

Background

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The War in Afghanistan: More Help Needed

James Phillips and Lisa Curtis

As the spring snowmelt signals the onset of Afghanistan's traditional fighting season, the United States has begun to deploy an additional 3,200 Marines to Afghanistan, raising the total U.S. force level to about 32,000.¹ These reinforcements will help to blunt the expected spring offensive by the Taliban-led insurgency, which has grown stronger in recent years.

Yet the United States and the young Afghan government need more international support in their efforts to secure and stabilize Afghanistan, which is a crucial front in the global war against al-Qaeda and its radical allies. Washington and Kabul need greater cooperation from Pakistan in controlling the border and from NATO, which is leading the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Coalition efforts in Afghanistan have suffered from a disjointed and poorly coordinated approach among the different NATO contributors and an overall lack of resources to achieve mission objectives. The United States should press its allies for more troops, fewer political restrictions on their use, more economic aid and capacity-building for the Afghan government, and greater military, economic, and diplomatic coordination. It is particularly important that the United States, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and all coalition forces carry out a unified and integrated strategy and reject separate deals with the Taliban leadership.

The results of the February 18 election in Pakistan, especially the victory of a secular Pashtun party in the province bordering Afghanistan, provide an opportunity to isolate Taliban and al-Qaeda elements in

Talking Points

- The United States and the young Afghan government need greater international support to secure and stabilize Afghanistan, a crucial front in the global war on terrorism.
- France's announcement of an additional 800 troops for Afghanistan is welcome, but other countries should also contribute to share the burden more evenly.
- NATO leaders need to educate their publics about the urgent need to prevent the reestablishment of a terrorist state in Afghanistan, which would greatly amplify the worldwide terrorist threat.
- Washington and Kabul need greater cooperation from Pakistan in denying sanctuary to Taliban and al-Qaeda elements in the border areas. The results of the February 18 Pakistani election provide an opportunity to isolate extremists along the border.
- The U.S. should work with NATO countries on a joint approach to Pakistan and consider appointing a high-level envoy to coordinate policies between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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Produced by the Douglas and Sarah Allison
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Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis
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214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4999
(202) 546-4400 • heritage.org

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Pakistan's Tribal Areas. The new Pakistani civilian government needs to work hand-in-hand with the Pakistan military to carry out a multifaceted campaign to uproot the international terrorist threat and deny al-Qaeda and the Taliban sanctuary in these critical border areas.

The War in Afghanistan

In Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in 2001, the United States and its Afghan and coalition allies inflicted a devastating military defeat on the Taliban regime and its al-Qaeda allies, but the Taliban has regrouped and made a significant comeback in recent years and now threatens Afghanistan's hard-won progress. Fueled by revenues from Afghanistan's booming opium trade and bolstered by support networks that stretch across Afghanistan's porous border into the Pashtun tribal areas of Pakistan, the Taliban and allied insurgent groups have gained control of a steadily increasing swath of Afghan territory.

The number and scope of insurgent attacks have steadily increased, and 2007 was the bloodiest year in Afghanistan since 2001. Although attacks have occurred throughout the country, most are concentrated in the Pashtun heartland in southern and eastern Afghanistan.² Despite repeated coalition victories over insurgent forces, the security situation has deteriorated in some areas of the south, and Taliban forces have expanded their operations into previously peaceful areas of the west and around Kabul.³ In 2007, the Taliban expanded operations into provinces where it had previously been weak, including Ghazni and Lowgar provinces.⁴

Coalition forces have won every major battle with the Taliban and the other insurgents, which lack the firepower to stand against the superior military strength of U.S., NATO, and Afghan forces. In

the past year, coalition forces scored major successes by killing three key Taliban leaders, including Mullah Dadullah, a senior military commander. Targeting Taliban leaders could have a cumulative debilitating impact because charismatic leadership plays an important role in Afghan war-fighting and politics.

Yet these tactical victories have not amounted to a strategic knockout, in large part because the insurgents are free to retreat and regroup in sanctuaries across the Afghan–Pakistani border in the Pashtun tribal belt of Pakistan. These sanctuaries have significantly enhanced the resilience and long-term staying power of the Taliban, which enjoys more popular support from Pakistani Pashtuns than from Afghans who suffered under its harsh rule from 1996 to 2001. Lacking popular support outside of scattered strongholds, predominantly located in southern Afghanistan, the Taliban has increasingly turned to terrorist tactics that have become widespread in Iraq: suicide bombings, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and vehicle bombs.

Taming Pakistan's Tribal Areas

Because the Taliban movement straddles the border with Pakistan—like the ethnic Pashtun population from which most Taliban are drawn—the problems of Afghanistan cannot be addressed effectively without undermining Taliban influence in Pakistan, particularly in the border areas. The Taliban and al-Qaeda elements in this region not only are destabilizing Afghanistan, but also started a bombing campaign in Pakistan in 2007 to sow confusion among the population and demoralize Pakistani security forces. At least 865 Pakistani security personnel and civilians were killed by suicide bombings and IEDs in 2007, and more than 250 Pakistanis have perished in at least 18 suicide attacks in just the first three months of 2008.⁵

1. This figure includes 19,000 U.S. troops under ISAF (see Table 1) and approximately 13,000 troops in Operation Enduring Freedom.
2. For more on the war in Afghanistan, see Lisa Curtis and James Phillips, "Revitalizing U.S. Efforts in Afghanistan," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2076, October 15, 2007, at www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/bg2076.cfm.
3. J. Michael McConnell, "Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence," testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, February 5, 2008, p. 17.
4. Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-War Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service *Report for Congress*, updated January 28, 2008, p. 25, at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30588.pdf (April 4, 2008).

This string of bombings began shortly after the July 2007 confrontation at the Red Mosque in Islamabad, where Taliban-linked militants had holed up for six months, defying the government and calling for an Islamic revolution. The Red Mosque showdown was a watershed in Pakistan's battle against extremism, marking the first time that Pakistani radicals had brazenly challenged state authority. The suicide bombing campaign also follows Pakistani assistance in the capture and killing of senior Taliban leader Mullah Dadullah in Afghanistan in May 2007 and the death of Pakistani Taliban commander Abdullah Mehsud during a raid by Pakistani security forces on his hideout in Baluchistan last July.

Tackling the Taliban/al-Qaeda threat in Pakistan's Tribal Areas will require a multifaceted effort that includes close U.S.–Pakistan coordination and cooperation, large-scale economic assistance, precision military operations against terrorist leaders, a comprehensive effort to undermine the extremist ideologies that drive the various groups in the region, and a new political arrangement that incorporates the region into Pakistan proper. The new Pakistani civilian government has an opportunity to make headway against the extremists, but only if it develops a serious strategy that recognizes the gravity of the threat and works hand-in-hand with the military leadership.

An Opportunity to Marginalize Extremists

Major electoral gains by the secular Pashtun Awami National Party (ANP) over the religious parties in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) in Pakistan's February 18 elections could foster a political environment that helps to isolate Taliban and al-Qaeda elements along the border. The vote in the NWFP clearly repudiated extremists' efforts over the past year to push a strict Islamic agenda by closing girls' schools, burning video stores, and threatening barbers—the same tactics that the Taliban used to cow the Afghans in the mid-1990s. Although the ANP does not enjoy support through-



out the entire region, especially in the most troublesome southern tribal agencies, its recent election victory provides a limited opportunity to roll back the “talibanization” of the province and extend government control in parts of the semi-autonomous Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). (See Map 1.)

The ANP's electoral victory will be helpful in the NWFP's Swat Valley district, where the Pakistan

5. John D. Negroponte “Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence,” unclassified statement before the Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. Senate, February 5, 2008, at www.dni.gov/testimonies/20080205_testimony.pdf (April 4, 2008).

Army is conducting operations to roll back a Taliban-backed insurgency that swept the region in 2007. The ANP won all of the provincial assembly seats and one National Assembly seat in the Swat district, campaigning on a platform of bringing peace to the troubled region. Large swaths of the district had come under the control of Maulana Fazlullah, leader of the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammad, a Pakistani militant group that supported the Taliban after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and that now seeks enforcement of Shariah law in Pakistan.

In November, the Pakistan army launched a major operation with 10,000 troops to retake the territory. A Pakistani general said in late February that the army had secured 90 percent of the region and would continue operations until it had driven the militants from the region.

Hazards of Tactical Negotiations

Recent statements from the new civilian leadership emphasizing negotiations as a way to reduce the terrorist threat emanating from the FATA are cause for concern. Asif Zardari, co-chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, recently said that the war against the insurgents in the FATA must be redefined as "Pakistan's war" and that it should be dealt with through talks and the use of more police force rather than the army. Pakistan Muslim League/Nawaz (PML/N) leader Nawaz Sharif likened the situation in the Tribal Areas to the Northern Ireland problem, emphasizing the need to negotiate.⁶

Comparing the situation in the Tribal Areas to that in Northern Ireland, however, ignores the global threat from this region. Most international terrorist plots against Western countries that have been executed or thwarted during the past three years have had links to the Tribal Areas. Additionally, the insurgents that find refuge in Pakistan's border areas are battling nearly 60,000 U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan. While Pakistani leaders should indeed

lead a public debate on the spread of terrorism and extremism in Pakistan, they cannot ignore the international nature of the threat from these areas.

Pakistani civilian leaders who are considering negotiations to curb terrorism in Pakistan also need to take into account the results of President Pervez Musharraf's efforts to establish peace deals with militants in the FATA. While Pakistan's military has conducted military operations in the FATA since late 2003, it has also tried to make tactical peace deals since early 2005 to pacify the region. Many of these peace deals have backfired and instead have strengthened Taliban/al-Qaeda influence in the area.⁷

The Pakistan military achieved some success in spring 2007 when it turned a group of South Waziristan militants led by Maulvi Nazir against a group of Uzbek militants, leading to a major internecine battle that killed nearly 200 Uzbek terrorists. Maulvi Nazir was apparently supported by independent pro-Taliban groups of the area, Punjabi members of banned sectarian and Kashmiri militant groups, and his own tribe members.⁸ The Pakistani army provided medical support to Nazir's forces and helped him secure the bases vacated by the Uzbeks. Although this deal relieved pressure on Pakistan's military and temporarily stabilized part of the border region, tactical military negotiations alone are unlikely to uproot terrorism from the region or lead to long-term stability.

A realistic evaluation of the situation in the Tribal Areas points to the need to continue targeted military operations that decapitate the terrorist leadership and disrupt terrorist plans and operations. The new Pakistan government also needs to avoid promoting a negotiating process that legitimizes the extremists and boosts both their image with the local population and their ability to consolidate authority over Pakistani territory. Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher has stated on several occasions that

6. Masood Haider, "Asif, Nawaz Hint at Changing Anti-Terrorism Policy," *Dawn* (Karachi, Pakistan), March 23, 2008, at www.dawn.com/2008/03/23/top5.htm (April 8, 2008).

7. Imtiaz Ali, "The Emerging Militancy in Pakistan's Mohmand Agency," *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 6, Issue 2 (January 24, 2008), at http://jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?issue_id=4363 (March 19, 2008).

8. Hassan Abbas, "South Waziristan's Maulvi Nazir: The New Face of the Taliban," *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 5, Issue 9 (May 10, 2007), at www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2373385 (March 24, 2008).

peace deals must be backed by force and achieve the desired outcome.

The key to uprooting terrorism from the Tribal Areas is to develop a joint U.S.–Pakistan strategy. Washington and other influential capitals need to convey to Islamabad that the international community will not tolerate the existence of a refuge for Taliban/al-Qaeda elements, which are fighting coalition forces in Afghanistan and training and inspiring international terrorists. At the same time, Washington should reassure Pakistan that it is sensitive to concerns about destabilization of Pakistani society and is committed to the country's long-term stability and prosperity.

Trilateral Efforts to Control Border

Efforts to improve trilateral cooperation among coalition, Pakistani, and Afghan forces along the Afghan–Pakistani frontier should also help to bring coherence to the fight against extremists straddling the border. At the end of March, a border coordinating center manned by Afghan, Pakistani, and coalition forces opened at Torkham Gate, a critical crossing point through the Khyber Pass. A second border coordination center is scheduled to open in June across from the Pakistani city of Miram Shah, followed by six additional centers.⁹

In the past, Pakistani and Afghan officials have blamed each other for the Taliban's ability to cross back and forth between their two countries. Senior U.S. diplomats and military officials have also criticized Pakistan's inability to prevent Taliban militants from crossing into Afghanistan. According to former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Ronald Neuman, U.S. military commanders have observed firsthand the incoherent approach of Pakistan military officers toward the Taliban in the Tribal Areas. Neuman attributed the Pakistani Army's ineffectiveness to either "fear of the individual [Taliban] commanders" or sheer "absence of policy."¹⁰

ISAF's Rocky Road

Initially, NATO participated in Operation Enduring Freedom to only a limited degree, but in 2003 it assumed leadership of the ISAF, which was created under a U.N. mandate in 2002 to undertake postwar stabilization and reconstruction missions in Afghanistan.

Many NATO members that signed up to participate focused more on reconstruction than on security and stabilization. A common sentiment was that economic development would make the Taliban irrelevant, but economic development cannot be sustained without security and respect for the rule of law, human rights, and property rights.

Lacking resources and trained professionals, the Afghan government has found it extremely difficult to extend its authority in a civil society that had been traumatized by 30 years of constant warfare. Moreover, the Taliban has persistently played the spoiler by exploiting Afghan xenophobia, religious beliefs, lack of rule of law, the mushrooming black market narco-economy, and tribal rivalries.

NATO, like the United States, was initially caught off guard by the Taliban's revived strength, which gained momentum in 2005.¹¹ The United States opted for a "light footprint" policy in Afghanistan to minimize the stoking of the Afghans' easily aroused xenophobia and to free military forces for Iraq.

Although Afghanistan is larger than Iraq in size and population, it is protected by far fewer government and foreign troops. Before the dispatch of 3,200 U.S. Marines, which began arriving on March 18, OEF forces numbered only about 13,000 troops, which focused on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and training missions with the Afghan National Army. As of April 1, ISAF consists of about 47,000 troops from 40 NATO and non-

9. Major General David Rodriguez, "DoD News Briefing with Maj. Gen. Rodriguez from Afghanistan," February 26, 2008, at www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4159 (March 24, 2008).

10. Steve Coll, "Time Bomb," *The New Yorker*, January 28, 2008, at www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/01/28/080128fa_fact_coll (April 4, 2008).

11. See James Phillips, "Afghanistan's Elections and the Resurgent Taliban," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 847, September 16, 2005, at www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/wm847.cfm (April 9, 2008).

NATO countries, including about 19,000 from the United States. (See Table 1.)

There is a great need for more ISAF troops to secure and stabilize the countryside, but this may be politically difficult given growing opposition in several European countries to increased involvement. Many of the NATO and non-NATO countries that joined ISAF did so presuming that they would conduct peacekeeping and reconstruction operations, not fight an insurgency.

Washington's efforts to induce its allies to strengthen their contributions to ISAF have yielded mixed results. At the 2006 Riga summit, Britain, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Macedonia, and Spain agreed to commit more personnel to the force, but others stayed on the sidelines. In 2007, the United States, Britain, Denmark, and Poland dispatched greater numbers of troops, but other countries appear to be wavering in their commitments to provide troops. France announced at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest that it will send 800 additional troops to eastern Afghanistan, but this falls well short of the level of troop commitments necessary to stabilize Afghanistan. Senior U.S. military officials have recently indicated that as many as 10,000–15,000 additional troops are needed.

Another problem has been the restrictions, or “national caveats,” put on the use of troops contributed to ISAF. Many NATO members have barred their military forces from operating in high-threat areas, engaging in dangerous missions, or moving outside of narrowly defined geographic areas. For example, Germany has restricted its relatively large ISAF contingent to operations in the calm northern part of Afghanistan, where its troops patrol only in armored vehicles and do not leave their bases at night.¹² Many countries, including Italy, Spain, and Turkey, have refused requests to deploy their troops in southern Afghanistan, where the most intense fighting has occurred.

This has put more of a burden on U.S., Australian, British, Canadian, and Dutch forces, which have undertaken most of the combat operations in southern Afghanistan. Danish, Estonian, Polish,

Table 1				B 2124			
International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan							
Contributing Nation	Troops*	Contributing Nation	Troops*				
United States	19,000	Croatia	210				
United Kingdom	7,750	Portugal	170				
Germany	3,490	Albania	140				
Canada	2,500	Greece	130				
Italy	2,360	Macedonia	130				
Netherlands	1,730	Estonia	120				
France	1,430	New Zealand	110				
Australia	1,100	Finland	100				
Poland	1,020	Latvia	100				
Spain	770	Jordan	90				
Turkey	750	Slovenia	70				
Denmark	690	Slovakia	60				
Norway	540	Azerbaijan	40				
Romania	530	Iceland	10				
Bulgaria	400	Luxemburg	9				
Belgium	360	Ireland	7				
Sweden	350	Ukraine	3				
Czech Republic	290	Austria	2				
Lithuania	260	Singapore	2				
Hungary	250	Georgia	1				
Total Support Elements (rounded)		47,000					

* Totals include both NATO and National Support Elements.
Source: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “International Security Assistance Force,” April 1, 2008, at www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf (April 4, 2008).

and Romanian forces have been actively engaged in the fighting in other areas. The de facto segregation of coalition forces into frontline and “stand aside” units has undermined NATO's effectiveness, flexibility, and unity of purpose. This is no way to fight or win a war.

Canada, which has admirably taken the lead and made a vital contribution to bolstering the security of southern Afghanistan, has become increasingly frustrated with the lack of support from other NATO allies. The Canadian government has threatened to pull out its 2,500 troops when their parliamentary mandate expires in 2009 unless it receives reinforcements from other allies.

12. Paul Gallis, “NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, updated January 7, 2008, at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33627.pdf (April 4, 2008).

The French pledge to send an additional 800 troops to eastern Afghanistan will free some U.S. forces to move south to help the Canadians in Kandahar province. However, other NATO nations still need to fulfill their commitments and provide additional military forces and economic development funds to wage a more effective counterinsurgency campaign in the Taliban's heartland.

Streamlining the International Reconstruction Effort

The reconstruction effort in Afghanistan lacks strong leadership in coordinating the various assistance programs, which involve more than 40 contributing nations, the U.N., the World Bank, the European Union, and several nongovernmental organizations. As a senior U.N. official recently said, "the international community has been committed and generous, but all too often insufficiently united" in providing aid to Afghanistan.

Over the past six years, international assistance has raised many Afghans' living standards by providing health facilities and education opportunities. However, the aid has been less effective in strengthening the institutions of the state and bolstering the central government's authority throughout the country. A recent report from the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief reveals that major donors have fallen behind in their pledges and that two-thirds of international assistance to Afghanistan bypasses the Afghan government.

To address these problems, on March 20, the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1806,¹³ which sharpens the mandate of new United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Representative Kai Edie. The resolution empowers the UNAMA representative to coordinate all international civilian assistance and to act as a point-person for civilian-military coordination in Afghanistan.

The resolution further calls for "more coherent support by the international community to the Afghan government" and calls on the UNAMA representative to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian

assistance to build the capacity of the Afghan government. While individual countries will likely resist taking direction from the U.N. representative on how to spend their assistance funds, the strengthened mandate for the UNAMA representative should bring a higher level of accountability and coherence to the overall international reconstruction process.

More International Help Needed

All NATO allies share the goal of preventing the return of a terrorist regime to Afghanistan, but they differ over how best to attain this goal, the policy priorities, and how many military and economic resources should be devoted to this goal. The United States, due to the searing experience of the 9/11 attacks, puts a much higher priority on destroying al-Qaeda and bringing top Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders to justice. Britain has been generally supportive due to its own experiences with terrorism that has been linked to groups based in Pakistan's border areas.

However, Germany, Italy, Spain, and many other European countries are where the U.S. was in 1993 after the first World Trade Center bombing. They do not see themselves as being at war with Islamist terrorist networks, but seek to handle the terrorist threat primarily as a law enforcement matter. This leaves them much less willing to sacrifice to wage war and build peace in Afghanistan.

This school of thought will eventually be discredited by further terrorist atrocities, as it was in the United States on 9/11. Until then, NATO leaders need to do their best to educate their publics about the urgent need to prevent the reestablishment of a terrorist state in Afghanistan, which would greatly amplify the terrorist threat in Europe and around the world.

In addition, they should stress the important stake that all NATO members have in reducing the flow of opium and heroin from Afghanistan. Afghanistan now provides 93 percent of the world's illicit opium supplies. Moreover, the cultivation of opium poppies is significantly correlated with the

13. U.N. Security Council, Resolution 1806, March 20, 2008, at www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Afgh%20S%20RES%201806.pdf (April 6, 2008).

areas controlled by the Taliban-led insurgency, such as Helmand province.

To maximize the prospects for successfully stabilizing Afghanistan, the United States should:

- **Press NATO allies to provide more troops.** ISAF forces are stretched thin across Afghanistan's rugged terrain. A larger ground presence is necessary to wage a more effective counterinsurgency campaign and reduce its dependence on air strikes, which can often produce civilian casualties.

The United States has led by example, committing an additional 3,200 U.S. Marines for a seven-month deployment in southern Afghanistan. The lead elements of this force began arriving in Kandahar on March 18. French President Nicolas Sarkozy's announcement of an additional 800 troops is welcome but insufficient. Other countries should also contribute to share the burden more evenly. Washington should especially press Turkey for additional troops in return for stepped-up American cooperation with Turkish counterterrorist operations in northern Iraq against the Kurdistan Workers' Party forces.

- **Seek to remove as many national caveats as possible.** The United States and the other front-line NATO members should press reluctant NATO allies to remove national caveats that hinder joint operations against insurgents and threaten the long-term success of the NATO mission in Afghanistan. These restrictions hamper the flexibility and effectiveness of NATO forces and make the situation more difficult for other ISAF contingents by forcing them to shoulder a disproportionate share of the war-fighting. All ISAF elements should be able to participate in joint operations and fight under common rules of engagement wherever possible. ISAF and OEF forces also need to improve coordination of their operations.
- **Seek greater NATO involvement in building up, training, and financing the expansion of the Afghan army and police.** The Afghans will ultimately determine the outcome of the struggle and are more capable of sustaining the effort than the many NATO members that do not perceive themselves as being at war. The Afghan National

Army (ANA) was created only six years ago and has made great strides in improving its effectiveness, but it is still a work in progress. It is severely underfunded, underequipped, and undersized. It is rapidly approaching its goal of 70,000 fully trained and equipped troops by 2009 but is handicapped by inadequate pay, which has contributed to problems in retaining trained soldiers.

NATO should undertake a commitment to expand the ANA far beyond its planned end strength of 80,000, boost the number of foreign trainers and embedded advisers to improve its effectiveness, and establish a fund to finance its expansion and subsidize its operations and salaries.

- **Call for a common strategy for inducing greater Pakistani cooperation in combating the Taliban and constraining Islamic radicalism.** The U.S. should work with NATO countries on a joint approach to Pakistan that addresses the problems in the Tribal Areas. NATO should consider appointing a high-level envoy to coordinate policies between Afghanistan and Pakistan, especially efforts to control the border and to promote Afghan-Pakistani military cooperation.
- **Call on the NATO commander to increase coordination on civilian reconstruction and military operations with the new UNAMA representative.** This will help to integrate civilian activities with military operations, expediting the delivery of reconstruction aid to areas that have been cleared of the Taliban.
- **Rule out a peace agreement with top Taliban leaders.** President Hamid Karzai has repeatedly hinted at negotiations with Taliban and other insurgent leaders. On September 29, he offered to include Taliban militants in his government if they agreed to a peace deal. While diplomatic efforts to split the loosely knit insurgents could pay dividends if managed correctly, any insurgents included in the negotiations must agree to renounce the Taliban's harsh ideology, denounce their ties to al-Qaeda, and publicly break with the Taliban. No deals should be offered to Mullah Omar, other top leaders, or anyone who has committed terrorist atrocities. NATO members

also need to reject cease-fires that undermine government legitimacy and help the Taliban.

- **Substantially increase aid to the North-West Frontier Province and the Tribal Areas in tandem with the Pakistani military and the local provincial administration.** The focal point of international involvement in the region should be to provide large-scale assistance that gives hope to the people and builds confidence in the ability of Pakistani state authorities to meet their basic needs. U.S. economic assistance has already begun flowing into the tribal border areas with the U.S. Agency for International Development allocating \$90 million in fiscal year 2008 for projects in education, health, road-building, and economic growth.¹⁴ The Pakistan government's openness in allowing U.S. aid programs into the sensitive areas is a positive sign.

To isolate the extremists, Washington should seek to ensure that the aid also bolsters the local ANP-led government and builds the population's confidence in the government. The U.S. should also move forward with legislation that establishes reconstruction opportunity zones to provide duty-free access to the U.S. for goods produced in NWFP industrial zones. These zones can play an integral part in the overall development of the region, providing jobs and economic linkages between the underdeveloped tribal areas and the rest of the country.

- **Expedite counterinsurgency training of Pakistan's Frontier Corps.** The U.S. has moved slowly with plans to train Pakistani Pashtun paramilitary troops, partly because of disagreement over the potential benefits of such training programs. The Frontier Corps is drawn from Pashtun tribes and includes officers from the Pakistan Army.

Given the Frontier Corps' lack of success in confronting terrorists in the FATA and Swat Valley and their ethnic links to the region, many argue

that investing in training programs for these troops will be a waste of U.S. resources. Others argue that the Frontier Corps' Pashtun composition is an asset because the nature of counterinsurgency operations requires troops who are welcomed by the local population, not seen as a foreign occupying force. While training the Frontier Corps may not seem like the optimal solution, it probably offers the best chance for bolstering Pakistani forces against the extremists and provides an opportunity for the U.S. to build ties to troops that have close links to the region.

For its part, Pakistan should:

- **Pursue deradicalization programs and delegitimize suicide bombings.** As Pakistan works to combat extremism, it should consider adopting policies to deprogram or deradicalize militants that pose less of a direct security threat. Nearly a dozen countries, including the U.S. in Iraq, have recently started programs to educate radicals about the gap between their religious ideals and the groups that they follow—often with the help of clerics and ex-terrorists.

In 2003, Singapore launched the Religious Rehabilitation Group, in which volunteer clerics lead weekly one-on-one counseling sessions with detainees to expose them to the distortions in the radical Jemaah Islamiyah doctrine.¹⁵ Indonesia has been experimenting with similar deradicalization programs for the past three years using reformed, high-profile prisoners to convince radicals of the error of their ways through the force of argument.¹⁶ Pakistan greatly needs a public relations campaign that emphasizes the horrors of suicide bombings and portrays such acts as cultish behavior with no religious or political legitimacy.

- **Reform intelligence and police services.** Before her assassination, Benazir Bhutto told an interviewer that dismantling the terrorist networks that threatened the unity of the Pakistani

14. U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification: Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2008*, p. 564, at www.state.gov/documents/organization/84462.pdf (April 4, 2008).

15. Simon Montlake, "U.S. Tries Rehab for Religious Extremists," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 9, 2007, at www.csmonitor.com/2007/1009/p01s04-woap.html (April 4, 2008).

16. International Crisis Group, "'Deradicalisation' and Indonesian Prisons," *Asia Report* No. 142, November 19, 2007.

state would be difficult unless the Pakistani security apparatus is reformed. According to a recent Strategic Forecasting analysis, extremists have aggressively used their connections to the state's security and intelligence apparatus to conduct their operations.¹⁷ Completely severing these links will take time and strong leadership in the intelligence and security services. Disenchantment with the recent wave of suicide bombings may provide an opportunity to draw clearer lines between the violent extremists and nationalistic Pakistanis.

Conclusion

Afghanistan has made tremendous progress since the 2001 overthrow of the Taliban dictatorship, but this progress is threatened by a growing insurgency, mounting regional instability, and a disjointed and underresourced international response.

The mission in Afghanistan requires a steadfast commitment to providing security for Afghan civilians, rooting out the Taliban and other Islamic extremists, boosting the Afghan economy, and helping the Afghans to build a responsive government

that will be an effective ally in the war on terrorism. The conflict will be a protracted one, and the U.S.-led coalition needs to adopt a coherent long-term strategy that integrates military, political, and economic instruments.

The U.S. should welcome the results of Pakistan's recent elections, which brought to power a coalition of mainstream centrist parties, and seek to build an effective joint strategy with Islamabad to uproot terrorism from the tribal borderlands. Washington should convey to the Pakistani leadership the importance of its partnership in overcoming the terrorist scourge that threatens both Pakistan and the global community. Integrating NATO policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan is necessary to stabilize the region and prevent the Taliban from regaining influence in Afghanistan.

—James Phillips is Senior Research Fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, a division of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies, and Lisa Curtis is Senior Research Fellow for South Asia in the Asian Studies Center at The Heritage Foundation.

17. "Pakistan: Democracy and the Jihadist Threat," Strategic Forecasting, Inc., March 12, 2008.