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AFGHANISTAN AND SOUTHWEST ASIAN SECURITY

DRAFT REPORT

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* Until this document has been approved by the Political Committee, it represents only the views of the Rapporteur.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since 2001, Afghanistan has been a high priority for the international community, which has committed to strengthening Afghan governance, development, and security. While the international community, including NATO, has focused on the situation within the country, the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan involves complex relationships between domestic, regional, and international actors. Afghanistan's neighbours undoubtedly have a stake in Afghanistan's stability and prosperity, but the situation in the region is rife with tension. As the 2014 deadline for transition to full Afghan authority approaches it is all the more important to review the situation in Afghanistan within its regional context.

2. This report surveys the current state of transition in Afghanistan, with a view to the regional and international context. Special attention is given to Afghanistan's relations with its neighbours – Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, and particularly to Afghanistan's delicate and deeply intertwined relations with Pakistan. Pakistan is an indispensable neighbour when it comes to successfully stabilizing Afghanistan. Finally the report examines the role of the international community, beyond NATO, in the transition, noting that even after 2014, the international community, and NATO member states in particular will continue to have a key role in shaping the future of Afghan and regional security.

II. TRANSITION IN AFGHANISTAN – THE STATE OF PLAY

3. At the 2010 Lisbon Summit, NATO heads of state and government agreed to a framework for transferring full responsibility for Afghanistan's security, governance and development to Afghan authorities. They also committed to ending all Alliance-led combat operations in the country before 2015. According to the transition plan ("Inteqal"), international military and civilian agencies would gradually shift from engaging in direct interventions in Afghanistan towards undertaking training, advising and assistance roles in Afghanistan. The phased transfer of security responsibilities from International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) would occur at the district and sub-district levels, based on the ANSF's ability to tackle local security challenges and on the effectiveness of local governance. The first two phases of transition commenced in 2011. By the time they are complete, Afghan authorities will be responsible for the security of over half the country's population (U.S. Department of Defense, 2011).

4. At the beginning of 2012, 130,000 foreign soldiers were still stationed in Afghanistan, with the U.S. being by far the largest force contributor. By September, the 90,000 U.S. troops will have been reduced to 68,000 (Whitlock & DeYoung, 2012). In February, US Defence Secretary Panetta laid out the clearest plan yet for American troops, saying, "hopefully, by mid- to the latter part of 2013, [the US will] be able to make [...] a transition from a combat role to a training, advice and assist role," but it remained unclear what the exact pace of withdrawal would be after September (Martinez, 2012). While certain countries, such as the Netherlands and Canada, have already pulled out their troops, they have maintained personnel to train the ANSF. Some nations also intend to keep trainers in the country post 2014. Italy, for instance, signed a partnership agreement stating it would continue to offer financial support and military training to Afghanistan after 2014 (Associated Press, 2012). The US is negotiating a strategic partnership agreement with the Afghan government that would permit it to keep some military personnel indefinitely in the country, for training and counterterrorism operations (AFP, Al-Akhbar, 2012).

5. As international troops leave the country, the Afghan army and police force must be sufficiently large to provide for the country's security. In February 2012, the ANSF counted 310,000 members – only 42,000 short of the 352,000 NATO hoped to see - and there was no paucity of recruits (Whitlock & DeYoung, 2012). However, by early this year it was no longer

certain that the Alliance would be able to subsidise a 352,000-strong force. The salaries of the police and soldiers alone were estimated to require between \$5 and \$6 billion a year, a cost the Afghan government would not be able to cover on its own. Foreign nations will need to continue paying for the bulk of ANSF's training and equipment long after 2014. In February, US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said that the United States and NATO would ask Japan, South Korea and other countries to help subsidise the Afghan army and police, and that the amount of international funding would "in many ways" determine the size of the force that could be sustained (Whitlock & DeYoung, 2012).

6. Strengthening the capacities of Afghan security forces is key to the transition process. After 2009, when ISAF's commander, General Stanley McChrystal, "increased emphasis on building the capability of the ANSF," training capacity and quality improved considerably (Barry, 2011), and in 2010 and 2011, the international community devoted over \$20 billion to training Afghan forces, equal the previous eight years' worth of funding (Barry, 2011). Since 2009, the NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan (NTM-A), in co-ordination with Alliance nations and partners, international organisations, donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), has been training the Afghan army and police. The NTM-A's activities are complemented by local NATO initiatives such as the UK-led Helmand Police Training Centre. Other programmes also feed into the expansion of the security services. The Afghan Local Police Initiative, for instance, supports local armed villagers so they can provide security for their own villages and allows for transition of personnel to the ANSF.

7. Despite greater allied efforts at strengthening the ANSF, the police and army continue to be weakened by high attrition rates, low literacy, drug abuse, ethnic tensions, corruption, a shortfall of trainers and a lack of leadership skills. Lt Gen Curtis Scaparrotti, deputy commander of U.S. forces and the head of the NATO-led force's joint command, acknowledged in February that the Afghan army and police were far from being able to manage the country's security without major assistance from foreign troops, with only about 1% of units capable of conducting operations independently. Nevertheless, Scaparrotti said that 42% of Afghan forces were ranked as "effective," when working with the support of coalition advisers, and would be "good enough" to take over security by the end of 2014 (Agence France-Presse, 2012).

8. A recent spate of attacks by ANSF personnel against international staff has raised real concerns regarding the reliability of Afghan partners and has affected the pace of training. In January 2012, an Afghan soldier killed four French troops. Subsequently, President Sarkozy announced that France would temporarily suspend its training programmes and speed up its troop drawdown— pulling 1,000 soldiers out this year and bringing all combat forces home at the end of 2013 (Whitlock & DeYoung, 2012). In February, days after the burning of Korans at a US military base, two American military advisers were killed inside the Afghan Ministry of Interior, one of the most heavily guarded buildings in Kabul (Riechmann, 2012). In response, NATO, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Canada pulled hundreds of advisers out of Afghan ministries, interrupting mentoring and training programmes. The advisers have since returned, but restoring trust between them and their Afghan counterparts would clearly be a challenge.

9. The increased tensions between ISAF and the ANSF, as well as President Sarkozy's announcement of an accelerated French withdrawal, raised the question whether NATO Allies would be able to continue the implementation of the transition plan as agreed (Erlanger & Nordland, 2012). After the February killings of American troops by Afghan forces, however, President Obama said that the US plans would not change (Riechmann, 2012). The murders in March of 17 Afghani civilians by an American soldier – the worst atrocity by a US service member during the ten year war – seriously shook Afghans' confidence in ISAF and in the US forces in particular. However, US Defense Secretary Panetta stated that the killings should not undermine the "strategy or the mission that we're involved in" (Reuters, 2012). That said, it is still unclear

whether the violence, tensions and decreased trust amongst both Afghans and the Allies will alter transition plans in the coming months.

10. The success of the transition is not dependent solely on the security environment. Indeed, NATO's political strategy for transition has stressed the importance of efforts aimed at improving governance and long-term sustainable economic development (Barry, 2011). Effective governance, at the national and sub-national levels, is crucial for strengthening the legitimacy of the Afghan government. Improved provision of public services, reduced corruption, and the development of a more fair and efficient justice system are essential for undermining support for the Taliban. However, corruption remains rampant, including at the highest levels. Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Afghanistan the third most corrupt country, out of 183 surveyed (Transparency International). According to a United Nations study released in 2010, during the course of one year, approximately 25% of Afghans had to pay at least one bribe to the police and local officials, and between 10 to 20% had to pay bribes to judges, prosecutors, doctors and members of the government (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010). The corruption of the state justice system, along with its inefficiency, has led many people to turn to the Taliban to settle disputes. According to a 2011 report by the international Crisis Group, "[d]espite the significant resources devoted to the security sector and a greater focus on the police in recent years, the U.S. and its NATO Allies have failed to help build a functioning justice system that can enforce the rule of law." Indeed, according to a 2010 Integrity Watch Afghanistan survey, half the Afghan population sees the courts as the most corrupt government institution, and only two-thirds of Afghans have access to courts (Peter, 2012).

11. The pace of economic growth will also affect stability and the success of the transition. The government needs tax revenues to pay for reconstruction and to support its security and governance institutions. Moreover, jobs and food security can "underpin a transition away from a war economy" (Redman, 2011). While Afghanistan's GDP has grown significantly since 2001, largely due to the infusion of international assistance, the recovery of the agricultural sector, and service sector growth (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012), the country remains one of the poorest in the world, with a 2010 per capita GDP of only \$500 (The World Bank, 2012).

12. NATO's political strategy also set out that transition be accompanied by reconciliation between the Afghan government and key insurgent groups (Barry, 2011). Since 2010, the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme has been helping reintegrate former fighters who renounce violence, break ties with terrorists, and agree to abide by the Afghan Constitution back into their communities. By mid-2011, more than 1,700 former fighters had publicly joined the programme (GIROA-led, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan-led). The Afghan government has continued negotiations with insurgent groups.

13. US, Afghan, and Taliban representatives have begun three-way talks that Washington hopes will lead to direct peace talks between the Taliban and Kabul (Yaaroslav & Murray, 2012). In Afghanistan and amongst the international community, it has become increasingly acknowledged that sustainable stability cannot "be achieved without successful negotiations with the Taliban" (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011). However, the Taliban are a diverse movement and it is not always clear with whom the US or the Afghan government should be negotiating. The Obama Administration, for instance, has considered the Taliban leader Mullah Omar to be a critical figure in organising the peace talks, but even Omar does not have authority over all of the Afghan Taliban (Coll, 2012). While Karzai has expressed optimism about the peace process, there are major obstacles to success. Some doubt, for instance, that Taliban factions will have enough incentives to negotiate in good faith and will instead wait until international forces leave before trying to regain power. A recent spate of Taliban violence seems to support the view that the Taliban are not a reconciliatory group willing to negotiate (Bowley & Sahak, 2012). Another obstacle is Washington's on-going discussion with Kabul regarding

maintaining a long-term US military presence in the country, since Taliban leaders have claimed that they will keep fighting as long as American soldiers remain on Afghan soil (Yaaroslav & Murray, 2012). A further potential impediment to peace talks is the alleged support given to the Afghan Taliban by elements within the Pakistani military and intelligence services (Yaaroslav & Murray, 2012)¹. Indeed, the prospects for a stable and secure Afghanistan very much depend on the country's neighbours, and most notably on Pakistan, to which we now turn.

III. AFGHANISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS

A. AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: A CLOSE AND CRUCIAL, IF COMPLEX, RELATIONSHIP

14. Pakistan is crucial for the security and stability of its region and certainly of Afghanistan and the whole region. Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have long been uneasy. The contested Durand Line, which separates the two countries but divides the Pashtun communities on both sides, has been a source of friction since Pakistan's founding. Afghanistan has not recognised the border and has in the past called for a separate 'Pashtunistan,' which would incorporate Pashtun populations living in Pakistan, while Islamabad has vehemently opposed Pashtun separatism and has tried to ensure that Pashtuns on its side of the border look to Pakistan and not Kabul for leadership. Afghan officials have also accused Pakistan of interfering in their country's internal affairs and of supporting the Afghan Taliban, which has used Pakistan's border areas as safe havens and training grounds. Moreover, both sides have complained of insurgents crossing over the border from the others' territory. Developments in 2010, particularly the establishment of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Commission for Reconciliation and Peace, the forging of the Afghan-Pakistani Transit Trade Agreement and the signing of an agreement on the construction of rail tracks to connect with Pakistan Railways, seemed to signal a strengthening of ties. But the killing in September 2011 of Burhanuddin Rabbani, chairman of the Afghan High Peace Council and former Afghan president, a killing Afghans believed Pakistanis to be complicit in, seriously setback relations and strengthened the perception that Pakistan was contributing to its neighbour's instability (Roy-Chaudhury, 2011).

15. Pakistan clearly has a strong interest in a stable Afghanistan. Increased instability in its northwestern neighbour would have serious negative repercussions for Pakistan, including a greater influx of refugees, arms and militants into the country, with the consequence of increased social and ethnic tensions, violence, and an additional strain on already limited economic opportunities. What is more, a Taliban takeover post-2014 could encourage the Pakistani Taliban, which has been fighting the Pakistani army, and offer it a blueprint for its efforts to overthrow the government (Roy-Chaudhury, 2011). However, Pakistan's dedication to fostering Afghan stability has been mixed. Despite Kabul's and Washington's complaints, the Pakistani army has not done much to go after the Afghan Taliban on its territory. The army claims this is due to lack of capacity, and this may hold some truth, but Pakistani support for the Taliban seems to be active as well. There have also been repeated claims that elements within the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, Pakistan's chief intelligence service, have provided direct assistance to the Afghan Taliban, including its leadership council, the Quetta Shura, and to the Haqqani network, a group that the former US chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has called a "veritable arm" of the ISI (Bumiller & Perlez, 2011).

16. Independent analysts attribute Islamabad's limited support for the stabilisation of Afghanistan to Pakistan's rivalry with India: Delhi's presence and attempt at influence in Afghanistan is viewed as a means of encircling Pakistan, leading Islamabad to search for "strategic depth" in its

¹ See also, NATO's report on the situation in Afghanistan, including on Pakistani intelligence services support to the Taliban: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16821218>

neighbourhood. As such, a stable Afghanistan, while attractive, has been viewed as secondary to a friendly Afghan regime with limited ties to India. Some analysts also believe Pakistan's relations with the Taliban are a form of hedging, in light of the inevitable withdrawal of ISAF troops and the possibility of the Taliban gaining power in a new Afghan government, including through the nascent Taliban-Kabul peace talks that Pakistan could help facilitate.

17. Pakistan seems well placed to influence the peace negotiations, not least because it is home to a large number of Afghan Taliban and their families, to key Taliban bases and to the Taliban leadership. In February 2012, for the first time Pakistan publicly called on the Afghan Taliban and other Afghan groups to participate in a reconciliation process with Kabul, suggesting Islamabad may have more influence over the groups than it usually admits (Walsh & Schmitt, 2012). Yet to what extent the Pakistan will help further the negotiations will depend on a number of factors, not least its relations with the Allies, and the United States in particular.

18. Despite its alleged links with Afghan insurgents, Pakistan has in many ways facilitated US, coalition and NATO operations in its neighbourhood. Indeed, Islamabad's support of what many Pakistanis view the "American" war, along with its quiet acquiescence to American drone strikes within its borders, have "fuelled the rise of violent Islamist extremists" in the country (The Economist, 2012). Since 2001, terrorist attacks have risen significantly, mostly in the Pashtun belt in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the tribal areas. While some Pakistani-based militant groups have focused their operations against external targets, sectarian and anti-government groups have targeted civilian and military Pakistanis. The Pakistani army has been able to weaken anti-government groups, such as the Pakistani Taliban, as well as al-Qaeda, but has not been able to quell the violence, which continues to plague the country. Terrorist-related violence has claimed some 35,000 Pakistani lives, including more than 30,000 civilians, over the past eight years, and has cost the Pakistani economy an estimated \$40 billion (Roy-Chaudhury, 2011).

19. On top of insecurity, Pakistan grapples with numerous other challenges, which also add to instability, including weak governance and a struggling economy. Pakistan's inefficient policy implementation and inadequate public service delivery exemplify the ineffectiveness of governance, while the judicial system is slow and crippled by corruption (Legatum Institute, 2011). The army, in turn, is inordinately powerful, its presence reaching into the economic, political and intellectual spheres, making it difficult for civilian governments to function normally. According to the Legatum Institute, a UK-based think tank, in 2010 only 33% of Pakistanis supported the government, one of the lowest rates worldwide, while 82% had confidence in the army. Nevertheless, the current elected civilian government, now in office for four years, may "become the first in Pakistan's history to serve a full five-year term" (The Economist, 2012).

20. The weak governance has been detrimental to economic growth. Frequent power cuts, "largely the result of bad policy and mismanagement," severely hurt businesses, while inefficient public-sector management translates into weak guarantees for property, transactions and contracts, scaring off investors (The Economist, 2012). Markets suffer from a lack of competition, policy distortions, barriers to entry and poor regulation. Moreover, the workforce is grossly undereducated: 30% of Pakistanis have had less than two years of education, and literacy rates are some of the lowest in the world (The Economist, 2012). While the population is growing quickly, the economy is not. For 2012, the IMF has projected a GDP growth rate of 3.4%, far too low to absorb the rise in the working age population (Kundi, 2011). In the meantime, Pakistan remains extremely poor – 60% of Pakistanis live on less than \$2 a day and 58% of households lack adequate access to food (Butt, 2011). Looking ahead, rising water scarcity will pose further threats both to the economy and stability.

21. Pakistan's stability is not only important for regional security and for reducing international terrorist threats, but also because of Pakistan's growing nuclear arsenal. While Pakistan's stockpile of approximately 100 deployed nuclear weapons is considered secure, there is deep

concern regarding the safety of its nuclear materials - enough for 40 to 100 additional weapons - which are kept in laboratories and storage centers much more vulnerable to diversion, including to rogue elements within the Pakistani army and insurgents (Sanger & Schmitt, 2011). Moreover, Pakistan's poor record on nuclear proliferation is particularly worrisome.

22. Only a few months after the United States launched a raid into Pakistan to kill Osama bin Laden without alerting Islamabad in advance, US-Pakistani (and NATO-Pakistani) relations hit a new low when a NATO airstrike killed 24 Pakistani soldiers near the Afghan border. In response, Pakistan expelled American drones and personnel from a base in Baluchistan, announced that any foreign aircraft flying over Pakistani territory would be shot down, closed two border crossings through which large quantities of ISAF supplies had been passing and withdrew from a conference on Afghanistan's future. Islamabad also announced it would undertake a full review of its security cooperation with NATO and the United States.

23. Unfortunately, in light of today's poor state of relations between Islamabad and Western Allies, some analysts have questioned continued engagement with Pakistan. For example, commentators such as Teresita Schaffer and Howard Schaffer have called for the United States to accept that despite its wishes, a strategic partnership with Pakistan is not possible, as American and Pakistani goals diverge in too many ways (Schaffer & Schaffer, 2012). Similarly, Zalmay Khalilzad noted that the United States should accept that Pakistan is both an "ally and an adversary" and should use a mix of methods to contain Pakistan's "dangerous and destabilizing policies" but also to incentivize it to co-operate more fully (Khalilzad, 2012). Steven D. Krasner also posited that Washington's approach has been ineffective, arguing that the United States must be able to credibly threaten to end all assistance to Pakistan in order to demonstrate that co-operation is in Islamabad's best interest (Krasner, 2012). According to Robert Grenier, to achieve a "rough joint approach" on Afghanistan, which would serve both US and Pakistani interests, the United States would need to be clearer regarding its intentions for the end game in Afghanistan, as the lack of clarity has given Pakistanis continued incentives to hedge their bets (Grenier, 2012).

24. Other NATO states have had less difficult bilateral relations with Pakistan in recent times than the United States has, in part because of their more limited involvement in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations in the region. Their engagement with Islamabad, however, demonstrates a similar strategic concern regarding Pakistan. Germany continues to be Pakistan's largest trading partner; in 2011, France and Pakistan signed joint declarations on security co-operation, political partnership and trade; and in 2012, London and Islamabad formally launched an "enhanced strategic dialogue" aimed at strengthening ties in security, trade, health and education sectors. The UK underlined its strategic interests in 2011, when it made Pakistan the largest recipient of its development assistance, arguing that a prosperous, democratic and stable Pakistan would help improve "stability and security in Pakistan, the region and beyond" ((DFID-Department for International Development, 2011).

B. IRAN

25. Following Pakistan, Iran is the most influential of Afghanistan's immediate neighbours. Iranian policy towards Afghanistan is driven by two primary considerations: the impact of instability in Afghanistan on stability in Iran, and Iran's relations vis-à-vis the United States and its Allies. Instability in Afghanistan has direct ramifications for Iran. Their shared border is long and poorly monitored, and there is a large amount of cross-border drug smuggling. Iran is also host to a large number of unofficial Afghan workers and about one million Afghan refugees (Hokayem, 2011). Moreover, the Shia cleric-driven government of Iran dislikes the radical Sunni Taliban, and has historically opposed them. To that end, Iran has supported its co-religionists in Afghanistan - the

Hazara minority and other non-Pashtun Afghans, in particular the Northern Alliance. Increased instability at the border may compel Iran to assume a more involved role in Afghan affairs.

26. Iranian dislike of the Taliban is tempered by an equally acute animosity towards the United States. While Iran is interested in stability in Afghanistan, it strongly opposes the American military presence there. Iran's fears of strategic encirclement are strengthened by American co-operation with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, both of whom support Sunni radicals in Afghanistan. As a result of these somewhat conflicting goals, Iranian policy towards Afghanistan is "characterized by a pragmatic, cautious and largely opportunistic assessment of its reach and prospects" (Hokayem, 2011). Teheran has supported the Karzai government, while simultaneously opposing the US presence there.

27. The transition is a cause for mixed feelings for Iran: the departure of US forces is welcome, but the security void it leaves is not. This paradox is intensified by factionalism within the Iranian government; resolving the paradox and fostering a more co-operative Iranian attitude towards Afghanistan would require improved US-Iranian relations – an unlikely prospect at present.

C. THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

28. Afghanistan's relations with its three Central Asian neighbours – Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan – are also dominated by a concern over Afghanistan's instability, as increased violence in Afghanistan is viewed as a direct security threat, fuelling the spread of drugs and organised crime across the poorly monitored borders (Antonenko, 2011). By and large, Turkmenistan pursues a policy of neutrality with regard to Afghanistan and has mostly disengaged, but Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are much more closely involved in Afghan affairs and widely share Kabul's security concerns. This involvement is amplified by close ethnic ties: Tajiks and Uzbeks form the second and third largest ethnic groups in Afghanistan respectively.

29. Central Asian republics are not enamoured with the US presence in Afghanistan, but have benefited from it, largely by earning transit fees from the Northern Distribution Network, a variety of routes into Afghanistan through Central Asia (Recknagel, 2012). With 2014 nearing, both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are increasingly worried about spillovers from Afghanistan, in particular the potential radicalisation of their Muslim-majority populations, since violent Islamist anti-government movements in both countries (such as the Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan, IMU) have found safe havens in Afghanistan. While the real capacity of such groups to destabilise Central Asian states is believed to be limited (Bleuer, 2012), given the countries' porous borders and weak internal security apparatuses, their ability to cope with any increased instability is also minimal.

IV. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THE STABILISATION OF AFGHANISTAN

30. The stabilisation of Afghanistan remains high on the agenda of the international community. The Bonn Conference in 2011 brought together 85 countries and 15 international organisations to reaffirm their commitment to stabilise Afghanistan and the region. Ten years of progress notwithstanding, in the words of the International Crisis Group, the international community "has failed to achieve a politically stable and economically viable Afghanistan." (International Crisis Group, 2011). Security of the whole region remains highly volatile, thus continued international commitment to stabilisation efforts is required beyond 2014. The focus of this assistance is two-pronged: on the one hand providing immediate security assistance in the form of ISAF, and training to develop indigenous Afghan capabilities with a view to transition; and providing economic aid to improve Afghan development conditions and governance.

31. The international commitment to Afghanistan involves a plethora of different actors that operate in similar fields, at times in an overlapping fashion. This commitment is co-ordinated through a series of international conferences (most recently in Bonn in December 2011). Tasked with supporting the realisation of these commitments is the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). UNAMA also oversees the contribution of the UN system in Afghanistan. Similar co-ordinating roles are held by other international organisations, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank – both of which manage large multilateral funding programmes. UNAMA also works closely with ISAF and NATO in providing support to the political aspects of stabilisation – reconciliation and reintegration efforts in particular (International Crisis Group, 2012). Overall, the activities of the international community have largely been shaped by the thrust and intensity of ISAF's engagement, from limited beginnings to its country-wide presence and extensive engagement today. Even now the role of the international community is tied to the ISAF transition, with 2014 serving as a marker for all international efforts in Afghanistan. In this respect, an accelerated international pullout would have a detrimental impact on the other non-security activities of the international community.

32. The short-to-medium term goal of international assistance to Afghanistan is stabilising the security situation in Afghanistan. NATO's role in this is instrumental, both through ISAF and the NATO Training Mission (NTM-A). However, there is also an array of bilateral and multilateral security missions in Afghanistan. The largest is Operation Enduring Freedom, which continues to function on a separate track from ISAF (Katzman, 2011), and incorporates various combat-intensive forces (mainly special forces contingents). There are also several bilateral assistance programmes for Afghan military forces. In all of these programmes, the United States is overwhelmingly the single-largest contributor, and along with other NATO member states, comprises nearly all of security assistance received by the Afghan authorities (Katzman, 2011).

33. Another significant part of the stabilisation efforts is the training of civilian police and improving rule of law in Afghanistan. In particular the European Union has devoted a great deal of attention improving policing and rule of law in Afghanistan, by funding a European Union police training mission (EUPOL Afghanistan). The mission has been criticised for serious shortcomings and remains largely limited to Kabul, with very little presence in the countryside (Bloching, 2011).

34. Another primary means for the international community to assist Afghanistan is through providing development aid and external assistance. Since 2001, the international community has pledged US\$90 billion to Afghan reconstruction, 57 billion were disbursed, (International Crisis Group, 2011). The United States is by far largest donor – with US\$56 billion pledged (37 billion disbursed), with the EU and its member states pledging some US\$15 billion (around 9 billion disbursed). This funding is disbursed either through large multilateral funding programmes, such as the World Bank administered Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), or direct disbursements – by USAID, for instance. Only about 20% of aid is channelled through Afghan government institutions (International Crisis Group, 2011), although in July 2010 the international community committed to raise this to 50%.

35. International aid to Afghanistan has led to tangible achievements (Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2011): the country has experienced significant improvements in access to education and healthcare, as well as in women's rights. For all its problems, Afghanistan now has an elected government, a parliament, and an improved constitution. However, due to poor revenue collection capacity, and ballooning expenses, the Afghan government budget is highly dependent on donor funding. Foreign aid has played a central role in the Afghan economy, equivalent to over 40% of GDP over the past ten years and remains the primary driver for economic growth (Redman, 2011). The eventual reduction of the international security presence will undeniably lead to a reduction in foreign aid. Donor assistance is expected to fall from US\$4.814 billion in 2010/2011 to US\$3.908 billion in 2012/2013 (Redman, 2011). This will also have a more direct impact on the Afghan

economy, creating sharp downturns in the service and construction sectors, which have been inflated by the international presence.

36. There are also significant concerns over aid effectiveness. Due to its centralised nature, few funds received by the Kabul-based administration reach a number of provinces and those that do reach the provinces often do not meet local needs. In addition, a large part of external assistance is rerouted back to donor countries through high administrative costs, contracting services and the purchase of supplies from these same donor countries. This shortcoming is the result of collective donor policies, and difficulties in effectively co-ordinating priorities and means (International Crisis Group, 2011).

37. A further problem is that economic aid is often primarily driven by short-term military considerations, rather than Afghan priorities. The ANSF has received more than half of international aid to Afghanistan (International Crisis Group, 2011). This ratio is even higher with US reconstruction aid – for instance, in 2011 the the United States funded over 90% of ANSF costs (Barry, 2011).

V. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

38. The goals set by the international community for transition and beyond are highly ambitious, and may not be met entirely. In the short and medium-term, the international community can hope to militarily stabilise Afghanistan and ensure that a satisfactory handover takes place. As NATO moves into more of a training capacity, more robust bilateral programmes are likely to augment the developing abilities of the ANSF. In the medium to long-term – once the ANSF will be able to tackle Afghanistan's security, emphasis will shift to development and other non-security issues. No matter the shape and form of these programmes, after 2014, the international community will have to continue to help train and fund the Afghan army and police so that they are able to maintain security in the country. The importance of this support cannot be underestimated.

39. With the departure of ISAF troops and a diminishment of NATO's role in the country, the United Nations will be the international organisation best positioned to help the Afghan government strengthen the foundations necessary for a vibrant democracy and long-term economic growth. However, it is also likely that the UN will need to be involved in supporting Afghanistan in maintaining security and stability, including, potentially, in helping enforce a peace deal between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Afghanistan's stability has clear regional importance, but it is difficult to achieve. Despite the importance for more regional co-operation in stabilising the country, the policies of the international community are largely focused on Afghanistan itself. Moreover, efforts to develop a more meaningful regional policy are hindered by difficult relations between Western countries and Afghanistan's neighbours. However, as 2014 approaches, the international community will have to bolster its efforts at fostering more regional co-operation. Pakistan is strategically important for the stabilisation of Afghanistan, but also for combating global extremism as well as for curbing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation. A long-term partnership with Pakistan and Afghanistan is necessary to help them overcome the lack of trust and develop a mutually beneficial relationship that is not directed against any other country of the region. The Rapporteur will make some concrete suggestions for possible ways of how NATO and NATO member states could help develop regional relationships.

40. Afghanistan's stability and prosperity depend, to a great extent, on its neighbours' policies towards the country. Unquestionably, all countries in the region have an interest in seeing an end to insecurity and violence in Afghanistan, but their goals diverge as well. Notably, no country wishes to see another gain excessive influence in Kabul. Developing a regional approach to Afghan stability will require a clear understanding of all neighbours' interests and motivations in Afghanistan, as well as an emphasis on a commitment to non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Neighbours' engagement with Afghanistan should be constructive and not be threatening

to any other state. This is true also for countries outside the region, including NATO member states.

41. Of Afghanistan's neighbours, Pakistan is the most influential; its actions will markedly affect Afghanistan's future. However, Pakistan deserves attention independently of Afghanistan. Its nuclear arsenal, high levels of extremism and strained relations with India make it of paramount importance for regional and international security. As such, the rapporteur hopes that co-operation between Pakistan and NATO will soon be back to normal and that, over time, Pakistan will further strengthen political dialogue with NATO to complement existing military-to-military co-operation. Additionally, the rapporteur hopes that Pakistan will fully support initiatives for regional confidence building, security and co-operation, including efforts at resolving outstanding bilateral disputes. Pakistan should also intensify its cooperation with Afghanistan in seeking a political solution to the continued violence. The international community should also support Pakistan's development and facilitate trade and business links with the country. The relationship should not be viewed purely through a military lens. This report will be updated for the Assembly's 2012 Autumn Session.

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