

Appendix 1

Corruption in the Afghan National Police

Despite efforts to create an effective police force, today's Afghan National Police (ANP) is beset by institutionalized corruption at every level. Charged with providing order and security down to the district and village level, the ANP has managed to reduce the legitimacy of the government among the very population it is meant to protect. As a major arm of the counterinsurgency effort, the ANP is failing in its mission. Each day the Afghan population watches as senior leaders in the ANP and the Interior Ministry (MoI) are engaged in corruption and graft involving large amounts of currency and resources. At the same time, the population must deal with corrupt police officers and local officials in the normal course of their lives.

Corruption has become an endemic problem throughout Afghanistan, affecting almost every facet of society to include the relations between the population, government institutions, international military forces, private security firms, non-governmental organizations, and aid agencies. Corruption is common from the highest levels of the Afghan government down to the lowest government operative.¹ Transparency International ranks Afghanistan 172nd in the world in its *2007 Corruption Perceptions Index*.² President Karzai has been forced to address the issue publicly, indicating that a "cabinet shakeup" may be in order.³ The *Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007* points out:

"Post-conflict countries are particularly vulnerable to corruption because of weak government institutions and the inability to ensure the rule of law. Corruption poses a particular threat to post-conflict countries by undermining the legitimacy of the

¹ See Stephen P. Riley, "Petty Corruption and Development," *Development in Practice*, Vol. 9, No. 1/2 (February 1999): 189-93. Riley suggests that high-level corruption encourages "petty corruption," where the population is forced to deal with corrupt officials face-to-face.

² Transparency International, *2007 Corruption Perceptions Index*, at http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2007, accessed on 6 December 2007. Afghanistan received a score of 1.8 out of 10, 10 being highly clean from corruption.

³ Ron Synovitz, "Afghanistan: Karzai's Corruption Comments Could Lead to Cabinet Shakeup," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, (November 16, 2007), at <http://www.rferl.org>, accessed on 30 November 2007.

Government and by fomenting public distrust towards internationally supported efforts to rebuild the country. Corruption also destabilizes efforts to build society.”⁴

Widespread corruption, combined with an active insurgency, threaten to de-stabilize and de-legitimize Afghanistan’s fledgling government as well as retard future economic growth.⁵

How Corrupt is Corrupt?

The scope of this appendix does not cover the institutional and cultural causes of state corruption. It is, however, relevant to point out that within a state corruption often “is disproportionately present in law enforcement sectors.”⁶ This appears to be especially true in a state such as Afghanistan which is attempting to recover from three decades of conflict and chaos, an ongoing insurgency, and a struggling reconstruction process. Low pay among its officers on the street combined with the absence of effective government oversight has allowed the ANP to become one of the most corrupt state institutions in Afghanistan.

While hard statistics regarding corruption among the ANP are difficult to come by, a number of anecdotes fairly describe the level and openness of corruption. In his article for *The TimesOnline*, Anthony Loyd details cases after case of corruption among the ANP and MoI. Drug smuggling, in large part, provides the funds which fuel police corruption. Bribes are paid to police by drug smugglers to protect their routes and police pay bribes to work along drug routes in order to win a piece of the pie. In one case a new chief of police was given his position “in a drug-rich northern province” for “one hundred and fifty thousand [dollars].” The new chief, after having paid the bribe

⁴ Center for Policy and Human Development, *Afghanistan Human Development Report 2007*, (Islamabad: Army Press, 2007): 61, at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/nationalreports/asiathepacific/afghanistan/name,3408.en.html>, accessed on 30 November 2007.

⁵ Mitchell A. Seligson, “The Impact of Corruption on Regime Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Four Latin American Countries,” *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (May 2002): 408-33.

⁶ Omar Azfar, Young Lee and Anand Swamy, “The Causes and Consequences of Corruption,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 573, Culture and Development: International Perspectives (January 2001): 47.

in Afghanis, was unceremoniously thrown out of office for failing to pay in US dollars. According to Loyd's sources, a police position in a province with high levels of drug running can cost as much as \$300,000 with the potential for a counter-narcotics official to bring in as much as \$400,000 a month.⁷ As recently as November 2007, the MoI detained 10 high-ranking officials in the counter-narcotics department "for misappropriating three million afghanis and 47,000 dollars."⁸

Equal enforcement of the law is not occurring where the police meet the population. Bribes and extortion are demanded from the public, at checkpoints and traffic stops for missing documents or as "taxes."⁹ Taxi drivers are often forced to pay traffic police in Kabul between \$0.20 and \$6 each day.¹⁰ A recent survey suggests that the average Afghan household pays an average of \$100 annually in bribes. With a per capita GDP of only approximately \$300,¹¹ bribes are especially harmful to the Afghan population.¹² Police are also known to be involved in crimes at the local level, occasionally engaging in brutal and violent treatment of the population.¹³

Causes, Consequences and Solutions

A number of factors contribute to rampant corruption in the ANP. First, current efforts to create a new and viable national police force were preceded by decades of conflict and the general absence of any state authority. The current generation of police has little to no institutional history of actually serving the nation and people upon which to build. Equally, they have lived and operated in a society where personal survival was the driving force of daily life. It may be difficult for them to move past that mindset

⁷ Anthony Loyd, "Corruption, bribes and trafficking: A Cancer That is Engulfing Afghanistan," *The TimesOnline*, (November 24, 2007), at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/>, accessed on 30 November 2007.

⁸ *Pajhwok Afghan News*, "10 Police Officers Detained on Embezzlement Charges," (November 26, 2007), at <http://www.afghanistannewscenter.com>, accessed on 4 December 2007.

⁹ Center for Policy and Human Development, 84.

¹⁰ Bilal Sarwary, "New Scourge of Afghan Society," *BBC News*, (August 6, 2007), at <http://www.afghanistannewscenter.com>, accessed on 4 December 2007.

¹¹ "Afghanistan," *World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency, 2007
<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>> (7 December 2007)

¹² Center for Policy and Human Development, 61.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 84.

when executing their official duties. Second, corruption at the highest levels of the Afghan government, compounded by the strength of regional warlords and the opium trade, has trickled down into the lowest levels of the ANP. Third, low and intermittent pay for ANP officers makes it difficult for them to provide a secure living for them and their families. Currently, ANP officers are paid an average of only \$77 a month. Some police units in two districts in Kandahar were not paid for three months due to administrative mistakes.¹⁴ It is also common practice for local police administrators to collect either a portion of working policemen's salaries or to collect salary for policemen who are not actually working.¹⁵

Corruption in the ANP combined with a serious lack of resources and inadequate training has resulted in an institution that is barely able to fulfill its duties. In areas where the ANP are more focused on earning bribes and facilitating smuggling, they have become an ineffectual and even harmful appendage to the counterinsurgency effort. Rather than providing security for the population and winning their support for the government, they are creating the opposite effect. Many among the population may, if they have not already, throw their support elsewhere, (perhaps to the Taliban), in hopes of having their livelihoods protected and some semblance of order restored. If the current trend continues, the best that can be hoped for is pockets of order amidst a sea of chaos and violence. The worst that can be expected is the collapse of the Afghan state, leaving behind large numbers of armed men with some training and loyalties for sale. It is important to consider that the current pattern of events in many ways resemble what occurred in the 1990s, prior to the rise of the Taliban.

Answers seem difficult to come by with the current picture of Afghanistan in view. Corruption in the ANP is unlikely to end while it continues to exist at the highest levels

¹⁴ Bill Graveland, "Afghan Police Threatening to Walk Off the Job," *The Canadian Press*, (November 15, 2007), at <http://cnews.canoe.ca/>, accessed on 30 November 2007.

¹⁵ David Rohde, "Overhaul of Afghan Police is a New Priority," *The New York Times*, (October 18, 2007), at <http://www.nytimes.com>, accessed on 19 October 2007.

of the government. As long as warlords and drug kings are free to grow and export their products, they likely will be able to pay local and national police officials more than they can make legally. There are, however, several steps which could possibly alleviate the level of corruption among the ANP at the local level. First, police must be provided an adequate salary which will remove the necessity to look for income outside of legal avenues. A proposal to raise salaries to \$150 per month has been made. Such a step could go a long way in removing the temptation of police officers to engage in corruption. Second, embedding more ISAF or US troops with police at the local level likely would decrease the frequency and openness of corruption. This option unfortunately will require a greater commitment from nations which are reluctant to maintain even their current level of support. As long as large numbers of trainers are simultaneously required in Iraq it is unlikely that the US will be able to meet all of the security, training and mentoring requirements of the ANP or the Afghan National Army.

A long term solution to the endemic corruption engulfing the ANP will require more than just an increase in salaries and increased training and mentoring from international forces. It is important to remember that it is the ultimate goal of the Afghan people and their international partners to create a truly independent and sovereign state. Eventually international forces will be withdrawn and funds decreased. Afghanistan will have to look after its own affairs. The ANP is often the public face of the government; therefore, it is important to tackle corruption among its ranks. Unless it is meaningfully reformed, the Afghan people will continue to lose confidence in the new Afghanistan. Without a strong central government that is willing to swear off corruption and look after the interests of the population, it is likely that the state will remain illegitimate in the eyes of a significant portion of the population, thereby fueling and prolonging a violent insurgency. The longer such an innovation in thinking is put off, the more difficult it will be to change course.