

## Afghanistan Implementation Colloquium



LIECHTENSTEIN INSTITUTE  
ON SELF-DETERMINATION  
AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

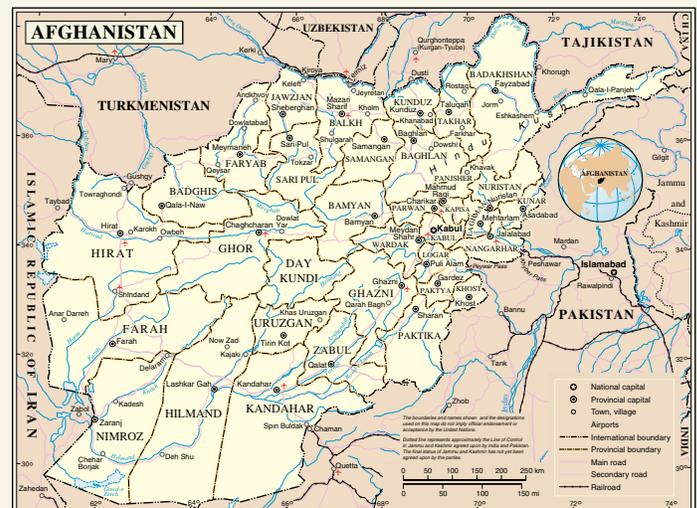
The Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination (LISD) at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs convened the “LISD Afghanistan Implementation Colloquium” in the Sauerhof in Baden bei Wien, Austria, February 25-28, 2010. This was the eleventh LISD-sponsored colloquium on Afghanistan since 2001. It was funded in part by the Republic of Austria, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Princely House of Liechtenstein, and the Stiftung für Selbstbestimmung und Internationale Beziehungen in Vaduz, Liechtenstein. It was organized in cooperation with the Liechtenstein Institute in Vienna, Austria (LIVA).

The colloquium convened over one hundred participants including diplomats, parliamentarians, practitioners, academics, and civil society representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, India, Turkey, Canada, the EU, the UN, and the US to engage in working group discussions about issues addressed by the London Conference of January 2010 – security, the rule of law, development, governance, civil society and media, reconciliation and reintegration, parliamentary elections, and the region. The conference opened with introductions by Dr. Zalmay Rassoul, Foreign Minister of Afghanistan; Dr. Michael Spindelegger, Foreign Minister of Austria; Dr. Aurelia Frick, Foreign Minister of Liechtenstein; Ambassador Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, Secretary-General of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe; Ambassador Bernd Muetzelburg, German Special Representative for Afghanistan; and Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, United States Ambassador to Afghanistan. The colloquium was chaired by Dr. Wolfgang Danspeckgruber, Director of LISD.

## INTRODUCTION

The tone of the conference was set by the *leitmotiv* of LISD’s Afghanistan project work since 2001: “by, for, and with the Afghans and Afghanistan.” Most importantly this focuses on Afghan ownership and Afghan sovereignty, and the capability to determine the nation’s destiny. However, the atmosphere and attitudes in and around Afghanistan seem to have noticeably shifted in the last eighteen months, especially with regard to the growing trust deficit between Afghans and the international community. Various actors within Afghanistan and within the region are now realigning their policies, motivated mainly by the perception of an impending draw down of international forces in Afghanistan. The possible heightening of tensions with Afghanistan’s western neighbor, Iran, over its nuclear ambitions further complicates the West’s calculus of involvement in the region.

After nine years of engagement in Afghanistan, the international community is also grappling with its own major economic challenges, and is preparing to reduce



Map No. 3558 Rev. 5 UNITED NATIONS Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
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its military involvement and begin the process of transition to the Afghans. The envisaged timelines for military withdrawal, set to commence in 2011, have prematurely emphasized the “time factor” in the Afghan situation which is seen differently in Washington and other ISAF capitals than it is in Kabul, Islamabad, or Tehran, as well as by the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. General David Petraeus rightly stated in his June 2010 confirmation hearings as the top US military commander in Afghanistan that “this has become a battle of wills.” Much is now about perception and trust.

It has become apparent that the priority for both Afghans and the international community is to facilitate a transition of all domains of current donor country activities in Afghanistan to Afghans themselves, under the auspices of Afghan sovereignty. But the trust necessary to make this common goal a reality has seriously eroded since 2008. Critical factors shaping the current situation in Afghanistan – those of time, costs, and stakes – are being perceived and prioritized differently by Afghan, regional, and international actors.

The “cost factor” of the international community’s Afghanistan effort has further obtained greater prominence due to the global financial crisis. Recent public opinion assessments in the UK, the Netherlands and Germany, as well as in Canada and even the United States have revealed instances of domestic fatigue in these key donor countries. Afghanistan’s international partners have also in recent months been increasingly vocal in expressing their lack of confidence in the Afghan government, notwithstanding the optimistic rhetoric of the January 2010 London Conference. This has damaged perceptions of support for the Afghan government, thereby vindicating and encouraging spoilers of the Afghan government – who, incidentally, are also spoilers of the international community’s efforts in Afghanistan.

The cost of continuing engagement is increasingly appearing to be too high – regardless of the stakes, the importance of prevailing in Afghanistan is no longer evident for many of the domestic publics and voters in ISAF states. On the Afghan side, there is also increasing dis-

trust. This is fueled both by the growing fatigue and disenchantment that many Afghans are developing toward the international presence – one that has yielded insufficient results for the vast majority of the Afghan populace in comparison to the cost in lives and resources – and by the perception that the international community is preparing for an exit from the country. Clearly, the Afghans have the most to win or to lose in the success or failure of this operation. Afghans and the Afghan government have, especially in recent months, highlighted the importance of giving the Afghan government – in reality, not just in promise – greater responsibility, ownership, and a greater leading role in the rebuilding of their country as the international community assumes more of a secondary, supporting role. In other words, they have pressed to speed up the transition.

In spite of these challenges and conflicting perspectives, however, the situation, and the Afghan-international partnership, still seems salvageable. If competing motivations and complicating factors are rethought, readjusted, and redefined, trust may be regained and a constructive, long-term partnership reestablished. The end goal of a secure, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan is a shared one. Divisive issues and the challenges of transitioning from an international-led to an Afghan-led process can and must be addressed and overcome. To this end, the clarifications issued by President Barack Obama at the conclusion of the G20 Summit in Toronto concerning the possible US exit strategy and the reaffirmation of a long-term US commitment to success in Afghanistan has helped to generate positive momentum and facilitate a unity of effort. This underscores the necessity to reach out to a broad and diverse set of audiences – internationally, regionally, and locally in Afghanistan – with a unified message and a clear sense of purpose.

Much is now about perception and trust.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### CROSS-ISSUE AND SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

These cross-issue recommendations deal mainly with changes in the prioritization of state capacity-building and development strategies. They represent recommendations that should be taken into special consideration in conjunction with the specific issue area recommendations that follow.

#### Recommendations for Afghanistan, Its Neighbors, and Its International Partners

- Preserve and build upon hard-earned achievements by increasing the international community's diplomatic regional engagement as the international community seeks to decrease its military presence in Afghanistan.
- Consider establishing a neutrality agreement to guarantee Afghanistan's borders and inviolability, provided it is detailed in complete accordance with Afghan interests.
- Strengthen regional relations between Afghanistan and all of its neighbors, by clarifying Pakistan's strategic role in Afghanistan and as a bilateral partner, and by encouraging the development of regional initiatives, such as the Triangular Initiative and Trilateral Summits.
- Improve communication and transparency between all government, civil society, and international community and donor elements in Afghanistan.
- Continue and intensify the fight against poppy production and the narcotics trade.

#### Recommendations for Afghanistan's Development

- Rebalance aid, program, and resource distribution, and cease prioritizing regionally insecure areas in favor of equitable distribution that prioritizes human security and stability.
- Increase Afghan ownership and accountability for aid allocation and utilization.

Crucial factors shaping the current situation in Afghanistan – those of time, cost, and stakes – are being perceived and prioritized differently by domestic, regional, and international actors.

- Foster vocational training and the creation of sustainable jobs and income.
- Prioritize projects that will develop Afghanistan's mining sector potential and Afghanistan as a regional trade and transit center, but doing so with Afghan involvement and within the Afghan political system.

#### Recommendations for Afghanistan's State- Building Efforts

- Remove corrupt senior government officials from their positions as a way to foster rule of law and facilitate the trust of Afghan citizens in their government.
- Use media outlets for education, to promote Afghan citizenship, civic virtues, and the understanding of judicial and civil rights and related processes; to engage Afghans in the political and reconstruction process; and to support diversity.
- Prioritize capacity building of the formal justice system and the use of the formal justice system for all criminal and human rights cases.
- Prioritize and strengthen civil service reform, including the establishment of a pay scale and grade system.
- Require all senior Afghan government officials to publicly declare their assets while serving in government positions.

## THE REGION

As one Afghan participant stated, “our future is with our neighbors.” After the international community dimin-

# AFGHANISTAN FROM THE LOCAL TO THE GLOBAL

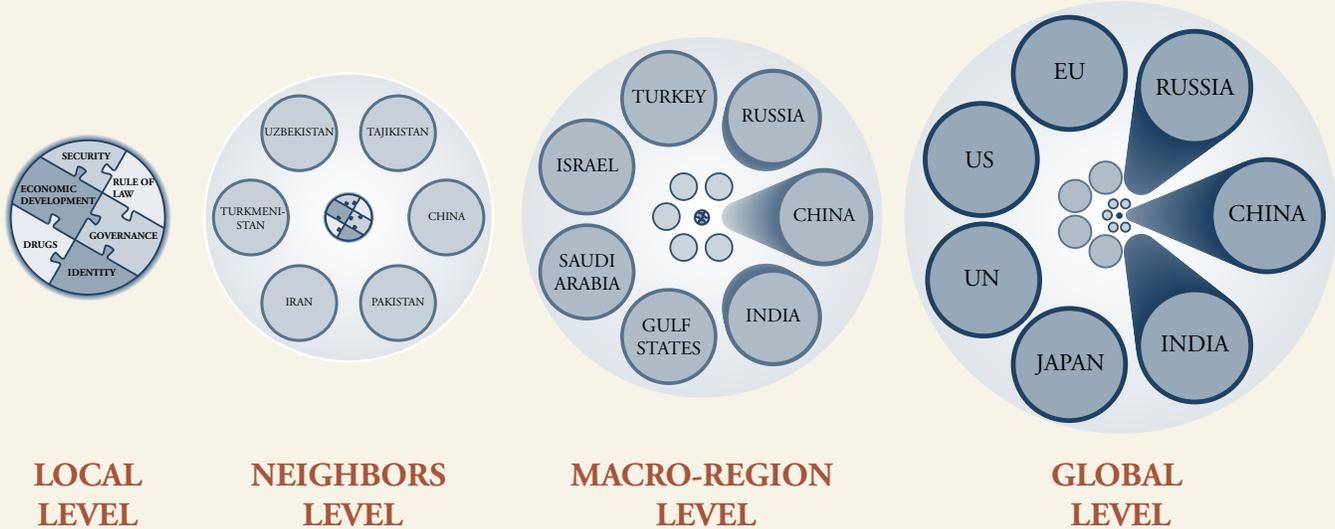


Image: Danspeckgruber/Parushev

ishes its presence, regional relations will become even more critical to stability and development in Afghanistan. Methods of strengthening regional relations must emphasize regional dialogue and cooperation, beyond Afghanistan's bilateral relationship with Pakistan, to encompass the broader region.

## Recommendations for the Region

- Consider four levels of international relations around Afghanistan – bilateral and trilateral; the immediate neighborhood; the macro-region; and great power and multilateral – and the mechanisms that each employ.
- Better utilize the OSCE, SAARC, ECO, the UNODC's Triangular Initiative, and other regional multilateral mechanisms, and consider holding a regional conference on Afghanistan.
- Consider the option of creating a regional envoy position from the UN, or from Afghanistan itself, as a way to forward regional diplomatic relations.
- Address real and potential regional dangers to Afghanistan's internal stability and state-building agenda, especially the tense relations between India and Pakistan, and the possibility of a crisis between Iran and some members of the international community.
- Address the Durand Line border issue, perhaps through a new push by the Tripartite Commission.
- Strategically redefine and clarify Pakistan's role in rebuilding Afghanistan, and the nature of Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, the region, and the international community to ensure that Pakistan remains a strong and beneficial partner.
- Establish a new regional compact and facilitate regional relationships through economic projects, agreements, and integration with regional neighbors and macro-regional states – Iran, the Central Asian republics, Russia, India, China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and other Persian Gulf states – based on shared interests in a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.
- Build upon the 2002 Kabul Declaration on Good Neighborly Relations signed in Kabul by Afghanistan, China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, and consider establishing a mechanism to follow-up, monitor, and improve upon the agreement.

- Build upon the April 2004 Berlin Declaration on Counter-Narcotics and the achievements of the UNODC initiatives to combat the drug trade.
- Pursue discussions about a possible guaranteed neutrality agreement, with the nature, framework, and mechanisms for implementation of any agreement to be outlined and detailed in accordance with Afghan leadership and great power guarantees.
- Develop Afghanistan as a regional mining, trade, and transit center as a way to stabilize the state, its internal economy, and solidify its relationships with its neighbors, but in a manner that preserves Afghan interests.
- Develop a uniform master plan for the construction of railroad infrastructure in Afghanistan, keeping in mind the regional differences in rail track width.

## SECURITY

The security session focused on the need to place a greater emphasis upon human security in security considerations and strategy, as well as to improve current intelligence-gathering strategies. It also focused on the longer-term need to prioritize transfer of security to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), as well as to reform current ANSF structures to enhance the effectiveness of this transfer and leadership.

### Recommendations for Overall Security

- Begin allocating resources equally to what are deemed to be threats to the Afghan population as well as to what are deemed to be security threats to the international community.
- Focus resource allocation on human security needs, as stability for the Afghan people must be more highly prioritized.
- Improve intelligence gathering by NATO/ISAF as current efforts are insufficient, lead to an increase in civilian casualties, and could undermine counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism efforts.

### Recommendations for ANSF Transition and Reform

- Start the transfer to Afghan-led security soon in order to allow for strategic flexibility.
- Implement the transfer in a phased and sustainable manner, and with respect to progress and responsibility.
- Adapt ANA vs. ANP distribution, training, and re-sourcing to distinct circumstances.
- Clearly define the mandate of the mission of the police and the mandate of the army as many overlaps exist.
- Evaluate the tenable size of ANSF in terms of fiscal sustainability, especially in light of international withdrawal timelines, so that expansions of force numbers will not create long-term support and sustainability problems for Afghanistan.
- Evaluate and reform recruiting and training policies taking into account:
  - The million high school teenagers graduating with no reliable promise of a job;
  - The lack of recruits for ANSF;
  - The benefit that a reinstatement of a national conscription policy might have on national unity; and
  - The need to provide law and order education as well as paramilitary training for the ANP.
- Reform and improve the legal and organizational status of ANSF, including:
  - The creation of a special parliamentary liaison in both chambers between the Parliamentary Defense Commission and the Afghan National Security Council;
  - The passage of a law that rationalizes army personnel rank and promotion processes, and broadens the ANSF Trust Fund to include pension funding for retirees and a welfare mechanism for family members of current ANSF per-

“Our future is with our neighbors.” – Afghan Conference Participant

sonnel who may not have alternative sources of income generation;

- The strengthening of the management and logistical chains of ANSF;
- The involvement of the Ministry of Justice in the current review of military justice codes to ensure that there are no constitutional contradictions;
- The creation of a spectrum of checks and balances for accountability at the local level including: traceable mechanisms for registration of weapons for ANSF members at all levels, mechanisms to address structures – including regional and parallel structures of power – that may undermine state security or the development of state institutions, and policies recognizing that unaccountable militias are likelier to violate the rights of women and should be reined in;
- A consideration of whether it may be more efficient to organize security on a district level rather than on a provincial level; and
- The reallocation of training resources toward rule of law issues.

## GOVERNANCE AND ANTI-CORRUPTION

The governance session determined that making progress in the fight against corruption requires a multifaceted approach, including strong leadership by the Afghan government and also on the part of the international community, improving systems and not neglecting prevention, effective law enforcement and administrative actions, and pay and grade reform for government employees to reduce petty corruption. Many of these recommendations are intimately connected to the aid ef-

[M]aking progress in the fight against corruption requires a multifaceted approach . . . [and is] intimately connected to the aid effectiveness agenda.

fectiveness agenda and thus there should be cohesion between the two. In particular, donors must not pull out, as there is no way to create long-term or sustainable projects without aid consistency and reliability. International donors also have a responsibility to substantially limit and improve reporting of aid that is channeled outside the national budget. There are no magic solutions and real improvements take time. Protection of state building must also be prioritized, and small achievements should not be dismissed as they make a real difference.

### Short-Term Recommendations for the Afghan Government

- Remove corrupt senior officials from their positions and do not reappoint them elsewhere as this:
  - Sends a very important symbolic and substantive signal from the top;
  - Does not require legal or administrative actions for political appointees and therefore can be effective in the near term while legal and justice institutions are developed;
  - Demonstrates immediate action while lengthier criminal procedures play out;
  - Involves parliament by virtue of its impeachment powers; and
  - Compels the meaningful vetting of future senior appointments.
- Develop an asset declaration policy that:
  - Implements existing constitutional and legal provisions;
  - Requires the submission and review of asset declarations; and
  - Strengthens and supports an independent high office for monitoring whose leadership is not appointed by the president.
- Establish a parliamentary commission on anti-corruption.
- Build-up the verified payroll system and direct deposit of salaries of government employees.
- Revive pay and grading reform and implement it with integrity.

## Long-Term Recommendations for the Afghan Government and International Donors

- Develop special anti-corruption courts.
- Delegate decisions, authority, and accountability without ethnic preferences.
- Strengthen and augment anti-corruption laws.
- Enhance transparency in parliamentary-system and media reforms.
- Increase the proportion of donor development aid to the Afghan national budget to 50% as outlined by London Conference commitments.
- Implement the use of transparent contracting practices for international aid and cease channeling donor aid outside the Afghan national budget.
- Support the watchdog role of civil society as a means of enhancing transparency.

## RULE OF LAW

The rule of law session dealt with a broad spectrum of issues, ranging from how to make Afghan citizens more aware of their rights and of the state's legal mechanisms, to mechanisms to generally strengthen the rule of law in Afghanistan, to the possibility of reform of Afghanistan's current formal legal system by enhancing it with some elements of the traditional justice system. The session emphasized the importance of a strong linkage between the justice sector and the law and order element of the Afghan government in order to restore the confidence of Afghan citizens in the crime fighting capabilities of Afghan security institutions.

## Recommendations to Strengthen Rule of Law in Afghanistan

- Widely circulate laws among all legal operators (judges, lawyers, clerks) and the general public through flyer distribution and media that can be widely understood such as radio and television programs, in addition to on the internet or CDs.
- Create public outreach programs so that people know how to access justice.

- Address bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption as these are often detrimental to citizens' experiences of justice and lead to a lack of faith in the overall system.
- Provide higher salaries for judges, since insufficient compensation for legal operators is partially responsible for the continuance of corruption in the legal system.
- Address impunity at the highest levels by prosecuting and widely publicizing cases brought against senior government officials in order for citizens to develop trust in the system and to set national standards for crime and justice. Since a majority of cases brought to court are land disputes, prosecuting a land-related crime might set a particularly strong example.

## Recommendations for Reform of the Formal Justice System

- Use pension and retirement programs to incentivize older judges and other civil servants to vacate their posts so that younger professionals who are part of the generational shift currently occurring in Afghanistan – recent graduates of high school, university, and law and shari'a schools – may enter into these decision-making positions.
- Utilize the educational infrastructure by establishing law clinics in both secular and shari'a law schools, and introducing a civics course at the middle and high school levels.
- Prioritize the reconciliation of human rights institutionalized in the formal justice system with shari'a law, as indicated by the Afghan constitution.
- Handle all cases whenever possible, and particularly for criminal prosecution and in cases involving human rights and women (e.g. forced marriage and blood feuds), within the formal justice system since informal justice is often inconsistent, prejudiced against women, and does not protect basic human rights as outlined in the Afghan constitution.

## Recommendations for Incorporating the Traditional Justice System into the Formal Structure

- Explore ways in which the formal and informal systems of justice could be complementary, creating a trusted and wide scope of judicial authority as well as a means of propagating judicial decisions that support the values of the constitution and the Afghan state.
- Create a system to formally recognize, validate, and document decisions made within the informal justice system with the conditions that jirgas allow female involvement, shuras honor the constitution and human rights, and shuras immediately cease to condone honor killings.
- Provide legal training, including gender-sensitivity training, to all legal operators and jirga leaders.
- Provide training about local jirga and shura to formal justice sector and human rights officials.

## DEVELOPMENT

The development session, as it was tasked with a broad domain, focused primarily on how to improve current development strategies and aid distribution. It determined that both the international community and the Afghan government have a fundamental responsibility to reform current donor practices with the objective of improving Afghan capacity for aid delivery, transferring greater control of development money and resources sent to Afghanistan to the Afghan government, and distributing development aid more equitably between the secure and insecure parts of the country. To date the Afghan government manages only about 25% of the aid sent to Afghanistan. The bulk of the remaining tens of billions of dollars is dispersed by donors bilaterally or via NGOs, sometimes with little accountability or oversight.

### Recommendations for Development Strategies

- Foster economic development through enterprise and value-chain/value-added development activities

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that create jobs for Afghans and markets for Afghan goods and products by:

- Supporting initiatives that foster this type of development such as the Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development's (MRRD) Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program;
- Focusing development on rural areas and better enabling access to finance and credit in these areas;
- Encouraging local procurement by foreign missions to stimulate local capacity building;
- Developing Afghanistan's transportation infrastructure, including the construction of a railroad network in Afghanistan and with its neighbors to develop the country's potential as a transit hub in the region, to stimulate domestic employment, to expand trade markets in Afghanistan, and to open these up to foreign investment;
- Supporting national production, trade, and goods exchange;
- Offering vocational training, in particular for small- and medium-sized enterprises; and
- Encouraging the growth of labor-intensive, value-added crops rather than wheat, which is currently overemphasized.

### Recommendations for Aid Distribution

- Render aid more effective and equitable through:

- Increased Afghan ownership;
- Enhanced accountability by both the Afghan government and the donor community side, as well as increased transparency of international practices;
- Application of the “3C” approach to aid delivery – coherent, coordinated, complementary; and
- Increased absorptive capacity of and accelerated rate of budget execution by the Afghan government.
- Draft an agenda of action for aid effectiveness and accountability for consideration at the upcoming Kabul Conference.
- Reform and streamline fund management.
- Facilitate investment in energy and resource development as a means of creating jobs and productive infrastructure.
- Develop bankable projects with technical assistance provided by donor countries.
- Implement economically and environmentally sustainable development.
- Limit exploitation and corruption through land titling, regulation, and control of extractive industries.
- Balance aid distribution between secure and insecure areas.
- Address the long-term role of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), including donor accountability, review by the Afghan government, and development of an Afghan transition strategy.
- Make aid continuous and reliable to serve the needs of long-term development projects, especially through strengthening the role of the Ministry of Finance for aid management and coordination.

#### Recommendations for the Afghan Government

- Use the Afghan National Solidarity Program as the basis for transparency, prioritization, ownership, and participation of the Afghan people in development programs.
- Reform and simplify Ministry of Finance procedures, budget, and procurement laws, and consider decentralizing budgetary control.

- Improve financial management as a confidence-building measure for the international community, including an internal and external audit.
- Expedite and strengthen civil service reform, especially through the establishment of a pay scale and grade system.
- Establish an independent commission to annually evaluate and score each donor, government, and civil society actor involved in Afghanistan.

#### CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is vital for changing the lives of people and positively influencing Afghanistan’s economy, political system, and society. Civil society must exist and function parallel to the government and private sector, act as a bridge between the people and the government, claim its legal rights, and have a presence in all domains of the country. Civil society is currently suffering from a lack of internal cohesion, as well as cohesion with its donors, across Afghanistan. Internally, civil society must network and strategize more effectively geographically and between organizations and sectors in order to strengthen civil society, make its programs more complementary, and render its activities effective.

#### Recommendations Related to Civil Society

- Facilitate coordination, cooperation, and interaction between civil society organizations and the Afghan government, recognizing and incorporating civil society as a participant in all national and international decision-making processes, including reconciliation and reintegration peace jirgas and other important events.
- Leverage civil society organizations to inform the government of the needs of localities in which it has a limited presence through consultancy meetings with governmental organizations and mandatory dialogues with government officials.
- Implement the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan.
- Make the process of reconciliation and reintegration

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transparent to women, mainly through the ability to access information.

- Promote and prioritize investment and capacity building of the formal justice system over the informal justice system.
- Foster relations with the mass media to promote active citizenship among Afghans, including launching awareness campaigns about citizenry engagement, the rights and responsibilities of citizens in relation to gender equality, human rights, democracy, peace-building, competency, and transparency.

## MEDIA

Media in Afghanistan is crucial for providing information, education, and entertainment and has begun reaching wide audiences and broadcasting more diverse content. There is significant improvement in the flow of information – current capacity can reach roughly 85% of Afghanistan – and, despite intimidation, there has been a surge in open expressions of opinion through media outlets. Still there remains the need to cultivate the objectivity of the media in the eyes of the Afghan public, to protect freedom of expression, and to better use the media for information dissemination. As a confidence-building measure, progress and success stories of the Afghan government and the international community in Afghanistan should be publicized through the media. This would publicly signal the continued commitment of the international community to Afghanistan, and to fight the image of the international community as occu-

piers that is often spread in Taliban propaganda.

## Recommendations Related to Media

- Release Radio and Television Afghanistan (RTA) from government ownership and control, and render it responsible and accountable by turning it into a national public service broadcaster and through the implementation of the media law.
- Encourage jobs development, enhance media professionalism, and promote sustainability through independent, private-sector investment in the media.
- Use media outlets to promote education through educational programming, to engage Afghans in the political and reconstruction process, and to encourage ideological diversity.
- Expand the scope of media outlets, content diversity, and broadcast languages to better reach all Afghans, especially in rural areas, with the goal of impacting how Afghans see their country and each other.
- Encourage the independence of the Afghan media and elevate the standards of the profession.

## RECONCILIATION AND REINTEGRATION

The Afghan government and the international community has of late increased its focus on the incorporation of a reconciliation and reintegration process (R&R) – i.e. a political solution – to complement efforts made toward the establishment of security and good governance in Afghanistan. Although there has been much rhetoric that reconciliation should be Afghan-led, domestic imperatives in donor countries and regional nuances impact the reconciliation agenda and stand to shape the outcome of the reconciliation and reintegration process. Given the consequences and sensitivities involved, any reconciliation and reintegration process should respect and take into account Afghan leadership and perspectives as they have more legitimacy than any other actor to carry out and implement this initiative. While the international community should seek to facilitate discussions about reconciliation and reintegration, it should play a secondary and supporting role to the Afghan government in this process.

## Recommendations for the Guidelines of a Reconciliation and Reintegration Process

- Clarify the terminology of R&R, noting that reconciliation is not necessarily an appropriate or an accurate term for the process of reaching out to the Taliban leadership for a political solution.
- Focus on reintegration as the first step, especially in regards to Taliban foot-soldiers who have joined the insurgency due to local grievances and financial insecurity rather than a deep commitment to extremist ideology.
- Make R&R transparent and inclusive to Afghans – especially parliament and civil society – as sufficient political will and Afghan political ownership of the process is crucial in light of the severe impact that a flawed process can have on Afghan civilians, especially women.
- Address concerns that reintegration of Taliban fighters might reverse the hard-earned gains in gender equality that have been made since the fall of the Taliban.
- Improve strategic communication of R&R policies.
- Refocus on the Afghan National Action Plan on Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation and broader transitional justice issues.
- Employ a regional outreach strategy for R&R and target all regional players – Pakistan, India, Iran, China, and Russia – to ensure that R&R policies are, if not supported, then at least not undermined.
- Address and clarify Pakistan’s role in this process, as well as the persistence of insurgent sanctuaries with-

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in its borders.

## Recommendations for a Reconciliation Process

- Prepare for negotiations with talks with key stakeholders such as the US, talks with all key countries in the region, and third party facilitation of talks with the Taliban.
- Explore different options for peaceful engagement with the Afghan government’s armed opponents, including the possibility of entering into initial discussions without preconditions.

## Recommendations for a Reintegration Process

- Recognize in the R&R conceptualization and planning stages that:
  - There may be a lack of incentive for insurgents to negotiate given the reorganized insurgency and the fact that the international community is planning its exit strategy;
  - The program could serve as an incentive for some citizens to join the Taliban in order to receive the short-term financial benefits of reintegration;
  - Program success is dependent on public consultation and awareness, a motivation for ordinary Afghans to accept R&R, and adequate planning for program sustainability; and
  - The program must not further the culture of impunity.
- Include appropriate accounting and oversight mechanisms to make the reintegration process accountable to Afghans and donors.
- Rebalance aid, development, governance, and security distribution across Afghanistan to ensure that R&R, which will be focused on insurgent areas, does not lead to neglect of other parts of Afghanistan.
- “Hold” a community once it is “won back” from insurgents through the extension of governance and development, rather than with short-term material incentives only.
- Consider a two-tiered approach including:
  - A top-down approach that would focus on engaging with Pakistan as a stronger bilateral part-

ner, or on establishing neutrality and on regional commitments to non-aggression; and

- A bottom-up, Afghanized local approach that would acknowledge and address individual reasons why Afghans join the insurgency.

## PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

This session emphasized the need for credible 2010 parliamentary elections in order to foster and maintain long-term popular support and credibility for the Afghan democratic process and government. It also reiterated a recommendation that has been made persistently but has been continually disregarded by the international community at election time: the necessity of supporting the democratic process in Afghanistan, regardless of its outcome. It is only through objective support for the democratic process in Afghanistan over a long span of time that the international community will retain its legitimacy as a non-interfering actor whose aim is to fundamentally support the development of Afghanistan and its governance.

### Short-Term Recommendations

- Commission a report on elections from a body such as the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) to examine failures of past elections at the local and provincial levels and to identify defective technical procedures that enabled fraud in the past with the aim of identifying micro-level technical lessons that can be addressed immediately.
- Form a specialist United Nations monitoring group along the lines of the election certification team deployed in East Timor in 2007 tasked with reporting its findings on the progress of elections preparations to the UN Security Council.
- Prohibit election officials from monitoring elections in their own districts as a way to guarantee the impartiality of electoral authorities and to bolster public perceptions of election authorities as independent and unbiased.
- Increase funding for public awareness campaigns among the Afghan population about the importance

of the election and their role in it, as well as the full range of candidates and perspectives.

- Utilize a diverse mass media and civil society to undertake elections-related public awareness campaigns.
- Develop election capacity building, monitored by civil society actors, through support of Afghan organizations such as the Free and Fair Elections Foundation (FEFA) and civil society networks.

### Long-Term Recommendations

- Hold a census, as originally outlined in Bonn, as soon as possible in order to inform election planning, and to provide a basis for issuing high-integrity national identity cards to replace the existing system of voter registration.
- Consolidate the electoral calendar and consider holding elections simultaneously since elections are extremely costly undertakings and Afghanistan's constitutional system mandates the holding of a large number of elections.
- Reexamine and reform the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) system, particularly the desirability of leaving it in place once a credible law on political parties comes into effect.
- Develop a transparent vetting system and national funding mechanisms for all candidates in order to give more candidates a fair opportunity to run for office.

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