aren't many security problems. We have been here for a long time and the government has been good to us.
- Q:** What are the main problems of the people in this camp?
- A:** We work as day labourers, we go to the town in the morning and we come back home in the evening, we can find work some days but we can't find work every day and we survive on that basis, we don't have anything else, we lost all our cattle.
- Q:** Who did you and the other people vote for in the previous presidential election?
- A:** We voted for Hamid Karzai.
- Q:** Who will you vote for this time?
- A:** Hopefully we will again vote for Karzai because he is the head of Afghanistan and we don't have any other good candidate in Afghanistan.
- Q:** What do you want the government of Afghanistan and the international community to do for you?
- A:** We want from the government to give us some land and food, we are living in other people's land and you can see the mud here, everybody has dug a ditch around their houses to keep the water away from their place.

### **Interview 7: Male Afghan, Kochi Camp, Kandahar (originally from Qeshlaq)**

- Q:** What are the main problems you face in this camp?
- A:** There is no work and that is a big problem. We live in the town because we feel safe here and we are not worried about security problems, nobody bothers us, some of us work as day labourers and some sell sheep in the market.
- Q:** Does the Afghan government or any international organization help you?
- A:** Only once they gave us about 5kgs of rice and some tea. We haven't received any other aid since.
- Q:** Who will you vote for in the next presidential elections?
- A:** We will see when the time comes; who ever captures more effectively the imagination of the people at the time we will vote for him. We will also consider who our whole village is supporting because we cannot vote by our own choice.
- Q:** What do you want the government of Afghanistan and the international community to do for you?
- A:** We only want the security to improve; we don't want anyone bothering us. We want our kids and our orphans to be safe and not to suffer. We need a strong rule of law.
- Q:** How is the security situation now?
- A:** Within Kandahar City the security situation is good. But there is fighting in the outskirts.

### **Interview 8: Male Afghan, Kochi Camp, Kandahar (previously in Khakrez district)**

- Q:** How is the security situation in Khakrez district?  
**A:** The Taliban control the high ground, so whenever any kind of aid comes to the town the people never receive it.
- Q:** Is it safe for the government and the NGOs to come here?  
**A:** The government can go there and the NGO people can go up to the district office but they cannot go further.
- Q:** What are the main problems people face?  
**A:** We don't have doctors, we also need hospitals.
- Q:** Do the government of Afghanistan and the NGOs help the people?  
**A:** Poor people don't receive any aid.
- Q:** Is there fighting in your place?  
**A:** No there is no fighting in our area.
- Q:** Who did you vote for in the previous presidential election?  
**A:** We voted for president Karzai
- Q:** Who will you vote for this time?  
**A:** I think we will vote again for him.
- Q:** What do you want the international community to do for your people?  
**A:** We want them to help us, to build roads, to build hospitals in the suburbs. We also need a doctor to visit district.

### **Interview 9: Male Afghan, Kochi Camp, Kandahar (previously in Nesh district)**

- Q:** How is the security situation in the Nesh district?  
**A:** The security situation is good, there is no fighting now.
- Q:** What are the main problems in Nesh?  
**A:** There are economic problems. The cattle farmers haven't received any help from the government.
- Q:** Who controls your area, the Taliban or the Afghan government?  
**A:** The government is in power in our area.
- Q:** Is there any fighting?  
**A:** No there is no fighting in our area and the Taliban don't have a visible presence in our area.
- Q:** Who will you vote for in the next presidential elections?  
**A:** It depends on the people's choices and we will see how the situation is. Afghanistan has a leader so I think the people will vote for him.
- Q:** What do you want the international community to do for your people?  
**A:** We want the international community to pay more attention to the security situation. We also have too many economic problems but we are not worried about them as much as we are worried about the security problems. Everyone is abusing whatever power they have on the weak and the poor. If the government only had as good control on the suburbs as they have on the cities people would be safe. We can walk beside the police without any fear here, but we can't walk freely in the suburbs.

### Interview 10: Male Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah (originally from Musa Qala)

- Q:** When did you move here?  
**A:** Around seven months ago.
- Q:** Could you please tell me why you moved out of Musa Qala?  
**A:** Some of our relatives in Lashkar Gah called us and and warned us to leave, because our villages would be bombed. The foreigners were coming to Musa Qala, so we left. We did not even have time to take our belongings with us; we only had time to gather our children and get out of there.
- Q:** Did you receive any help from the international community or the government while you were in Musa Qala?  
**A:** Not when we where there.
- Q:** How did the fighting start?  
**A:** All we heard was that there was going to be fighting. Suddenly the bombing started and that's when we fled.
- Q:** How many people do you think have been displaced by the fighting in Musa Qala?  
**A:** I do not know exactly how many, but it's a lot of people; all the tribal elders and leaders left Musa Qala.
- Q:** Why are the Taliban fighting the government?  
**A:** I don't understand why they are fighting, but the Taliban argue that the foreigners have taken control of our country.
- Q:** Have you lost any family members in the fighting?  
**A:** No, I thank God for that.
- Q:** What do you think the government should do to gain the support of local people in Musa Qala and across Helmand, and bring peace to the region?  
**A:** I think if they can end the fighting and bring peace and security, everyone will be happy.
- Q:** What would you ask the international community and the Afghan government to do?  
**A:** I want them to help us, we have moved out of our villages, we don't have food to feed our children, it is cold and we don't have anything to put over our children to keep them warm at night. We are staying in a deserted house, when it rains it leaks everywhere.
- Q:** Do you work?  
**A:** I do daily labour but I don't make enough money.
- Q:** Where there clinics, hospitals and madrassas when the Taliban were in Musa Qala?  
**A:** Yes, there were but they were all private.
- Q:** Were people growing poppies in Musa Qala, and were there any heroin laboratories and traffickers?  
**A:** Of course there were heroin laboratories and people were growing poppy. But they also grew wheat.
- Q:** What's the difference between having the Taliban and the government controlling Musa Qala?  
**A:** There is no difference between them.
- Q:** Does the government harass the people?  
**A:** No, the government is doing a really good job right now, they have brought peace and they are very nice to the people here. They care about the people in Musa Qala.
- Q:** What would you ask the next president to do?  
**A:** To bring peace and security to the country. To build schools, clinics and roads for us and help rebuild our lives.



### Interview 11: Male Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah

- Q:** Who will you vote for in the next elections?  
**A:** I will vote Hamid Karzai.
- Q:** Why do you want to vote for Karzai?  
**A:** He deserves this job and he is capable of doing it and he has not committed any crimes.
- Q:** Is the ethnicity of the president important to you?  
**A:** I don't want a Tajik or Hazara president. I want a Pashtun like Hamid Karzai, someone who cares about his people and his country.
- Q:** Why does it matter to you if your president is Tajik or Hazara?  
**A:** They are all afghans, but if we choose Tajik or Hazara there will be tribal favouritism.
- Q:** What do you expect from the next president?  
**A:** To build schools, irrigation systems and roads, to provide electricity for the people and guide the people on to the right path.

### Interview 12: Male Afghan, resident of Musa Qala

- Q:** Did you know that there are elections next year?  
**A:** No I didn't know that.
- Q:** Is the ethnicity of the president important to you?  
**A:** It does not matter to me. Anyone who will bring security and peace to the country will be fine.
- Q:** What do you expect from the next president?  
**A:** To bring security and peace to the country. To provide us with shelter and food so we can feed our children. Also to control the prices because everything is so expensive now.
- Q:** Do you think this or the next president should talk to the Taliban and negotiate with them?  
**A:** I think the president should talk to the Taliban and by doing this, bring peace and security to the people of Afghanistan. We've been fighting for the past thirty years and yet we have achieved nothing.

### Interview 13: Male Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah (originally from Nawai)

- Q:** What can you tell me about the security situation here in Lashkar Gah?  
**A:** In the city itself there is nothing going on, but outside and in other districts there is fighting all around.
- Q:** What do you think of the possibility of the new president being a Tajik or Hazara?  
**A:** As long as he is a Muslim and helps us, we will regard him as our brother.
- Q:** What do you think of the possibility of the new president negotiating with the Taliban?  
**A:** If there is peace and stability, we will be happy.
- Q:** What difficulties are you facing?  
**A:** We have all kinds of problems and difficulties. There is nothing, the country is poor, people can't find jobs.

### Interview 14: Female Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah (originally from Sangin district)

- Q:** Why have you come from Sangin?  
**A:** We have come here because of constant fighting. The Taliban were stronger and we couldn't defeat them. The foreigners would later come and bombard the villages. I had to protect my children and family so we fled here.
- Q:** How long have you been here?  
**A:** We came here during the Ramadhan.
- Q:** Did anyone give you aid in this cold weather?  
**A:** Today they have brought some coal for these refugees and before the Red Crescent gave us some pills, flour and cooking oil. We appreciate their help.
- Q:** Were there Taliban in Sangin before?  
**A:** They would not come during the day, but they would come at night. We told them to stop coming here, but they had weapons and were stronger and we couldn't say anything.
- Q:** Were the local people satisfied with the Afghan government?  
**A:** Yes, the people in Sangin were satisfied with President Karzai.
- Q:** Have farmers in your village harvested opium this year?  
**A:** Yes, they were harvesting wheat, opium and other crops.
- Q:** Were the Taliban destroying your crops?  
**A:** They were happy, they said to harvest more opium.
- Q:** What about the government and the foreigners; were they destroying the crops?  
**A:** Yes, the government and foreigners would destroy the crops. But this was the only income for the poor people.
- Q:** Where did your husband die?  
**A:** He died in Sangin, in Kharso village.
- Q:** During the bombardments?  
**A:** Yes, during the same bombardments my brother in law and his wife also died. Our lives are ruined. God gave me five daughters and four young boys. Two of my daughters are dead.
- Q:** How do you support yourself and your family?  
**A:** I run around here and there for labour to get some money so that I can feed my children in the evening. The next morning is again the same situation. We make fire from the plastics. This is my life now. Look at this, I have nothing.

### Interview 15: Male Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah

- Q:** How is the security situation in Helmand now?  
**A:** The whole world knows the security situation in Helmand is not safe. In every district there is a problem. Personally no one has oppressed us, but generally the situation is not safe.
- Q:** What is your view about the Taliban fighting against the government?  
**A:** The Taliban say we are fighting the foreigners, and the government is with the foreigners.
- Q:** Have you heard that the Taliban are gaining support amongst the people?  
**A:** The place we live in is controlled by the government so I don't know anything.
- Q:** What do you think the government should do in order to win the support of the local people and bring peace and stability?  
**A:** The Afghans have been dealing with fighting for the last 30 years. The poor people are mostly the ones who pay for it.
- Q:** Have you received aid from the government or the international community?  
**A:** Not in the last three years.
- Q:** Were there times that you had no food at home to feed your children?  
**A:** There were many times we didn't have food at home. We would go around and gather food from other houses to feed the family.

- Q:** What do you request the government or the international community to do?
- A:** We ask the government and the international community to help us with food and shelter, and to protect us. We have lived through 30 years of war.
- Q:** Do you expect your current President or the next President to negotiate with the Taliban?
- A:** The Taliban are from this country and you can't take them out of it. The whole world knows if they are taken out of Afghanistan they will make more problems. So, I agree with negotiation.

### Interview 16: Male Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah (originally from Shabarghan)

- Q:** Have you received any aid from the government or the international community?
- A:** Two years ago we received aid, but since then we haven't received any help.
- Q:** Are there people who have taken refuge here from Sangin, Musa Qala or other districts?
- A:** There is not a single day that we do not see ten or twenty vehicles coming here from different places and it's hard to keep track of them. The Afghan people are very tired of fighting. My personal view is that if someone is in trouble, and has problems with another, then they should negotiate, and end that problem.
- Q:** What do you ask the government and the international community to do for its people?
- A:** The first thing I want from the government and international community is to end the fighting.
- Q:** What do you think the next President should discuss, and which problems should be addressed?
- A:** My opinion is that whichever brother becomes the next President he should gather all the Afghan brothers in one 'house of Afghanistan'. Otherwise our problem will not be solved.

### Interview 17: Male Afghan, resident of Lashkar Gah (originally from Baighas)

- Q:** How long have you been here?
- A:** We came here in 2000.
- Q:** Have any government officials or NGOs helped you?
- A:** Both the government and NGOs provided us this place and helped us to get started.
- Q:** How many people have come here?
- A:** First there were 5000 families, later it increased to 8000 families. People came from various Helmand districts.
- Q:** What do you think the government should do in order to gain public support?
- A:** One bag of flour used to be 250 Afghani, and now it is 2000 Afghani. If the government doesn't pay attention to these problems how can the country be stable? Unemployment is increasing, poverty is increasing. If the government pays proper attention to increasing job opportunities, assisting refugees to return back to their homes and informing people of their rights, then Afghanistan will prosper. Both the government and the international community must end the fighting and civil strife, they must bring peace and stability.
- Q:** What do you expect from the next Afghan President?
- A:** The next president must rebuild this country and bring peace.
- Q:** Does it make a difference to you who the President is?
- A:** No, it doesn't make a difference - as long as he is Afghan, it doesn't make a difference to us.

### Interview 18: Male Afghan refugee, temporarily living in Helmand province

- Q:** Why have you come here?  
**A:** I am a refugee. I begged the NGOs to help us and they offered to bring us here.
- Q:** How many people are here?  
**A:** There are about 6,500 families here.
- Q:** What are the current problems you are facing?  
**A:** I am unemployed, I have nothing. I only have an 18-year old son who is now in Pakistan trying to make a living. I have spent the last six years in a tent. We don't have coal to burn to keep us warm. For the past week our room was leaking; we haven't slept all night. We don't even know where to bury our dead.
- Q:** What expectations do you have from the next president?  
**A:** He should do act on the basis of Islam. He should help the poor and needy Muslim.

### Interview 19: Male Afghan policeman, Lashkar Gah

- Q:** Why did you choose to become a policeman?  
**A:** I couldn't find any other job.
- Q:** What are the main problems the police face today?  
**A:** It is the Taliban; they blocked the roads and there is fighting.
- Q:** How much money do you earn?  
**A:** My salary is 3500 AFS.
- Q:** Is this money enough to support yourself and your family?  
**A:** No, it is not enough to support my family. One bag of flour is 3000 AFS.
- Q:** Do you have to hide the fact that you are a police officer where you live?  
**A:** Yes, because there are Taliban around and they may cause trouble for me and my family.
- Q:** Do you know any colleagues who have been shot in the last month?  
**A:** Yes, friends were killed when they had gone home; they were killed by the Taliban.
- Q:** What initial training did you receive when you first entered the police force and how long did it last?  
**A:** I didn't receive any training thus far.
- Q:** What are your biggest concerns?  
**A:** My biggest concern is insecurity. The situation today compared to five years ago has worsened; the Taliban blocked roads and occupy rural areas. We want security; stability and peace in our country.

### Interview 20: Male Afghan policeman, Lashkar Gah

- Q:** Why did you choose to become a policeman?  
**A:** I want to defend my country.
- Q:** Do you consider your police force sufficiently equipped to face these challenges?  
**A:** No. We are paid 3000 AFS - what can we do with that?
- Q:** What should the salary of the police be?  
**A:** At least 10,000afs.
- Q:** Do you feel the police can defeat the drug trade alone?  
**A:** Starving police cannot do anything.
- Q:** What are your biggest concerns?  
**A:** Our biggest worry is hunger.

**Interview 21: Male Afghan, Lashkar Gah (originally from Musa Qala)**

- Q:** How long have you been here?  
**A:** I have been here for one month.
- Q:** Can you tell me why you came here and how you got here?  
**A:** We came here because there were Taliban, bombings and fighting in Musa Qala. We couldn't stay there any longer as our houses had been destroyed.
- Q:** How many families came here from Musa Qala?  
**A:** A lot of families came here, maybe around 300 families.
- Q:** How was life under the Taliban in Musa Qala?  
**A:** They would make problems for anyone who conspired against them, but otherwise they were fine.
- Q:** Has any of your family been wounded or killed in the fighting?  
**A:** No, nobody has been wounded but my house was destroyed.
- Q:** What do you think the Afghan government and the international community should do to gain public support in Helmand?  
**A:** They must bring peace and security. We are exhausted and we want them to help us. We are poor and displaced.
- Q:** How do you cope with the cold?  
**A:** We have nothing to keep us warm. All of our children are sick because of the cold.
- Q:** What do you do when your children are hungry?  
**A:** Our kids are crying for food and we tell them, "we will find food for you". They sleep without eating food.
- Q:** How was the situation under the Taliban in Musa Qala?  
**A:** The Taliban didn't have anything to do with the people, only with their enemy. They didn't hurt the people and everyone had a job.
- Q:** Were there schools under the Taliban in Musa Qala?  
**A:** There were only Madrassas .
- Q:** When you were in Musa Qala, was there poppy cultivation?  
**A:** There was poppy cultivation and drug trafficking.
- Q:** Were the farmers growing poppy?  
**A:** The farmers were growing poppy because they were hungry – they had to survive.

**Interview 22: Male Afghan, Lashkar Gah (originally from Garmser district)**

- Q:** How long ago did you come here and why?  
**A:** I came here about a year ago, after the Taliban came to Garmser and fighting started. Our house was destroyed. People had to escape the bombings – thousands of them fled to Lashkar Gah.
- Q:** Was there aid from the government and the international community?  
**A:** There was aid before but nowadays there is no help because the situation is really bad; there is so much fighting and nobody can travel freely and distribute aid.
- Q:** Why do you think the Taliban fight the government?  
**A:** I think the Taliban say that the American and the British shouldn't be here in Afghanistan and they say, "Nobody should be with them, nobody should help them and whoever is with them is just as bad."
- Q:** What arguments do the Taliban use to convince people to support them?  
**A:** They tell you that this is a fight for Islam and all Muslims must support it. If you didn't, they'd threaten to kill you.

- Q:** Has any of your family been wounded or killed during the fighting?
- A:** Yes, my brother died about three months ago. Some Taliban hid in a house that he was staying at, the warplanes bombed that house, my brother was sleeping when the house was bombed so he and four other Afghans died. The Taliban had all left by then.
- Q:** What are the main problems you face here?
- A:** My biggest problem is that my house was destroyed and now I don't have a place to live. I made shelter in the mud from cloth and plastic materials and I live in the shops. When we find food, then we collect papers and plastic from the streets and use them in the oven to cook food and keep us warm.
- Q:** What do you think of foreigners (NATO)?
- A:** The foreign soldiers came here to help, to protect the Afghan government and bring peace.

### Interview 23: Male Kochi Afghan, Kandahar City

- Q:** How long have you been here?
- A:** We have been here for two years and we don't have a place to live, we are constantly on the move. We don't have a home. We are desperate.
- Q:** Have you received any help?
- A:** We haven't received proper help. Once, they distributed rice. Some benefited but not the newcomers; they get nothing whereas the old refugees received one or two bags, and even some of those haven't received any. Different types of people are living here. There are widows who received nothing.

### Interview 24: Male Afghan doctor, Mirwais Hospital

- Q:** How long have you been working in this hospital?
- A:** It has been twelve years.
- Q:** Can you tell us what the security situation in Kandahar City is like?
- A:** The security situation is not like it was two years ago. It is very bad, people don't feel safe.
- Q:** We had heard that someone had helped Mirwais hospital; can you please tell us more about this?
- A:** There is some truth as the Japanese have given some equipment. They have given a good anesthesia machine twelve months ago.
- Q:** What do you think of the recent fighting in Kandahar and Helmand? Have any victims been brought to you?
- A:** We sometimes receive patients who have been caught up in the fighting and these are often women, elders and young children. They come to Mirwais hospital and some of the wealthier among them go to a private hospital.
- Q:** Where do many of the wounded or sick patients come from?
- A:** They come from all provinces because Mirwais hospital is the only hospital in the region. For instance, people come from Qalat, Uruzgan, Helmand, Nimroz and Kandahar, but most of the patients come from Helmand due to the fighting and bombing that is going on there.
- Q:** What can the government do to win the hearts and minds of the people?
- A:** In my opinion, bringing security is essential. Transparent governance, a justifiable administration and solid reconstruction work will also contribute.
- Q:** Why do the Taliban Fight?
- A:** I really don't know why they fight. We don't want fighting. I think they should come together and reconcile their differences and solve these problems, whether they are the Taliban or the government. Fighting is not the right way to solve problems and it has never been.

**Q:** Would you vote in the future election?

**A:** I don't know, but if the security situation is like this we will not have the opportunity to hold an election; how can it happen if the security in the suburban areas is this bad? How can people go and cast their vote in such an environment?

**Q:** Who would you vote for? What type of person would you vote for?

**A:** We would vote for someone who can improve the economy and the security of our country, and also someone who can change poor people's lives.

**Q:** Are you happy with the present administration of Karzai?

**A:** Karzai's government had successes and his administration came in the time of difficulties. It was really hard for his administration to handle all these problems, therefore we had fighting in the region. Still, it has been a good administration.

**Q:** How can NATO overcome these problems and what might be the cause of NATO failure?

**A:** NATO should put pressure on the sources of the problems, whether diplomatically or otherwise.

**Q:** As a doctor, what would you request for the Mirwais hospital?

**A:** The doctors lack the medication and the professionals, we lack everything from A to Z.

**Q:** What is your message to the government?

**A:** Our first message is that the government should take strong steps in order to solve security problems and create a justifiable and transparent administration for the progress of our country.

**Q:** Are you worried about the security?

**A:** Of course we are worried. We worry every minute that there will be an explosion or suicide attack; will my children come back safely from the school or will they be kidnapped. These worries make people mentally sick.

### **Interview 25: Male Afghan policeman, Arghandab district, Kandahar**

**Q:** Do you need weapons, uniforms or any other thing?

**A:** We need uniform and bullets.

**Q:** Do you need weapons?

**A:** Of course.

**Q:** Do you have to hide the fact that you are a police officer where you live?

**A:** Of course I do. I don't tell anyone that I am a policeman even if I am passing a check post.

**Q:** Why can't you tell people that you are a police man?

**A:** I don't tell because I don't want to get in trouble.

**Q:** Do you know any colleagues who were shot in the last month?

**A:** I was shot in Boldak. I still have the wounds on my stomach.

### **Interview 26: Male Afghan policeman, Arghandab district, Kandahar (originally from Mazar-e-Sharif)**

**Q:** How much money do you earn?

**A:** Our salary is now 3500 AFS.

**Q:** Is this salary enough for you and your family?

**A:** It is not enough but at least we are not in dire need as a lot of other Afghans.

**Q:** Do you have to hide the fact that you are a police officer where you live?

**A:** Yes. I tell them I go somewhere, but I don't tell my situation.

**Interview 27: Male Afghan policeman, Arghandab district, Kandahar**

**Q:** How long have you been a policeman?

**A:** It has been four or five years now, ever since this government took over.

**Q:** Is your salary enough to support yourself and your family?

**A:** No. I cannot support them - how can I? But we have to protect our country, Afghanistan.

**Q:** If you were in the government, how would you go about resolving this problem?

**A:** I would dedicate a lot of money to improving the army; giving the soldiers what they need. I would move to all those places where the enemy is, and I would free Afghanistan.

**Q:** Do you know any colleagues who have been shot in the last month?

**A:** My 22 year old son was killed inside his vehicle; he was completely burnt. I have lost my son. I buried him. He was in the Afghan National Police.

**Interview 28: Former Taliban, now joined the National Solidarity Programme**

**Q:** Who will you vote for in the next elections?

**A:** I will vote for Karzai again because since he became the president he has tried his best to help his people.

**Q:** What are your expectations from the next president?

**A:** My request for the next president is that he rebuilds Afghanistan and he ends these fights, so everyone can go back to their districts and build their communities.

**Q:** Do you think this or the next president should talk to the Taliban?

**A:** I want the president to share power with Mullah Omar. Mr. Karzai and Mullah Omar are both from Afghanistan but today one is named a Taliban and the other soldier and they are fighting. I hope they will negotiate and bring peace. For how long Afghanistan has to suffer from these fights?

**Q:** Do you think a woman can become a president in Afghanistan?

**A:** Yes, why not.

**Q:** With the current security situation, do you think the next election could take place everywhere in Afghanistan?

**A:** I don't think elections will take place in the areas which are under the control of the Taliban.

**Interview 29: Male Afghan, Lashkar Gah (originally from Musa Qala)**

**Q:** When did you move here from Musa Qala?

**A:** We moved here nine days ago.

**Q:** Did people in Musa Qala receive any aid from the government and the international community?

**A:** No, no one had delivered aid to us; I used to do day-to-day labour.

**Q:** Why do you think the Taliban are fighting the government?

**A:** Because there is no unity between Pashtuns; everyone wants more power. I don't understand why they are fighting.

**Q:** Did many innocent people die during the fight in Musa Qala?

**A:** So many innocent people died, by the thousands. I have seen dead bodies on the main road.

**Q:** Were you informed about the imminent attack on Musa Qala?

**A:** No, the fight started suddenly.

**Q:** What do you want the international community and the government to do for you?

**A:** All we want from them is peace and to stop the fighting and killing. The government should use all means available to bring peace to the country and to its people. If the Taliban want to be part of the government they should be allowed, so they'll stop fighting.



**Q:** What are the main problems you are facing now?

**A:** I want the government to help us. We moved out of Musa Qala because of the bombings and left all our belongings behind, my children are starving we don't have any clothes.

**Q:** What do you tell your children when you can't provide them with food?

**A:** I just try to tell them that there is no food tonight and I try to make them go to sleep; we have spent many nights like that.

**Q:** What do think is the difference between the government and the Taliban?

**A:** There is no difference for me; whoever brings peace will be the better ruler.

### Interview 30: Male Afghan, Lashkar Gah (originally from Musa Qala)

**Q:** When did you move here?

**A:** About a month ago. The fight between the Taliban and the government started so we had to flee. We moved to Lashkar Gah because it is a bit safer. We wanted to keep our children and women safe.

**Q:** Can you tell me what you know about the battle in Musa Qala?

**A:** The government forces surrounded Musa Qala, but some of the Taliban were caught in the middle and they started fighting. Some of the Taliban died, some hid and some ran away to the mountains. When the bombing started we had to move.

**Q:** Was the international community or the Afghan government giving aid to people in Musa Qala?

**A:** During the fight there was no help. I don't know about now.

**Q:** How many people have fled Musa Qala?

**A:** Probably around a thousand families have fled.

**Q:** How was life under the Taliban in Musa Qala?

**A:** There was no fighting, everyone was busy with their work. Shopkeepers did their work, labourers did their work. When the fight started, everyone left to other districts like Baghdi and Baghran to save their children.

**Q:** What were the Taliban telling the local people to gain their support?

**A:** They were telling local people that foreigners had occupied our country and that we should fight them.

**Q:** What is the government telling people now?

**A:** The government is saying to join them and stand with them, to stop the fighting and killing and to help bring peace to the country. They say that this is the only way to rebuild our country, build clinics, roads and schools and educate our children, because we don't have any of these.

**Q:** Did anyone warn you to leave the town before the fight started?

**A:** There were rumours that the government was going to attack Musa Qala and take the district from the Taliban.

**Q:** What do you think the government should do to gain the support of the people?

**A:** The government should sit with the Taliban, talk to them and negotiate a peace agreement with them. It should also promote education and rebuild the roads. Fighting is useless.

**Q:** What are the main problems you are facing right now?

**A:** We are refugees here. We do not have a place to spend the night. It is winter now and it is very cold, our children are dying.

**Q:** Did the Taliban have their own police in Musa Qala?

**A:** Yes they had many people, by the thousands, probably around 2,000 people

**Q:** Are there schools or clinics in Musa Qala?

**A:** There are no government clinics or schools, only private clinics and drug stores. Musa Qala has been destroyed; all the houses and shops have been destroyed; It is not the old Musa Qala now.

**Q:** Why are the Taliban fighting the government?

**A:** The Taliban used to control the whole country but I don't know why they are fighting now. They tell local people that the foreigners have come to our country, that we have to fight them and that we don't want them here.

**Q:** What is the difference between the Taliban and the government?

**A:** The government with the help of the international community is trying to help its people: they are building schools and clinics. The Taliban are not capable of doing this.

**Q:** Is the ethnicity of the president important to you?

**A:** All that matters to me is that he is Muslim. Language and ethnicity doesn't matter.

**Q:** Do you think this or the next president should talk to the Taliban and negotiate with them?

**A:** We have been in war for almost 30 years and what is the outcome of this? For how long we will be fighting each other? They need to talk to each other to make peace and bring unity to the country.

### **Interview 31: Male Afghan, Lashkar Gah (originally from Musa Qala)**

**Q:** For how long have you been here?

**A:** Around a month.

**Q:** Why did you move here?

**A:** Because of the bombing, the fighting and the harassment.

**Q:** Who was harassing you?

**A:** We were victims of both sides: the soldiers were bombing the Taliban, but the bombs would hit our houses and when the Taliban were shooting at the soldiers they would also hit our houses, so we had to move out of our village and take our children to a safer place where there is no fighting.

**Q:** How many people moved out when the fighting started?

**A:** Almost everyone from Musa Qala left the town. Some have returned now, but most are still here.

### **Interview 32: Male Afghan, Mukhtar Camp (originally from Musa Qala)**

**Q:** How long have you been here?

**A:** It has been eight nights since I came here to Mukhtar camp. There was fighting in Musa Qala and we couldn't stay there so we came here.

**Q:** Did you receive any aid by the government or NGOs in Musa Qala?

**A:** During the time we were there we didn't receive or see any aid being distributed.

**Q:** Before the fighting started, how was the living situation of these people?

**A:** People were trying to make a living but there were still many difficulties.

**Q:** What were the Taliban trying to do in order to gain people's support?

**A:** They would try anything in order to gain people's support.

**Q:** Before the fighting started, were you warned by the government to evacuate because there would be fighting?

**A:** Notice papers were dropped from the planes warning about that.

**Q:** What do you think the government should do to win the population's support?

**A:** The government should provide people with jobs, schools, clinics and also build bridges, because Musa Qala district is a mountainous area. If they do this they will gain 100 per cent of the people's support.

**Q:** What do you request from the international community and the government?

**A:** My request is that our children be educated and that there should be clinics for the sick people.

- Q:** What are your current problems?  
**A:** We currently have nothing at all, nothing to feed our kids or ourselves, we have no permanent shelter and we are living in a place that is not suited for cold and is always leaking.
- Q:** When you were living in Musa Qala were the Taliban organizing public life?  
**A:** Yes, they had police, madrassas and courts, but no clinics.
- Q:** Were people growing opium, were there markets, and factories of opium?  
**A:** Yes, there were.
- Q:** How do people differentiate between the government and Taliban?  
**A:** There is only one difference. Taliban is Sharia law and this government is not.
- Q:** Is the ethnicity of the president important to you?  
**A:** It doesn't matter to me.
- Q:** What expectations do you have for the next President?  
**A:** I hope he can bring stability, peace and an end to the fighting.
- Q:** Do you think this or the next president should talk to the Taliban and negotiate with them?  
**A:** I believe he must talk with the Taliban and end the conflict.

### Interview 33: Male Afghan, Lashkar Gah (originally from Musa Qala)

- Q:** How long have you been here?  
**A:** Around three weeks.
- Q:** Why have you come here?  
**A:** There was fighting, and bombardment. I escaped with my children and haven't brought anything with me. We also left all our money.
- Q:** Can you describe how you fled Musa Qala?  
**A:** There were the Taliban from one side and tanks on the other side, in the air there were planes throwing bombs, not knowing if they were targeting the enemies or the local innocent people. Innocent people were also being shot at.
- Q:** Was there any aid or help provided by the government and NGOs there?  
**A:** We have seen nothing at all, nothing at all.
- Q:** How many people might have left from there?  
**A:** I don't know the exact number but there are probably 500 displaced families.
- Q:** Before the fighting, how was the living situation of the people during the Taliban rule?  
**A:** During the Taliban rule they were not treating anyone badly, everyone was busy trying to make their own daily living.
- Q:** What were the Taliban doing in order to gain people's support?  
**A:** They were doing nothing in particular, just telling people to stick with the religion and come to the mosque for prayer.
- Q:** Did anyone from your family get injured or died during the fighting?  
**A:** More than 40 people, including elders and children, were injured or killed. Fortunately none my relatives got injured or died.
- Q:** What do you think the government should do in Musa Qala in order to gain support?  
**A:** The main thing is that we have stability. We want an Islamic government where people live in peace.
- Q:** What do you expect from the international community and the government?  
**A:** We would be grateful if they could give us covers, blankets and food.
- Q:** Do you currently have any job?  
**A:** I have nothing. I can't find a job.
- Q:** What are your current problems?  
**A:** I have no shelter, no food, nothing to burn. The kids have no shoes, not even clothes to wear.

- Q:** Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't have anything to feed your children with?
- A:** Yes, yes there had been many times. When they scream at night, we don't know what to do. We just put a blanket on top of them and tell them to go to sleep.
- Q:** Can you tell me why are these Taliban fighting the government?
- A:** I think they are saying that the foreigners came here to this country and so we should be doing Jihad against them. Maybe they're still fighting because they didn't have their share in the government and they want some power.
- Q:** Were people growing opium, were there markets, and factories of opium?
- A:** Yes, they were.
- Q:** Did the Taliban treat people badly?
- A:** Not during their control of that area, not that I am aware of.
- Q:** Who will you vote for in the next elections?
- A:** My vote goes to the person who brings stability and peace. Someone who brings a good Islamic government.
- Q:** Is the ethnicity of the president important to you?
- A:** It doesn't make a difference for me.
- Q:** Do you think this or the next president should talk to the Taliban and negotiate with them?
- A:** Yes, they should talk with them. The Taliban don't have a government share now, maybe that is why they are fighting.

### Interview 34: Male Afghan, Lashkar Gah (originally from Nawzad)

- Q:** How long have you been living here?
- A:** Since Mullah Mohammad Omer was toppled down.
- Q:** Have you received any governmental or international aid?
- A:** When we came together I wrote a petition to the governor Mullah Shir Mohammad and he sent me to Kabul with the refugee chief. The Minister gave me a letter to Mullah Shir Mohammad and asked him to survey the place and give these people a land.
- Q:** How many people have come here?
- A:** There are 7000 houses.
- Q:** What do the Taliban tell the people to convince them to support them?
- A:** The Taliban are telling people that they can make their future better, that they can make their lives better. They tell local people that while you try to do daily labour, most of the time you can't even find work, but you have to feed your children. If you join us we will solve your problems. So people who are in desperate need, and who don't have money to feed their children, will join the Taliban.
- Q:** Can you tell me the story of the Taliban?
- A:** Most of my students joined the Taliban during Mullah Omar's time when he came first to power. More than 200 students who I taught myself went and joined the Taliban. We thought it was a good movement. We thought they will empower Islam, bring Shariah law to the country and build Afghanistan. Then, the Taliban started harassing and oppressing Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks, so those people stood up and started fighting. Taliban movement started from Boldak and in no time they went to Mazar-e-Sharif. All the Pashtun leaders embraced them. The way the Taliban treated Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks was inhuman, and so they fought back. I took all my seven relatives (who fought with the Taliban in Musa Qala) to Kabul to join the government reconciliation program. A letter of amnesty was given to them, but no aid was given to rebuild their lives.
- Q:** What are the main problems that you face?
- A:** Our biggest problem is our bad economy. Men are begging to feed their family.

- Q:** What do you want the international community and Afghan Government to do for you?  
**A:** I want the international and Afghan government to give work to eligible people; the work should be based on merit.
- Q:** What issues would you like the next president of Afghanistan to address?  
**A:** I expect the future president to bring peace to Afghanistan and if he does, he would be the greatest man in the world. I want peace and security.
- Q:** Do you think that the president of Afghanistan should negotiate with the moderate leaders of Taliban?  
**A:** Yes, these Taliban who are sons of this country should be involved in power. They shouldn't be thrown away from Afghanistan's Parliament or Jirga and shouldn't be left without hope and without a share of power. They are also children of Afghanistan.

### Interview 35: Male Afghan, Lashkar Gah (originally from Ghor provinces)

- Q:** How long have you been here/  
**A:** I have been living here for eight years.
- Q:** Why did you come here from Ghor?  
**A:** Ghor is mountainous and doesn't have fertilized land. We had to leave because of drought, and we chose Helmand province.
- Q:** Can you tell me how many families have come from the fighting?  
**A:** I don't have an accurate number, but it is about 1000 families.

### Interview 36: Male Afghan, Lashkar Gah (originally from Faryab province)

- Q:** How long have you been living in here?  
**A:** It has been six years that I have been living here.
- Q:** Why did you come here?  
**A:** We came here because of the fighting and drought. We have lost our animals.
- Q:** Was there any government or international aid?  
**A:** In these two years we have not received any aid. We have built our houses with our own hands.
- Q:** How many people have come here?  
**A:** At first we were 8,000 people who came here from eight provinces, but right now the population has risen to 80,000 due to the recent fighting in the districts.
- Q:** Why do the Taliban fight the government?  
**A:** It is largely because the Taliban were given no role in the new government.
- Q:** What are the main problems that you face in here?  
**A:** Our people face starvation and cold. The government and NGOs should be surveying us, finding out how they can help us – we cannot afford to subsist alone.
- Q:** What do you want the international community and Afghan Government to do for you?  
**A:** If we can educate our children properly, then perhaps we can build a future. If we were all educated, do you think we would have the problems that we have now?
- Q:** Does it matter to you who the president of Afghanistan is?  
**A:** First he should be Muslim and secondly he should serve Islam.
- Q:** What issues would you like the president of Afghanistan to address?  
**A:** Afghan refugees currently in Iran and other countries should be brought back and looked after.
- Q:** Do you think that the president of Afghanistan should negotiate with moderate Taliban?  
**A:** We want the whole Islam to be one and united, God forbid brothers killing each other.

### Interview 37: Former Taliban fighter from Musa Qala

**Q:** Can you tell me more about the reconciliation process with the government and how you got involved in the programme?

**A:** I was a shopkeeper in Musa Qala. At that time there were not that many Taliban present in Musa Qala. And I was minding my own job. Then the Taliban's presence grew: they offered money to some people to join and told others that refusal meant they were cooperating with the infidels. I was with the Taliban when the fighting started in Musa Qala and I received a phone call from my uncle in Helmand telling me not to fight and to lay down my weapon. I laid down my weapon and fled from Musa Qala. Afterwards our home was bombed and destroyed. Our women and children also fled and went to Nawzad to some relatives. And then my uncle took a car and brought our women and children to a refugee camp in Lashkar Gah. He showed us documents, seven of us, telling us how we could get involved with the government. Then we went to Spin Boldak and started working with the Commander. I went to the military academy and now I am serving in the National Army.

**Q:** What did the Taliban tell local people in order to gain their support?

**A:** The Taliban told local people that there is Jihad going on in Afghansitan and that we can't just sit at home and do nothing. If there are two men in one family one has to join the Taliban and the other has to support the family.

**Q:** What did your family and friends think of you joining the Taliban?

**A:** I was with the Taliban for almost a month. I had to join them; I did not have any other choice. But when I heard about the reconciliation programme, I put down my weapon and left Musa Qala and joined the government.

**Q:** What do you think about the foreigners?

**A:** The foreigners are here to defend Afghanistan, they are here to help us build our country. They are here to help the Afghan people and help us defend our country against our enemies.

**Q:** What did the Taliban say about the foreigners?

**A:** The Taliban said that the foreigners are here to destroy our country and our religion.

**Q:** What kind of weapons are the Taliban using?

**A:** They have old Russian and Chinese AK-47, Rocket Launchers and some other heavy artillery. During the day they are in the mountains, and at night they come down to the villages and carry on their operations and attacks.

**Q:** From where do they receive money to fund their operations?

**A:** Our commander told us that the money is coming from Quetta Pakistan.

### Interview 38: Former Taliban fighter from Musa Qala

**Q:** Can you tell us more about the reconciliation process of the government and how you got involved in the programme?

**A:** I joined the Taliban out of fear. I was a shopkeeper in Musa Qala and they would come and harass us, saying "why are you not fighting the Jihad? It is the obligation of each Muslim to take part in Jihad". We lived there with our families, so I had to join them.

**Q:** Did the Taliban know that the government was going to attack Musa Qala?

**A:** Yes, the Taliban knew that Musa Qala would be attacked, but did not know that they would bomb Musa Qala so heavily.

**Q:** Were the Taliban ready for the fight?

**A:** They wanted to fight , but they were not capable of fighting because of the heavy bombardment.