

Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Stability Challenge¹

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Part 1: Afghanistan

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Robert Templer opened his presentation by stating that the the *Loya Jirga* was a remarkable achievement, despite the obstacles. However, creating a durable peace remains a continuing challenge.

PROBLEMS WITH AFGHANISTAN

Two key problems were identified with Afghanistan, namely level of insecurity, and the power of commanders and warlords. The Afghan central government acts as a municipal government whose power does not extend far beyond Kabul. The regions are still controlled by warlords. Until now, the government has been comprised of warlords with a thin civilian veneer.

It has been difficult to end “war lordism” in Afghanistan. Some of these warlords were of minor importance before they received funding from the U.S. to combat *Al-Qaeda*. Hence, the short-term aims of the international coalition are at odds with nation-building in Afghanistan. Different warlord factions want to remain in power and retain resources.

CONSEQUENCES OF “WAR-LORDISM” AND WEAK GOVERNANCE

The weakness of the central government and increasing regionalism have resulted in attacks against Pashtuns in northern Afghanistan. It has been difficult to move toward reconstruction. The West has also been unwilling to expand its presence in the country. Therefore, it will be difficult to bring the warlords into the central government.

THE INABILITY TO BUILD AN AFGHAN MILITARY FORCE

The post-Taliban Afghan military force trained by the US and France has been largely unsuccessful. Training has also been carried out in a haphazard fashion. Given the current rates of training, only 10 percent of forces needed will be available by 2005. Another problem will be to determine how to deploy this force into combat missions. Will it fight against local warlords? Little has been done to determine the criteria for admission to this force. As well, no screening process exists to prevent human rights abusers from joining the Afghan military force.

GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

In the past, Afghanistan had strong central governments that did not tolerate regional diversity and autonomy. In order to combat the present weakness of the state, we need to emphasize state creation, in addition to building civil society. According to Templer, one key state institution to guarantee security is the creation of a viable Afghan police force. Hence, building schools alone

¹*Rapporteur's note:* The above text constitutes a summary of remarks for the presentation and discussions. It is not a transcript.