Summary of *Independent Assessment of the Afghan National Security Forces*

Jonathan Schroden • Catherine Norman • Jerry Meyerle • Patricio Asfura-Heim • Bill Rosenau • Del Gilmore • Mark Rosen • Daniella Mak • Nicholas Hutchinson

with Mary Ellen Connell • Nilanthi Samaranayake • Sarah Vogler • Michael Markowitz • Jim Gavrilis • Michael Connell

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This assessment, tasked by the United States Congress, was made by analysts in CNA's Center for Strategic Studies. Dr. Jonathan Schroden led this work, and many CNA analysts contributed to the results. Their names are on the cover. The CNA analysts involved in this assessment have considerable experience with Afghanistan's security situation, many having been assigned in Afghanistan and having worked with United States, NATO, and Afghan security forces, and knowing the local language.

The Center for Strategic Studies engages in analysis of security matters of many kinds in all parts of the world. We have significant expertise in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. On-the-ground experience, knowledge of local languages, and use of local primary source data to produce empirically-based analyses are hallmarks of our regional work.

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Eric V. Thompson, Ph.D.
Vice President and Director
CNA Strategic Studies

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Cover photo: An Afghan army cadre instructs a recruit on proper weapon placement during security drills at the Regional Military Training Center in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, Jan. 2, 2012. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Renee Crisostomo).

CNA
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President and CEO

January 24, 2014

United States Congress
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators and Representatives:

The 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, Section 1215, required that the Secretary of Defense "provide for the conduct of an independent assessment of the strength, force structure, force posture, and capabilities required to make the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) capable of providing security for their own country so as to prevent Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists." The Act also required that the organization making this independent assessment provide a report of its findings to the Congressional Defense Committees, which I am doing, and to the Secretary of Defense. CNA was selected by the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) to make this independent assessment. I enclose our report for your consideration.

The CNA report concludes that the security environment in Afghanistan will be more challenging after the draw-down of international forces in 2014; that the Taliban insurgency will become a greater threat to stability than now; and that a small group of al Qaeda members will remain active in remote valleys of northeastern Afghanistan. We also conclude that the ANSF will require a security force (Afghan National Army and Police) of 373,400 people – smaller than their present size but significantly larger than was envisaged at the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago. A force of lesser size than 373,000 would, in our assessment, increase the risk of instability of Afghanistan and make success less likely for the U.S. policy goal for Afghanistan.

The ANSF we recommend is different in composition and in deployment than the existing ANSF. We conclude that the ANSF will be more successful if it has fewer infantry units and more support units, and if a portion of the ANSF were re-allocated from low threat to higher threat areas. These measures would increase the likelihood of ANSF success through 2018, thereby improving the longer-term prospects for a negotiated political settlement to end the war. We also conclude that continued advisory, material, and financial support from the United States and the international community is essential to the viability of the ANSF and the security of Afghanistan and therefore to the likelihood of a negotiated political settlement.

We are pleased to provide any additional information or assistance that you wish.

Yours sincerely,

Robert J. Murray

4825 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22311-1850 703-824-2000 www.cna.org

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Senior Review Panel members

The Senior Review Panel was convened by CNA's chief executive officer, the Honorable Robert J. Murray, and was asked to signify that they endorsed "the general policy thrust and judgments reached by CNA's analysis, though not necessarily every finding and recommendation." They participated in the Senior Review Panel in their individual, rather than their institutional, capacities.

Mr. Thomas A. Betro
Former Director, Naval Criminal Investigative Service

Dr. Stephen Biddle
Professor of Political Science, The George Washington University

General James T. Conway, USMC (Ret.)
Former 34th Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps

Lieutenant General Lawrence P. Farrell, Jr., USAF (Ret.)
Former Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Force

The Honorable Nelson M. Ford
Former Under Secretary of the Army

Mr. Bart R. Johnson
Executive Director, International Association of Chiefs of Police

Lieutenant General Francis H. (Frank) Kearney III, USA (Ret.)
Former Deputy Combatant Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command

Dr. Katherine A. McGrady
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, CNA

Mr. Dean G. Popps
Former Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology

General Peter J. Schoomaker, USA (Ret.)
Former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army and former Combatant Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command

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Executive summary

The 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Section 1215, directs: "The Secretary of Defense shall provide for the conduct of an independent assessment of the strength, force structure, force posture, and capabilities required to make the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) capable of providing security for their own country so as to prevent Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists that threaten Afghanistan, the region, and the world." The Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) asked CNA to make this independent assessment. The Under Secretary also requested CNA make several additional assessments of related issues.[1]

NDAA mandated assessment

The NDAA mandates that the independent assessment of the ANSF should address the following matters, which this report does:

1. The likely internal and regional security environment for Afghanistan over the next decade, including challenges and threats to the security and sovereignty of Afghanistan from state and non-state actors.

2. The strength, force structure, force posture, and capabilities required to make the ANSF capable of providing security for their own country so as to prevent Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists that threaten Afghanistan, the region, and the world.

[1] This document presents a summary of the findings from our assessments. The full report, which describes our analysis in support of these findings in detail, is titled *Independent Assessment of the Afghan National Security Forces* and is available via CNA's website (www.cna.org/research) or by request from the director of CNA's Center for Stability and Development, Dr. Jonathan Schroden (schrodj@cna.org).

3. Any capability gaps in the ANSF that are likely to persist after 2014 and that will require continued support from the United States (U.S.) and its allies.

4. Whether current proposals for the resourcing of the ANSF after 2014 are adequate to establish and maintain long-term security for the Afghan people, and implications for U.S. national security interests of the under-resourcing of the ANSF.

These tasks are focused on the future security environment in Afghanistan. They do not address topics of political stability, such as governance, social development, corruption, or tensions among Afghanistan's ethnic and sectarian groups. As such, we do not consider these topics when sizing and structuring the ANSF. Rather, we assume that the current level of political stability in Afghanistan will remain during the timeframe of this study. We recognize that events that might perturb this political stability—such as changes in the stability of Afghanistan's neighbors, their policies and actions with respect to insurgents targeting Afghanistan, reconciliation of insurgent groups, the upcoming Afghan presidential election, and whether the international community continues to support Afghanistan—have the potential to alter the security situation in Afghanistan in significant ways. We therefore consider these events and their implications for the ANSF in the section of this report addressing ANSF responses to political scenarios.

To make our assessment of the ANSF, we assessed the future security environment; defined a set of operational objectives for the ANSF that support the U.S. policy goal in Afghanistan through 2018; conducted a troop-to-task analysis of ANSF force structure required to achieve these operational objectives; identified critical gaps in the ANSF's capabilities to achieve these objectives; and assessed the adequacy of current resource plans to support the ANSF in the coming years. Subject to this method and the caveats above, we draw the following conclusions in regards to the questions posed by Congress.

We conclude that the security environment in Afghanistan will become more challenging after the drawdown of most international forces in 2014, and that the Taliban insurgency will become a greater threat to Afghanistan's stability in the 2015–2018 timeframe than it is now.

The insurgency has been considerably weakened since the surge of U.S. and NATO forces in 2009, but it remains a viable threat to the government of Afghanistan. The coalition's drawdown will result in a considerable reduction in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations by Afghan, U.S., and NATO forces. History suggests that the Taliban will use sanctuaries in Pakistan to regenerate their capabilities as military pressure on the movement declines. In the 2015–2016 timeframe, we assess that the Taliban are likely to try to keep military pressure on the ANSF in rural areas, expand their control and influence in areas vacated by coalition forces, encircle key cities, conduct high-profile attacks in Kabul and other urban areas, and gain leverage for reconciliation negotiations. In 2016–2018, once the insurgency has had time to recover from the last several years of U.S. and NATO operations, a larger and more intense military effort will become increasingly likely.

We conclude that a small group of al Qaeda members, many of whom have intermarried with local clans and forged ties with Afghan and Pakistani insurgents, remains active in the remote valleys of northeastern Afghanistan.

However, as a result of sustained U.S. and Afghan counterterrorism operations, this group of al Qaeda members does not currently pose an imminent threat to the U.S. and Western nations. Further, *so long as adequate pressure is maintained via U.S. and Afghan counterterrorism operations*, the group is unlikely to regenerate the capability to become a substantial threat in the 2015–2018 timeframe.

We conclude that, in the likely 2015–2018 security environment, the ANSF will require a total security force of about 373,400 personnel in order to provide basic security for the country, and cope with the Taliban insurgency and low-level al Qaeda threat.

This number is slightly smaller than the current ANSF force size of 382,000.[2] We assess that this small reduction in force size can be achieved, despite the expectation of a growing insurgent threat, by

[2] This includes the 352,000 personnel approved in the ANSF Plan of Record and an additional 30,000 Afghan Local Police. By comparison, our figures include a base force of 344,300 plus 29,100 Afghan Local Police (for a total of 373,400 ANSF).

redistributing some of the ANSF from areas of low threat to those of higher threat—for example, from the northern and western regions of the country to the east—and by restructuring some elements of the ANSF. For example, we conclude that the Afghan National Army needs fewer combat battalions, but substantially more logistics and support forces to enable sustained combat operations.

We conclude that the ANSF will continue to have significant gaps in capability that will limit their effectiveness after 2014.

We identify critical capability gaps in six areas: mobility; air support; logistics (e.g., supply, maintenance, and contracting); intelligence gathering and analysis; communications and coordination among ANSF components; and recruiting and training of people with specialized skills. These are systemic gaps in capability that can be mitigated via materiel solutions but not closed by them.

We therefore conclude that international enabler support—to include advisors—will be essential to ANSF success through at least 2018.

We were unable to conduct a detailed analysis of the cost of an ANSF sized at 373,400 personnel, due to a lack of data to support an independent cost estimate. Rough estimates using two existing models put the sustainment costs of the 373,400-member force in the range of $5-6 billion per year, though these are highly approximate and further work should be done to develop a more accurate cost estimate.

The last formal announcement of the international community's plan for the post-2014 ANSF came at the 2012 Chicago Summit. At this conference, it was agreed that, subject to the developing security environment, the ANSF should be drawn down to a force size of 228,500 (not including an additional 30,000 Afghan Local Police to be sustained by the United States). The estimated annual cost of this force was $4.1 billion per year.

Our calculated ANSF of 373,400 personnel is significantly larger, and likely to be more expensive, than the force envisioned by the United States and NATO at the Chicago Summit.

Our earlier conclusion that the threat in Afghanistan is likely to increase in 2015–2018 *stands in direct contradiction* to the assumption of a reduced insurgent threat made at the Chicago Summit.

We therefore conclude that proceeding with the drawdown of the ANSF as announced at the Chicago Summit will put the current U.S. policy goal for Afghanistan at risk. Instead, we recommend that the international community establish a new plan to fund and sustain the ANSF at an end-strength of about 373,400, with a proportionally sized assistance mission (including advisors), through at least 2018.

If the international community did this, and *if the ANSF are successful through 2018:*

We assess that a negotiated political settlement to end the war would become much more likely in the 2019–2023 timeframe.

Additional assessments

In addition to our independent assessment of the ANSF, the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) asked us to conduct additional assessments on several related issues.

Task: Assess the capabilities of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Ministry of Interior (MoI) to perform required functions in support of their respective forces and the appropriate proportion of military and civilian advisors to assist these ministries and their required expertise.

We conclude that for the MoD and MoI to carry out their responsibilities to support army and police forces in the field, they require four core capabilities: logistics; strategy and policy planning; financial management; and personnel management.

In addition, we found that six institutional enablers are important for ministerial success: anti-corruption; gender integration; local ownership; information technology; intelligence; and civilianization.

We conclude that the MoD and MoI are not likely to be independently capable in any of these areas by 2018. We therefore assess that international advisors within the MoD and MoI will be required through at least 2018.

Our analysis suggests that the absence of these advisors has the potential to undermine the ANSF's combat effectiveness over the timeframe of this study, thereby imparting additional risk to the U.S. policy goal for Afghanistan.

Task: Assess legislative authorities that would enable—or hinder—success of the U.S. assistance mission.

We identified over 20 specialized legal authorities and many more standing authorities and international agreements that enable the U.S. military's mission in Afghanistan. The U.S. military will likely focus on four missions in Afghanistan in 2015–2018: counterterrorism; training, advising, assisting (and possibly equipping) the ANSF; retrograding personnel and equipment; and protecting U.S. civilians working on the ground. Having analyzed the authorities required to conduct these missions:

We conclude that the U.S. Department of Defense will require the same types of authorities that it has today with the possible exception of authorities for counterinsurgency programs which are not part of the envisioned post-2014 mission set for the U.S. military.

We also conclude that the decentralized and makeshift nature of the current authorities regime promotes waste and inefficiencies.

Accordingly, we suggest that a new, consolidated approach consisting of a single, omnibus authority be considered.

Task: Assess opportunities for cooperation—or prevention of conflict—between the ANSF and the Pakistani military.

We conclude that there will be areas of enduring conflict in the relationship between the ANSF and the Pakistani military that may prevent full normalization of relations between the two countries and will threaten to periodically escalate tensions between them. These include Afghanistan's reluctance to recognize the border with Pakistan; Pakistan's continued relationship with elements of the Taliban; and Afghanistan's growing security relationship with India. However, we also find that there are areas of common interest, as well as enduring mechanisms for cooperation, that could help reduce conflict and stabilize the relationship over time. These include cross-border trade; repatriation and resettlement of Afghan refugees currently in Pakistan; and countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

In our interviews with officers in both countries' militaries, we identified interest in continuing, and in some areas expanding, initiatives for cooperation. However:

We conclude that if the United States and NATO significantly decrease their commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan, areas of enduring conflict are likely to be exacerbated and areas of potential cooperation are unlikely to reach their full potential.

If the U.S. and NATO continue their commitment to Afghanistan and Pakistan, it will help mitigate some, but not all, of the areas of enduring conflict between the two countries and it will bolster opportunities for cooperation.

Task: Assess likely ANSF responses to several political scenarios.

We created three scenarios to identify possible ANSF reactions to events that might impact political stability in Afghanistan. Our first scenario considered Taliban reconciliation.

We conclude that as long as the Afghan president adequately consults, listens to, and addresses the concerns of ANSF leaders as part of the reconciliation process and during the implementation of a settlement, the ANSF are likely to accept the settlement's terms.

That said, we assess that there is a low probability of the Taliban reconciling by 2018.

Our second scenario considered the possibility of a "bad" presidential election or transfer of power in 2014.

We conclude that as long as the winning presidential ticket maintains the current ethnic balance of power, the ANSF will largely accept the results of the election.

If a non-Pashtun were to win, it could lead to desertion or defection among rank-and-file ANSF along with increased violence in the south and east of the country and protests in the major cities. We assess these possibilities are of low-to-moderate likelihood.

Our third scenario considered the loss of international community support.

We conclude that if the United States and NATO do not maintain a training and advisory mission in Afghanistan, the absence of advisors in 2015 is likely to result in a downward spiral of ANSF capabilities—along with security

in Afghanistan—unless the ANSF can find other patrons to fill the resulting "enabler vacuum."

We find this excursion to be of moderate likelihood. Further:

We conclude that the loss of international community funding, or even a too-rapid decline in funding, is likely to result in another civil war in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Taking all of our assessments into consideration, we conclude that for the ANSF to successfully support the U.S. policy goal of preventing Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists that threaten Afghanistan, the region, and the world, they will need a force size of about 373,400 with some structural and posture adjustments, through at least 2018. We conclude that this force is not likely to defeat the Taliban militarily, but that if it can hold against the Taliban insurgency through 2018, the likelihood of a negotiated settlement to the war will increase. We conclude that this force, as well as the security ministries that support it, will require international enabling assistance—including advisors—through at least 2018, and that this assistance mission will need authorities similar to those of the mission in Afghanistan today. Finally, we conclude that sustained commitment of the international community in Afghanistan is likely to mitigate tensions in the region and increase prospects for regional cooperation, but that withdrawal of international community support is likely to have consequences up to and including a renewed civil war in Afghanistan and increased instability in the region.

Figure 1. Afghanistan and Pakistan administrative divisions (University of Texas, available at: <www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia>, accessed September 2013).

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Summary of assessments

Introduction

The 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) states, "The Secretary of Defense shall provide for the conduct of an independent assessment of the strength, force structure, force posture, and capabilities required to make the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) capable of providing security for their own country so as to prevent Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists that threaten Afghanistan, the region, and the world.[3]" The Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) asked CNA to conduct this assessment.

The NDAA mandates that the independent assessment of the ANSF should address the following matters, which this report does:

1. The likely internal and regional security environment for Afghanistan over the next decade, including challenges and threats to the security and sovereignty of Afghanistan from state and non-state actors

[3] For the purposes of this paper, and per the NDAA, the ANSF are defined as including all forces under the authority of the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior (MoD and MoI, respectively). These include: the Afghan National Army (ANA); the pillars of the Afghan National Police (ANP), which are the Afghan Border Police (ABP), Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), Afghan Uniform Police (AUP), and Afghan Anti-Crime Police (AACP); the Afghan Local Police (ALP); the Afghan Air Force (AAF); Afghan National Army Special Operations Forces (ANASOF); Afghan Police Special Units; and the Special Mission Wing (SMW). While the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) does have a relationship with the MoI, it is a state-owned for-profit enterprise and thus fell outside the scope of this study. Also, while we acknowledge the important role played by the National Directorate of Security (NDS), direct consideration of that organization was also outside the scope of this study. 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 4310, Section 1215, accessed Sep. 10, 2013, at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hr4310enr/pdf/BILLS-112hr4310enr.pdf.

2. The strength, force structure, force posture, and capabilities required to make the ANSF capable of providing security for their own country so as to prevent Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists that threaten Afghanistan, the region, and the world

3. Any capability gaps in the ANSF that are likely to persist after 2014 and that will require continued support from the United States (U.S.) and its allies

4. Whether current proposals for the resourcing of the ANSF after 2014 are adequate to establish and maintain long-term security for the Afghan people, and implications for U.S. national security interests of the under resourcing of the ANSF

In addition, the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) directed the study to analyze and provide recommendations on the following:

1. ANSF regional differentiation in capacity, capabilities, resources, challenges, and relationships with Kabul

2. The capabilities of the MoD and MoI to perform the planning, programming, budgeting, management, oversight, and sustainment functions for their respective forces

3. The appropriate proportion of military and civilian advisors to assist these ministries and the required functional/professional expertise

4. Recommendations on legislative authorities that would enable—or hinder—success of the U.S. assistance mission

5. Assessment of opportunities for cooperation—or prevention of conflict—between the ANSF and the Pakistani military, especially along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border

6. Difficulties the ANSF may face—and likely responses and directions they could go—under several potential political scenarios

We address all of these additional topics in this report, though not separately in each case. During the course of our study, we discovered that the first additional task was naturally addressed in our analysis of the NDAA tasks, so we have integrated discussion of it with our independent assessment of the ANSF. Additionally, tasks 2 and 3 above

both pertain to the MoD and MoI, so we have combined the discussion of these tasks in the report.

Methodology

In order to ensure that our assessment of the ANSF was independent, we identified and used a method that has not been applied to this problem before. This methodology consisted of the following steps:

1. Create a future threat assessment.
    a. We performed a comparative historical case study analysis of periods in which non-state actors launched large-scale military campaigns against the government of Afghanistan in order to understand insurgents' past actions and their implications for the future. We focused on three case studies: the years following the Soviet withdrawal (1989–1992); the emergence of the Taliban (1994–2000); and the Taliban's resurgence as a guerrilla force (2006–2008).
    b. We conducted interviews and gathered data (e.g., U.S., NATO, and Afghan threat assessments) in the United States, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, in order to understand and characterize the current security situation in Afghanistan.
    c. We used an understanding of the past and present generated via the previous two steps to make judgments about the likely future threat beyond 2014. These take the form of narrative assessments of the Taliban's intent and capabilities at strategic, operational, and tactical levels (with regional nuances), as well as a map of Afghanistan assessed against the security tiers defined below.
2. Conduct a troop-to-task analysis to determine the ANSF's size, structure, capabilities (and capability gaps), posture, and required resources in the 2015–2018 timeframe.
    a. We used the future threat assessment to identify the missions that the ANSF would need to conduct, and in which areas, in order to achieve the operational goals that support the U.S. policy goal for Afghanistan through 2018. We used

this force-sizing framework to calculate the size, structure, capabilities, and posture of each component of the ANSF.

b. We compared our calculated ANSF to the current ANSF, in order to identify capability gaps that are likely to persist after 2014.

c. We compared current U.S. and international community resourcing plans for the ANSF to the resources that would be needed to address these capability gaps.

To link our qualitative future threat assessment with our quantitative troop-to-task analysis, we created a construct that enables the categorization of areas of Afghanistan by threat—via the following five "security tiers":

1. **Strategic/National areas:** These are areas that the insurgency would need to gain control of in order to topple the current government and claim political control of the country.

2. **Operational areas:** These are areas that the insurgency would want to control in order to project power and influence into the Strategic/National (Tier 1) areas.

3. **Tactical areas:** These are areas that the insurgency would want to control in order to project power and influence into the Operational (Tier 2) areas.

4. **Support/Transit areas:** These are areas that the insurgency would utilize in order to move fighters or materiel into Tactical (Tier 3) areas or seek to temporarily control as peripheral support zones.

5. **Civil Order areas:** If Afghanistan did not have an active insurgency, it would still require a base level of security forces to maintain civil order and protect the population from criminality. These are areas in which the insurgency is not likely to have a presence during the timeframe of this study. This could be due to a number of reasons, to include inhospitable local populations (e.g., due to ethnic or religious differences) or disinterest by the insurgency.

There is a certain "linearity" to this construct, in which insurgents take control of tactical areas to enable taking control of operational areas, to eventually enable taking control of national/strategic areas. While this may not be universally applicable to all insurgencies, it does apply to the situation in Afghanistan, as will be explained in the threat assessment below.

Since the additional directed assessments were stand-alone topics and not analytically connected, we used distinct methodologies for each. These will be described briefly with the summary of each individual assessment below.

Execution

In the execution of this method, we followed three lines of effort.

1. **An integrated, multi-functional, and diverse study team.** This team comprised a nucleus of senior analysts with Afghanistan and military functional expertise and served as the core of the analytic effort. It included the travel team described below and reached across CNA to bring in additional expertise as required.

2. **A Senior Review Panel.** The Senior Review Panel consisted of 10 members with experience in leading major organizations that focused on the military functional areas (e.g., ground forces, air forces, personnel, intelligence, logistics), as well as law enforcement and policing. None of them were employed by the U.S. government at the time of the study. The panel met twice during the study to critically review CNA's methodologies, assumptions, and interim analytical results, and to provide recommendations for further analysis. The panel members were also asked to review this report, and to signify that they endorsed "the general policy thrust and judgments reached by CNA's analysis, though not necessarily every finding and recommendation." All 10 panel members so affirmed.

3. **A small travel team composed of experienced analysts.** A significant amount of the data required for this assessment could only be obtained via interviews of military officers, civilian officials, and political leaders in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our travel team consisted of four senior analysts, all with significant

prior experience in Afghanistan. This team was on the ground from 10 to 25 August and traveled individually to each of four geographic regions: the Kabul cluster; eastern Afghanistan; southern and south-western Afghanistan; and western and northern Afghanistan. One analyst also traveled to Pakistan to speak with the Pakistani military, the Office of the Defense Representative – Pakistan (ODR-P), and the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. In all cases, we interviewed Afghan and Pakistani leaders and those from other pertinent organizations in addition to members of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. commands.

Timeframe

The wording of the 10 tasks for this study makes clear that the study's focus is on the future. We were not asked to conduct an independent assessment of the ANSF's *current* capabilities. Accordingly, this study will not assess the ANSF's current fighting effectiveness or military proficiency. Rather, it will focus on identifying requirements for the ANSF and the Afghan ministries in the future. Moreover, while the NDAA states that the timeframe for the future threat assessment should be "the next decade," this study will focus mainly on 2015–2018, and less on 2019–2023. Our analysis of historical case studies and the current security situation allows us to make plausible conjectures about events in Afghanistan through 2018, but making predictions beyond that timeframe with sufficient granularity to inform force structure analyses is exceedingly difficult and would not serve as a sound basis for policy decisions.

Overarching assumptions

In order to set the analytic parameters of our assessment and focus on the ANSF as a force for security in support of political stability, we made the following assumptions.

- The current level of political stability in Afghanistan remains during the timeframe of this study.
- The current level of political stability in Pakistan remains during the timeframe of this study.
- Regional powers continue to meddle in Afghanistan's internal affairs and Pakistan continues to support armed proxy groups

in Afghanistan,[4] but these activities are tempered so as not to significantly alter the level of political stability in Afghanistan.

- The Taliban do not reconcile with the Afghan government during the timeframe of this study.[5]
- The 2014 Afghan presidential election is acceptable to Afghans and the international community and leads to a peaceful transfer of political power.
- The international community continues to fund and resource the government of Afghanistan and the ANSF.
- The United States and NATO continue a training and advisory mission, and the U.S. maintains a counterterrorism mission, in Afghanistan during the timeframe of this study.

Our Senior Review Panel highlighted that these assumptions should be the subject of detailed studies themselves, as it is unclear that all of them will hold true.[6] In particular, invalidation of any of the first three would lead to such a radically different security environment in Afghanistan as to make our findings irrelevant. In this study we cannot fully explore the ramifications of each assumption proving false; however, we will examine the last four and analyze how the ANSF might respond if they proved invalid. We will do this as part of our assessment of likely ANSF responses to various political scenarios.

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[4] Jerry Meyerle. *Unconventional Warfare and Counterinsurgency in Pakistan: A Brief History*. CNA Report DRP-2012-U-003250-Final. Nov. 2012.

[5] The insurgency in Afghanistan is composed of a host of insurgent groups beyond the Taliban (e.g., the Haqqani network, Hizb-i-Islami Gulbuddin, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan). However, for the sake of simplicity, in this report we will generally use the terms "Taliban" or "insurgents" to encompass these groups unless the discussion warrants more specific language.

[6] Our Senior Review Panel was especially concerned about the future role that Pakistan might play and its ability to impact events in Afghanistan in both positive and negative ways. They highlighted the importance of the U.S.–Pakistan relationship in that regard.

Organization

The remainder of this summary will be divided into three sections. The first section contains the major conclusions and recommendations from our independent assessment of the ANSF, per the requirement in the 2013 NDAA. This section constitutes the heart of the study and its sub-sections are analytically connected. The second section contains the major findings from our additional assessments on the topics that were directed by the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy). The third section provides some overarching conclusions to our assessments.

Summary of independent assessment of the ANSF

This section contains our independent assessment of the ANSF. In addition to addressing the four NDAA-mandated tasks, the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) asked us to look separately at ANSF regional differentiation. Over the course of the study, we discovered that this was naturally addressed in our force size and structure analysis. Therefore, we have integrated these tasks in our discussion below.

Summary of threat assessment

Our analysis of Afghanistan's modern insurgencies concludes that although the current insurgency in Afghanistan has been considerably weakened since the surge of U.S. and NATO forces in 2009, it remains a viable force. The continued drawdown of U.S. and NATO forces in the coming year will lead to a considerable reduction in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations by Afghan as well as coalition troops. Precedent suggests that the Taliban will use sanctuaries in Pakistan to regenerate at least some of its lost capability as military pressure on the movement declines. From 2015 to 2018, insurgents are likely to increase operations in order to gain leverage in reconciliation negotiations and test the ANSF's capabilities in the absence of large numbers of U.S. and NATO forces.

We assess that the reduction in U.S. and NATO counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations combined with the continued existence of insurgent sanctuaries in Pakistan will make the insurgency a greater threat in the 2015–2018 timeframe than it is now.

Our historical analysis of three case studies in which insurgents conducted a campaign against the Afghan government showed that in all three cases, insurgents employed a strategy in which they focused first on controlling and influencing rural areas, to enable a later focus on taking key urban areas and cities—and they were largely successful at doing so in all three cases.[7] Based on these past precedents:

We conclude that the Taliban will follow a gradualist campaign in the two years immediately following the drawdown of coalition forces.

Such a campaign will involve keeping military pressure on the ANSF in rural areas, expanding insurgent control and influence in areas vacated by coalition forces, encircling key cities, and conducting high-profile attacks in Kabul and other important urban areas.

In the medium term (2016–2018), once the insurgency has had time to recover from the last several years of U.S. and NATO operations, we conclude that a larger and more intense military effort will become increasingly likely.

We assess that the Taliban will conserve resources in the near term for such an offensive, while carrying out enough attacks in the interim to remain relevant.

In Tier 1 areas, the Taliban is likely to escalate complex attacks and assassinations against leaders and institutions—especially in Kabul. These attacks will pose the greatest near-term strategic threat to the national government. Insurgents will seek to expand bases in the rural areas around Kabul, especially in the south, from which to conduct terrorist attacks in the capital. The Taliban is likely to use similar methods against regional capitals, especially Jalalabad in the east and Kandahar in the south.

[7] These cases are: the years following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989-1992; the emergence of the Taliban in 1994-2000; and the Taliban's resurgence as a guerrilla force during 2006-2008. In the third case, the Taliban were ultimately unsuccessful in achieving their strategic aims, but it took a significant surge of forces by the U.S. and NATO and a sizeable increase in ANSF end-strength to reverse the Taliban's momentum.

In Tier 2–3 areas, there are likely to be various small offensives aimed at expanding insurgent control and regaining ground lost during the surge of U.S. and NATO forces.

We conclude that the Taliban will continually test the ANSF—first in outlying areas and then, if Afghan forces fare poorly, increasingly in more central locations.

Most of these attacks will be small, but we also expect massed assaults in outlying areas where insurgents have freedom of movement. The Taliban will use captured ground to rebuild its military capabilities and surround and put pressure on district centers and other key areas.

We assess that insurgents will seek to regain freedom of movement in Tier 4 areas through key corridors from Pakistan and between strategically important districts and cities, especially the Ring Road (Highway 1) and the main highways to Pakistan.

In the south, the Taliban will seek to infiltrate back into northern Helmand and districts of Kandahar, from which to put pressure on the capitals of both provinces. The Taliban's primary aim in the south is likely to be control or influence over the population in rural areas and the seizure of vulnerable district centers. We expect massed attacks on outlying Afghan Local Police positions and targeted killings in key towns such as Sangin in northern Helmand. Once insurgents have had time to regroup in 2017 or 2018, they may attempt multiple massed assaults on outlying district centers, as they did in 2006.

In the east, we expect insurgents to focus on protecting their key bases and transit areas. A major coordinated campaign of significant scope or scale is less likely than it is in the south, though there may be intense fighting in some areas. Insurgents in the northeastern provinces of Kunar and Nuristan will periodically attack isolated ANA positions and target resupply convoys in the mountains, in order to fix the ANSF, disrupt their resupply, and make outlying positions untenable.

A small group of al Qaeda members, many of whom have intermarried with local clans and forged ties with Afghan and Pakistani insurgents, remain active in remote valleys of northeastern Afghanistan. However, this group is likely to maintain a low profile and remain

largely contained to remote valleys in the northeast. These members of al Qaeda may regenerate capability if the tempo of U.S. counterterrorism operations declines and the ANSF pull back from Kunar and Nuristan. Al Qaeda may also look to expand to other remote areas of the east, such as Ghazni province.

In the north and west, Taliban influence will remain largely contained to isolated pockets with large Pashtun populations in these regions. We also expect a modest increase in terrorist attacks and assassinations in Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif.

We assess that Pakistan will not take military action against the Haqqani network or other Afghanistan-focused insurgent groups until there is greater clarity on the future regime in Kabul and the long-term viability of the ANSF.

It is also unlikely that Pakistan will take action against Quetta-based Taliban leaders. Instead, Pakistan will use its control over insurgent sanctuaries to ensure that leaders amenable to Pakistani interests dominate these movements.

Iran is likely to engage in activities to oppose the Taliban and stabilize the government in Kabul, while pulling back from tactical support to Taliban insurgents as additional U.S. forces depart. Iran may, nonetheless, continue to aid insurgents in attacks on strategic bases and airfields in the west if U.S. forces or aircraft are present there.

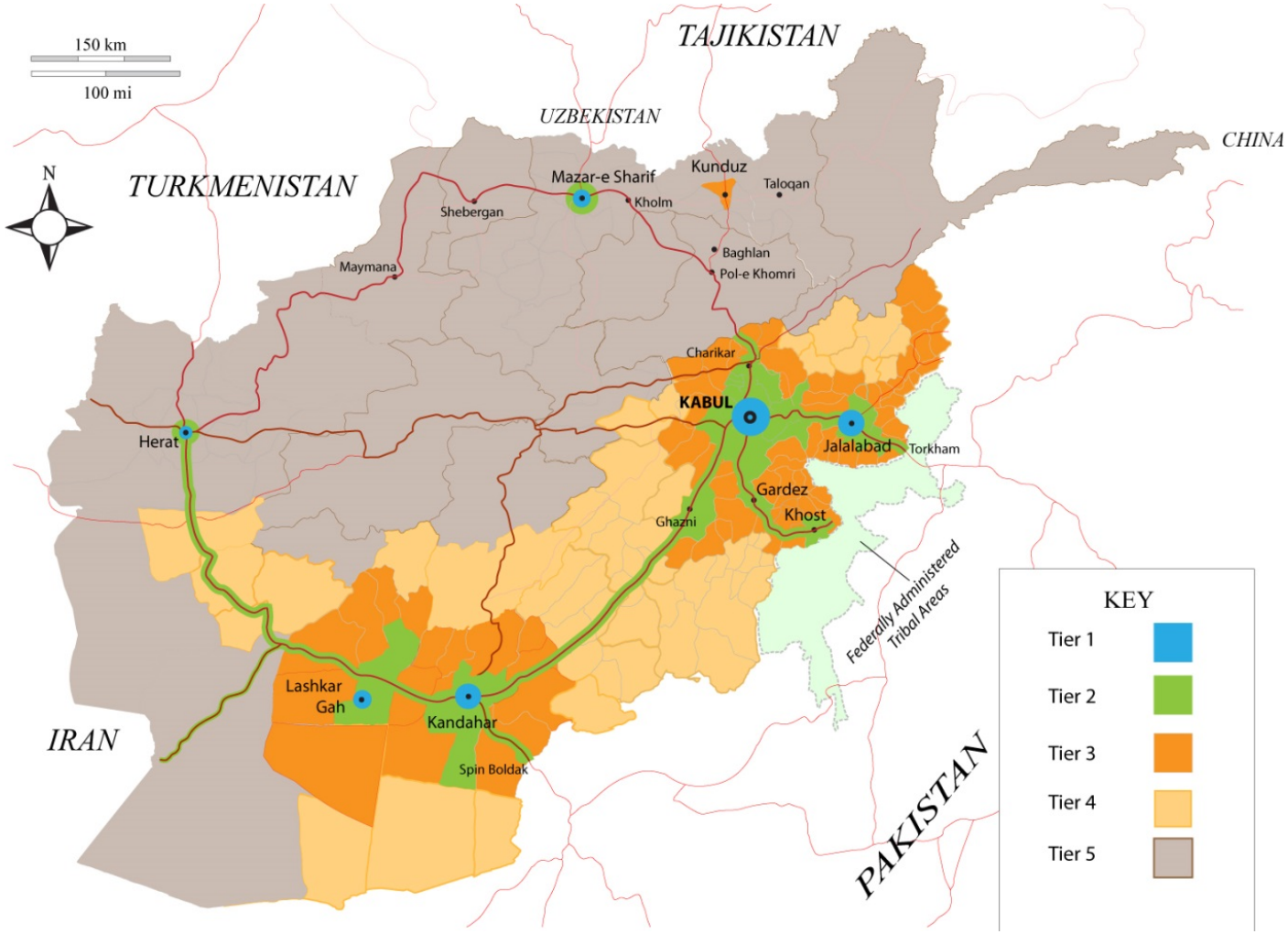
Using the implications of our case study analyses and current threat assessment, we derived a map depicting areas of Afghanistan categorized by the five security tiers defined above (Figure 2). The Taliban are likely to first test the ANSF in Tier 3 and 4 areas, attempting to gain control of these in order to project power and influence into many of the Tier 2 and Tier 1 areas. If they are successful, they are likely to gain recruits and momentum, enabling them to increase pressure in Tier 2 areas and terrorist attacks in Tier 1 areas in order to discredit the Afghan government and the ANSF. If they are successful in doing this, they will likely continue to ratchet up pressure on the ANSF and in the cities until they can capture the latter and claim political control of the country.

Looking further into the future, if the ANSF achieve their operational goals and hold against the insurgency for several years after 2014,

they will prove their ability to endure independent of substantial coalition support. This will remove the uncertainties associated with U.S. and NATO withdrawal and decrease incentives for insurgents to continue fighting, thereby creating the conditions for an enduring political solution to the conflict.

Assuming that the ANSF are successful through 2018, we assess that a negotiated political settlement to end the war will become much more likely during the 2019–2023 timeframe.

Figure 2. Map of Afghanistan by security tier



Summary of ANSF force-sizing framework

The U.S. policy goal for Afghanistan as stated in the 2013 NDAA is: "Prevent Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists that threaten Afghanistan, the region, and the world."[8]

To conduct a troop-to-task analysis, we needed to operationalize this policy goal by writing nested goals at the operational level—focused on security—that the ANSF could reasonably be expected to achieve with U.S. and NATO support (per our overarching assumptions). Using the construct of security tiers, we assess that the operational goals for the ANSF in 2015–2018 should be to:

- Neutralize the insurgency in Tier 1 (National/Strategic) and Tier 2 (Operational) areas.
- Disrupt the insurgency in Tier 3 (Tactical) and Tier 4 (Support/Transit) areas.
- Maintain civil order in Tier 5 (Civil Order) areas.

These operational goals are minimalist in nature. They are designed to prevent the overthrow of the government of Afghanistan and disrupt insurgent and terrorist safe havens within its borders. They are *not* designed to result in the military defeat of the Taliban. While the latter may be a desirable outcome, *it is not the stated policy goal of the United States.*

We assess that if the ANSF can achieve these operational goals through 2018, it will translate to achievement of the aforementioned U.S. policy goal—*but only through 2018*. Continued attainment of the U.S. policy goal past 2018 will require continued achievement of these operational goals or a political settlement to end the war.

Using these operational goals and our future threat assessment, we were able to conduct a troop-to-task analysis to determine the overall size, structure, posture, capabilities, and regional differentiation needed for the ANSF to achieve the operational goals (in support of the U.S. policy goal) in the 2015–2018 timeframe.

[8] 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, H.R. 4310, Section 1215.

Summary of ANSF force size, structure, capabilities, posture, and regional differentiation

Given the immediacy of the study's timeframe (2015–2018), we took the general contours of the ANSF as constant (i.e., it has an army, police force, special operations forces, and so on). We then used a variety of planning factors (Table 1) in conjunction with our force-sizing framework to calculate a size for each of the ANSF's force types.

Table 1. Summary of ANSF troop-to-task analysis planning factors

Force type	Security tier	Planning factor
Afghan Uniformed Police and Anti-Crime Police	Tier 5	2.2 police per 1,000 population
	Tier 4	2.5 police per 1,000 population
	Tier 3	6.0 police per 1,000 population
	Tier 2	2.9 police per 1,000 population
	Tier 1 (other)	3.5 police per 1,000 population
	Tier 1 (Kabul)	3.8 police per 1,000 population
Afghan Local Police	Tier 3	300 Guardians per each Tier 3 district (97 districts total)
Afghan Border Police	Tier 5	0.6 – 2.0 police per 50 square kilometer (sq km) of border zone
	Tier 4	3.8 – 5.9 police per 50 sq km of border zone
	Tier 3	3.8 – 8.8 police per 50 sq km of border zone
Afghan National Army infantry battalions	Tier 5	Area of operations aligned with political boundaries and sized for battalion response within one day
	Tier 4	Simultaneously conduct one battalion-size clearing operation and reinforce one district center per province
	Tier 2 & 3 (rural areas)	Average battalion area of operations of 4,800 sq. km
	Tier 2 (roads)	Varies by region, but a combination of three factors: 1. Number of personnel per checkpoint (12–20 soldiers) 2. Response time to each checkpoint (10–20 minutes) 3. Travel speed between checkpoints (25–100 km/hour)
	Tier 2 (urban areas)	"Ring of Steel" based on city circumference relative to Kabul
ANA combat support battalions	All	1 combat support battalion per combat brigade
ANA headquarters and logistics forces	All	Minimum historical U.S. Army tooth-to-tail percentages (16% headquarters and 36% logistics forces)
Afghan Air Force	All	Sized to capacity for growth and sustainment
ANA SOF	All	Sized to capacity for growth and sustainment
Other supporting forces (e.g., recruiting and training)	All	Sized based on relative percentage to current force

Using these planning factors, we derived the force structure shown in Table 2. As this table shows:

We conclude that the ANSF will need about 373,400 personnel (including ALP) in the 2015 to 2018 timeframe in order to achieve the operational goals described above.

This figure is slightly smaller than the current total end-strength of the ANSF (382,000, including ALP[9]). We assess that this small reduction in force size can be realized, despite the expectation of a growing insurgent threat, by redistributing some of the ANSF from areas of low threat to those of higher threat as described below, and by restructuring some elements of the ANSF. For example, we conclude that the Afghan National Army needs fewer combat battalions, but substantially more logistics and support forces in order to enable sustained combat operations (Table 3).

Table 2. Summary of calculated ANSF force levels in the 2015 to 2018 timeframe

Force type	Current force level	Calculated force level	Change
Afghan Uniformed Police and Afghan Anti-Crime Police	97,500	104,000	6,500
Afghan Local Police	30,000	29,100	(900)
Afghan Customs and Border Police	23,900	27,300	3,400
Afghan National Civil Order Police	14,600	0	(14,600)
ANP support (logistics and medical)	3,200	3,200	0
ANA infantry battalions	70,100	60,300	(9,800)
ANA combat support battalions	11,500	10,000	(1,500)
ANA national swing force (Mobile Strike Force)	4,500	4,500	0
ANA headquarters (brigade and above)	22,500	25,000	2,500
ANA logistics and support	37,200	56,100	18,900
ANA Special Operations Forces	11,900	11,900	0
Afghan Air Force and Special Mission Wing	7,800	7,700	(100)
Recruits and students (ANA and ANP)	19,300	18,700	(600)
Recruiting and training staff (ANA and ANP)	15,600	15,600	0
Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior staff	12,400	0	(12,400)
Total forces	**382,000**	**373,400**	**(8,600)**

[9] This includes the 352,000 personnel approved in the ANSF Plan of Record and an additional 30,000 Afghan Local Police. By comparison, our figures include a base force of 344,300 plus 29,100 Afghan Local Police (for a total of 373,400 ANSF).

Table 3. Key force size and structure takeaways, by ANSF force type

Force	Key force size and structure takeaways
Afghan Uniformed Police and Afghan Anti-Crime Police	**Overall assessment: Police require a small (5%) increase in force structure** • The current ratio of police to population in Afghanistan is in line with other countries facing significant security threats, but the number of police should be increased slightly in certain areas (e.g., in eastern Afghanistan). • The role of police in Afghanistan is likely to begin evolving from paramilitary functions to community policing and law enforcement, especially in larger cities and more secure rural areas, but we assess that the pace of change will be slow and so do not see a need to significantly change the number of police to reflect this changing mission by the 2015–2018 timeframe.
Afghan Local Police	**Overall assessment: Decrease by 900 personnel (3%)** • The ALP are most effective at securing rural areas from insurgent threats, so we size them to provide 300 Guardians in each of the Tier 3 districts.
Afghan Customs and Border Police	**Overall assessment: Increase border police by 15%** • The number of forces providing security and customs functions at border crossing points and airports is sufficient. • The number of border police operating in the 50-kilometer zone adjacent to the border, especially along the northeastern border with Pakistan, should be increased.
Afghan National Civil Order Police	**Overall assessment: No requirement for the ANCOP in our force sizing framework** • The roles and missions of the ANCOP overlap with other police and army functions, so we do not see a requirement for their force structure and zero them out accordingly. • ISAF has argued that the ANCOP are an effective counterinsurgency force in practice and that they should be kept. We acknowledge this position and recommend further analysis be done on the role and size of the ANCOP.

Table 3. Key force size and structure takeaways, by ANSF force type

Force	Key force size and structure takeaways
Afghan National Army	**Overall assessment: Reduce the number of infantry battalions from 95 to 81 (15%) but increase logistics and support forces that enable combat operations (net increase of 7% in overall ANA end-strength)** • Based on our threat assessment, northern and western Afghanistan will remain relatively secure and the ANA can maintain that security with fewer—but more mobile—forces. • The ANA requires significantly more logistics forces to support its operations than it has today.
Afghan Air Force	**Overall assessment: Afghanistan has a significant need for air support, but the AAF cannot support more air power than is currently planned** • The AAF is struggling to find sufficient numbers of qualified recruits to grow to its planned size. • Even if additional recruits are found, only a small number could be fully trained by 2018.
Special Operations Forces	**Overall assessment: Afghanistan has a significant need for special operations forces, but the ANSF cannot support more SOF** • The ANA could potentially recruit and train more SOF—but increasing the number of SOF recruits would likely require additional international personnel to provide them training. • ANA SOF currently depend on the U.S. and ISAF for logistics, intelligence, and air mobility. Simply increasing the number of ANA SOF personnel without addressing these support requirements would not increase the overall capability of SOF to disrupt insurgent and terrorist networks.

Table 3. Key force size and structure takeaways, by ANSF force type

Force	Key force size and structure takeaways
Other	**Recruiting and training: Reduce the number of recruits proportionally to the overall decrease in ANSF force structure** **Ministries: No requirement for uniformed personnel in the security ministries** • Attrition in the army and police will likely continue at or near current levels, so the ANSF will need to recruit and train proportionally as many people as they do today. • The uniformed ANSF positions in the MoD and MoI should be civilianized. If civilians with the appropriate expertise cannot be recruited or trained for these positions—or if active-duty ANSF personnel cannot be transitioned to the civil service—then ANSF force structure will need to be increased to accommodate them.

In terms of regional differentiation of the ANSF, our conclusions (Table 4) are as follows:

- The northern parts of Afghanistan are relatively stable today and the insurgency is unlikely to make significant inroads into these areas in the 2015–2018 timeframe. Thus, we assess that the ANA presence in northern Afghanistan can be reduced by five battalions. Similarly, we reduced the number of ANA battalions in western Afghanistan by one.
- The Haqqani network poses a significant threat to eastern Afghanistan and the ANSF should refocus its efforts from a counterinsurgency strategy to a dedicated counter-network strategy in that region. Therefore, we reduced the ANA by six combat battalions in the remote parts of eastern Afghanistan, but we increased the police and border police in those areas, and we assess that ANA SOF should increase their presence and operations in these areas as well.
- Tier 3 areas in southern Afghanistan will continue to require a significant ANA presence to conduct up-to battalion sized counterinsurgency operations, and a large-scale police presence to protect communities and hold areas after ANA clearing

operations. Based on our threat assessment, however, we assess that the Tier 4 areas of southern Afghanistan will be a lower priority for the insurgency, and so will require fewer ANA and police forces to maintain security in the 2015–2018 timeframe than they have today. We also assess that fewer police will be required in the Tier 1 and 2 areas of southern Afghanistan, as these areas no longer face the same insurgent threats as in the past.

Table 4. Difference between current and calculated ANSF force levels by region[10]

	Current forces	Calculated forces	Difference
Kabul	26,900	27,300	400
East	63,500	74,000	10,500
South & southwest	55,600	44,500	(11,100)
West	23,700	22,800	(900)
North	33,300	31,700	(1,600)

We recognize that the Afghan government might find it politically difficult to reduce the number of combat forces in northern Afghanistan, since a reduction could create an imbalance in the current power-sharing relationships across regional and ethnic lines. In addition, reducing the number of ANA personnel in the north would result in an increase in unemployment in this region. Although these areas are currently more stable than the rest of Afghanistan, reduced employment opportunities might adversely affect that stability. Similarly, reducing the police force in Tier 4 areas of southern Afghanistan might mean increased unemployment in these rural areas, which could also result in increased instability. While we acknowledge that the Afghan government can distribute its forces as it deems appropri-

[10] The regional figures shown in this table do not include the Mobile Strike Force or the ANCOP, as the MoD and MoI have the option to relocate these forces across regions. We also did not apportion the ANA headquarters, logistics, and support forces by region, because we did not assess a specific troop-to-task assignment for the additional headquarters or logistics personnel. Thus, it is not clear how many of these additional personnel should be physically located in the regions and how many should be at the national headquarters in Kabul.

ate, our analysis suggests that the ANSF could be used more efficiently against the future threat by adjusting the regional laydown of forces.

Summary of post-2014 ANSF capability gaps and resource proposals

By synthesizing a host of prior studies with our own observations from in-theater interviews, we conclude that the ANSF have a number of significant capability gaps. Our analysis suggests that six of these in particular may prevent the ANSF from adequately performing the missions required to achieve their operational goals in the 2015–2018 timeframe.

Specifically, the ANSF are likely to have systemic shortfalls in mobility; logistics (e.g., maintenance, supply, and contracting); air support; communications and coordination between ANSF pillars; intelligence gathering and analysis; and the recruiting and training of personnel with specialized skills.

Our analysis suggests that materiel solutions (e.g., the so-called "enhancements above the ANSF Plan of Record (APoR)" currently before the U.S. Congress) can help mitigate some of these capability gaps; however, they cannot close them completely, as most of the gaps are systemic in nature. As a result:

We conclude that international support (to include the presence of advisors) will be required to address the gaps in mobility, logistics, air support, and intelligence gathering and analysis though at least 2018.

We attempted to calculate the cost of the 373,400-member force, but were unable to find detailed data on the costs of the current ANSF and did not have adequate time to conduct a detailed cost analysis of our own. Rough estimates using two existing models put the sustainment costs of the 373,400-member force in the range of $5-6 billion per year, though these are highly approximate and we conclude that further work should be done to develop a more accurate cost estimate of our calculated force.

Conclusion of independent assessment of the ANSF

Using a quantitative troop-to-task analysis tied via five security tiers to a qualitative future threat assessment:

We conclude that the ANSF (including the Afghan Local Police) should have a total end-strength of about 373,400 through at least 2018. This force size is significantly larger, and likely to be more expensive, than that envisioned by the United States and NATO at the 2012 Chicago Summit.

The declaration from the 2012 Chicago Summit stated that:

> The pace and the size of a gradual managed force reduction from the ANSF surge peak [of 352,000 plus 30,000 ALP] to a sustainable level will be conditions-based and decided by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in consultation with the International Community. The preliminary model for a future total ANSF size, defined by the International Community and the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, envisages a force of 228,500 with an estimated annual budget of US$4.1billion, and will be reviewed regularly against the developing security environment.[11]

The envisioned drawdown of the ANSF to a significantly smaller force size than exists today was predicated on an assumption of a much-reduced insurgent threat in the post-2014 timeframe. *Our threat assessment finds this assumption to be faulty.* As such:

We conclude that proceeding with the drawdown of the ANSF as announced at the Chicago Summit will put the current U.S. policy goal for Afghanistan at risk. Instead, we recommend the international community establish a new plan to fund and sustain the ANSF at an end-strength of about 373,400,

[11] "Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan Issued by the Heads of State and Government of Afghanistan and Nations contributing to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force." *Chicagonato.org, The official Host Committee Website for the Chicago NATO Summit*, May 21, 2013, accessed Oct. 10, 2013, at www.chicagonato.org/chicago-summit-declaration-on-afghanistan-news-44.php. The 228,500 force described at the Chicago Summit did not include separate U.S. plans to maintain an additional 30,000 Afghan Local Police (i.e., these two together would yield a total security force of 258,500).

with a proportionally sized assistance mission (including advisors), through at least 2018.

If the international community did this, and *if the ANSF are successful through 2018:*

We assess that a negotiated political settlement to end the war would become much more likely in the 2019–2023 timeframe.

The next section will discuss the findings from our additional assessments.

Summary of additional assessments

This section contains summaries of our assessments of the additional topics of interest to the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy).

Summary of the capabilities of the MoD and MoI and the requirement for MoD and MoI advising

We were asked to assess the capabilities of the Ministries of Defense and Interior to perform the planning, programming, budgeting, management, oversight, and sustainment functions for their respective forces. We were also asked to assess the appropriate proportion of military and civilian advisors to assist the MoD and MoI and their required functional/professional expertise.

To do so, we examined the relevant security sector reform (SSR) literature, to identify best practices and "ideal types" of security institutions and what their required capabilities are. We used results from our earlier ANSF capability gap analysis, along with our in-country interviews, to identify required core capabilities for the MoD and MoI, as well as critical "institutional enablers." We used these same sources, along with organizational charts of the ministries, to identify whether the MoD and MoI were likely to be able to perform these core capabilities and institutional enabling activities independently by 2018 and if not, what their key shortfalls would be.

We analyzed field research in Afghanistan, government reports, and the SSR literature to identify and assess the characteristics that advisors working in the MoD and MoI should possess, and to identify the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to advising. Fi-

nally, we leveraged studies on advising in previous conflicts to provide recommendations on identifying, recruiting, and training advisors to enhance the effectiveness of ministerial reform in Afghanistan.

Using this method:

We conclude that for the MoD and MoI to function at a reasonably proficient level, and to carry out their responsibilities to support army and police forces in the field, they require the following four core capabilities: logistics; strategy and policy planning; financial management; and personnel management.

In addition, we found that six institutional enablers are important for ministerial success: anti-corruption; gender integration; local ownership; information technology; intelligence; and civilianization.

We also conclude that the MoD and MoI are not likely to be fully independent at any of these capabilities or enablers by 2018. We therefore assess that international advisors within the MoD and MoI will be required through at least 2018.

The absence of ministerial advisors will not likely lead to the collapse of the fielded forces in the short term, but it has the potential to undermine their combat effectiveness over the timeframe of this study, thereby imparting additional risk to the U.S. policy goal for Afghanistan.

We examine several different ways an advisor program could be constructed (e.g., bilateral versus multilateral, civilian versus military), but we conclude that there is no obvious "best choice" as each approach has significant advantages and disadvantages. We therefore refrain from making a specific recommendation and instead suggest the U.S. should make a clear-eyed decision on the structure of an advisor program based on the pros and cons we identify. Finally, we conclude that a thorough and deliberate advisor selection and training process—one that emphasizes previous experience, maturity, professional skills, and the ability to work across cultures—would help strengthen the post-2014 ministerial advisory effort.

Summary of legal authorities required post-2014

We were asked to assess and provide recommendations on legislative authorities that would enable—or hinder—success of the U.S. assistance mission post-2014.

To do so, we constructed a matrix that aligns current assistance missions with mission managers and the legal authorities that allow them to operate. We reviewed U.S. operational plans to identify which missions are currently being conducted. Using open source literature and our own interviews, we then identified who is conducting these missions and under which legal authorities they operate. We reviewed public statements from U.S. leaders and government officials, and interviewed U.S. personnel to identify the types of missions the U.S. military will carry out in Afghanistan in the 2015 to 2018 timeframe. We then compared current assistance missions to future planned missions to identify which legal authorities will need to remain in place. To present our findings, we prepared a "model law" which details all of the legislative components needed enable the post-2014 assistance mission.

Using this method, we identified over 20 specialized legal authorities and many more standing authorities and international agreements that enable the U.S. military's mission in Afghanistan. The current "authorities regime" is an amalgam of Title 10 and Title 22 authorities with different managers, accounting rules, and reporting requirements. This collection of laws allows the U.S. Department of Defense to maintain a presence and engage in combat operations in Afghanistan, transfer goods and services to the ANSF and coalition partner nations, and receive and spend public funds on specified programs. Some of the authorities have sunset clauses; others are permanent but require funding re-authorization each year.

Our research suggests the post-2014 mission will focus on four missions: counterterrorism operations; training, advising, assisting (and possibly continuing to equip) the ANSF; retrograding personnel and equipment from Afghanistan; and when called upon, protecting U.S. civilians working on the ground. In terms of authorities for this post-2014 mission set:

We conclude the U.S. Department of Defense will require the same types of authorities that it has today with the possible exception of authorities for

counterinsurgency programs which are not part of the envisioned post-2014 mission set for the U.S. military.

These include civil infrastructure development, economic development programs, and combatant reintegration programs. In addition:

We conclude that the decentralized and makeshift nature of the current authorities regime promotes waste and inefficiencies.

Having been developed in piecemeal fashion, the existing regime is cumbersome and difficult to track and manage. Instead of relying on the existing, disjointed assortment of authorities, we recommend they be consolidated into one omnibus authority where possible.

As an illustration of this, we prepared a U.S. assistance mission "model law," which contains all the authorities necessary for the post-2014 mission set (the text of the law is available in the full report). It is structured to lower administrative and transactional costs, speed up and simplify transfer processes, and provide the on-scene commander flexibility to adjust programs as needed. Key features of the model law include:

- Centralization of management and oversight with the Secretary of Defense;
- Codification and reaffirmation of the right to conduct counterterrorism operations alongside the train, advise, and assist mission;
- Establishment of a single fund to pay for all incremental expenses associated with the training and assistance mission; and
- The provision of broad transfer authorities to the ANSF (and allies and friends) outside the typical Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program, since Afghanistan can neither afford nor manage participation in this program.

The difficulties of enacting the model law notwithstanding, we assess it can serve as a useful checklist of authorities needed to enable the post-2014 mission in Afghanistan.

Summary of the ANSF – PAKMIL relationship

We were asked to conduct an assessment of the opportunities for cooperation—or prevention of conflict—between the ANSF and the Pakistani military (PAKMIL), especially along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

To do so, we documented the past and current dynamics of the relationship between the ANSF and the PAKMIL, using secondary sources in the literature and our own interviews in the U.S., Afghanistan, and Pakistan. We then used this understanding of the past and present to elicit areas of likely enduring conflict, as well as areas where the two countries may increase cooperation or, at the very least, reduce tensions in the future.

Relations between Afghan and Pakistani forces are often strained and prone to escalation, yet tensions between the ANSF and PAKMIL have yet to lead to open warfare. There is considerable demand among officers on both sides for a more stable relationship. We assess that there will be continuing opportunities for cooperation between the two forces post-2014, especially at the tactical and operational levels, as well as a reduction in tensions along the border. At the same time, there will be areas of enduring conflict that will require constant attention—some of which may worsen in the coming years.

Having conducted numerous interviews with Afghan, Pakistani, U.S., and NATO forces at multiple levels on both sides of the border:

We conclude that a significant reduction in the U.S. and NATO commitment to Afghanistan or Pakistan will destabilize the border region, exacerbate existing tensions between the two countries, and jeopardize fragile mechanisms for cross-border cooperation and de-escalation that have been built in recent years.

Many in the Pakistani military do not believe that the international community will provide sufficient resources for the ANSF to survive past 2014 or that the U.S. will continue to resource Pakistani military operations in the border areas. Uncertainty about the future is forcing the two militaries to plan for worst case scenarios.

We conclude that there will be continual conflict on a number of issues in the foreseeable future. These include Afghanistan's reluc-

tance to recognize the border, difficulties associated with demarcating the border line, the tendency of some Afghan leaders to exploit anti-Pakistan sentiment among the Afghan population, Pakistan's continued relationship with elements of the Taliban, insurgent sanctuaries inside Pakistan (and increasingly in parts of Afghanistan as coalition forces withdraw), and Afghanistan's growing security relationship with India.

Despite the likelihood of conflict over these issues, there are areas of common interest as well as potentially enduring mechanisms for communication and cooperation that could help reduce conflict and stabilize the relationship over time. Some of these include: expanding road networks and cross-border trade, repatriation and resettlement of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, continued counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations on both sides of the border, expansion of border coordination mechanisms at the tactical and operational levels, bilateral meetings between the two forces at all levels, and, finally, cooperation on countering IEDs, which officers on both sides see as a major future threat to their forces.

Summary of likely ANSF responses to political scenarios

We were asked to assess difficulties the ANSF may face—and likely responses and directions they could go—under several potential political situations or scenarios.

To do so, we used our overarching assumptions to create a set of political scenarios in which some of these assumptions are tested. In particular, we chose to individually test our assumptions pertaining to Taliban reconciliation, a peaceful and acceptable transfer of political power in 2014, and the continuance of U.S., NATO, and international community support. We then conducted literature research to understand which aspects of our scenarios have been studied and analyzed previously and what conclusions were drawn by others. We interviewed subject matter experts, to include a significant number of Afghans, to gather their views on how the ANSF might respond under these scenarios. We consolidated these views to derive most likely responses for the ANSF to the scenarios, focusing our attention broadly on leadership and rank-and-file reactions. We also considered what events might have to occur to cause a negative reaction (e.g.,

fragmentation, desertion, military coup) on the part of these aspects of the ANSF.

We considered three political scenarios and the ANSF's likely response to them. For the first scenario (reconciliation happens):

We conclude that so long as the Afghan president adequately consults, listens to, and addresses the concerns of ANSF leaders as part of the reconciliation process and during the implementation of a settlement, the ANSF are likely to accept the settlement's terms.

Given Afghan culture and the current Afghan President's precedent for calling *Loya Jirgas* prior to making significant national decisions, it seems likely there would be considerable behind-the-scenes consensus building before the President agreed to any terms or conditions of a settlement. However, we assess that there is a low likelihood of reconciliation actually happening before 2018.

For the second scenario (a "bad" presidential election):

We conclude that as long as the winning presidential ticket maintains the current ethnic balance of power, the ANSF will largely accept the results of the election.

That said, it is possible that in a Pashtun versus Pashtun runoff that some rank-and-file ANSF members loyal to the losing ticket could desert or defect to the insurgency. If a non-Pashtun were to win the election, it could lead to more widespread desertion or defection on the part of rank-and-file ANSF (especially within the police) along with increased violence in the south and the east of the country and protests within the major cities. We assess that these possibilities are of low-to-moderate likelihood.

For the third scenario (loss of international community support), if the U.S. and NATO do not continue a training and advisory mission for the ANSF:

We conclude that the absence of advisors in 2015 is likely to result in a downward spiral of ANSF capabilities, along with security in Afghanistan—unless the ANSF were able to find other patrons to fill the resulting "enabler vacuum."

We assess that the speed of this downward spiral would likely be most strongly dependent on the level of continued international community financial aid. If the U.S. and NATO discontinue training and advising the ANSF, we assess that many ANSF leaders would likely soldier on, since they are well-invested in the future of Afghanistan and its security forces. At the rank-and-file level of the ANSF, however, the loss of U.S. and NATO enablers could have a more dramatic effect—to include increased desertion and defection rates and the possibility of unit fragmentation or dissolution. We find this excursion to be of moderate likelihood, with moderate-to-high likelihood of these negative ANSF responses as a result.

With respect to the loss of international community financial support, this was the one point on which every one of our interviewees agreed. The loss of funding, or even a too-rapid decline in funding, to the ANSF would carry with it a high likelihood of increased desertion rates; fragmentation or fracture of ANSF units; or defection of units to the insurgency. As such:

We conclude that the absence of international community funds for the ANSF and Afghanistan's government is likely to result in another civil war in Afghanistan.

In the absence of such funding, the centripetal forces of Afghanistan's various power centers are likely to pull the country apart once again.

Summary of conclusions

Taking all of our assessments into consideration, we conclude that for the ANSF to successfully support the U.S. policy goal of preventing Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists that threaten Afghanistan, the region, and the world, they will need a force size of about 373,400 with some structural and posture adjustments, through at least 2018. We conclude this force is not likely to militarily defeat the Taliban, but if it can hold against the Taliban insurgency through 2018, the likelihood of a negotiated settlement to the war will increase. We conclude that this force, as well as the security ministries that support it, will require international enabling assistance—including advisors—through at least 2018, and this assistance mission will need similar authorities to the mission in Afghanistan to-

day. Finally, we conclude that sustained commitment of the international community in Afghanistan is likely to mitigate tensions in the region and increase prospects for regional cooperation, but withdrawal of international community support is likely to have consequences up to and including a renewed civil war in Afghanistan and increased instability in the region.

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Acronyms

AACP	Afghan Anti-Crime Police
AAF	Afghan Air Force
ABP	Afghan Border Police
ALP	Afghan Local Police
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANA SOF	Afghan National Army Special Operations Forces
ANCOP	Afghan National Civil Order Police
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
APoR	Afghan National Security Forces Plan of Record
APPF	Afghan Public Protection Force
AUP	Afghan Uniform Police
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MoD	Ministry of Defense (Afghan)
MoI	Ministry of Interior (Afghan)
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NDS	National Directorate of Security (Afghan)
ODR-P	Office of the Defense Representative–Pakistan

PAKMIL	Pakistani Military
SMW	Special Mission Wing
SSR	Security Sector Reform
U.S.	United States

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4825 Mark Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22311-1850 703-824-2000 www.cna.org