



# Afghanistan Update

A twice-weekly, one-page situation report on the latest developments affecting U.S. policy and engagement in Afghanistan.

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## Latest news: Outcome from London Conference

70 countries and international organizations met on 28 January to discuss assisting the Afghan Government to sustain its own security, exercise territorial sovereignty, offer a representative government, and foster economic prosperity.

Major announcements included:

- The World Bank and International Monetary Fund offered **\$1.6 billion in debt relief**.
- **Conditional transition towards Afghan-led security by late 2010** from the 135,000 international security forces.
- **Target of 300,000 total Afghan army and police**, with training supported by international community.
- **New measures to tackle corruption** with independent oversight and monitoring offices.
- **Development assistance to be better coordinated and increasingly channeled through the Afghan Government**, supported with budget and structural reforms.

## In Quotes:

*"As a soldier, my personal feeling is that there's been enough fighting, and that what we need to do – all of us – is to do the fighting necessary to shape conditions where people can get on with their lives, and everybody can make a decision where fighting's not the direction that it needs to go in. You just really don't make progress, politically, during fighting. What I think we do is try to shape conditions which allow people to come to a truly equitable solution to how the Afghan people are governed"* General **Stanley McChrystal**, 19 January 2010.

## In Quotes:

*"We want a strategic depth in Afghanistan but do not want to control it... A peaceful and friendly Afghanistan can provide Pakistan a strategic depth"* General **Ashfaq Kayani** 1 February 2010.

## Who's Who:

**General Ashfaq Kayani** (b. 1952) is Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff. Former director of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI); he replaced President Musharraf as the leader of the army in 2007.

Attended Pakistan Military Academy and received advanced training at Fort Benning and Fort Leavenworth.

Although Pakistan's army is often enmeshed in politics, Kayani has remained neutral. He briefly served as military aide to Benazir Bhutto during her first term as prime minister in the 1980s.

Kayani once compared coups to temporary bypasses that are created when a bridge collapses on democracy's highway. After the bridge is repaired, he says, then there's no longer any need for the detour.

Kayani recently expressed concern that an Afghan army with more than 250,000 soldiers could pose a threat to Pakistan.

## Key Issue: Talking to the Taliban

- At the international summit in London, Afghan President **Hamid Karzai's announced a traditional tribal meeting with Taliban leaders**, which reportedly goes farther than the approach preferred by many U.S. officials, which is reaching out to lower- and mid-level Taliban fighters
- A Taliban spokesman said that the movement's leadership "will soon decide" whether to participate in the peace talks, which would not involve the international community but solely the Afghan government, which intends to convene the *jirga* within weeks.
- **The U.N. removed international travel bans on five former senior Taliban leaders**, and the outgoing chief of the U.N. mission in Afghanistan, diplomat Kai Eide, reportedly met with members of the Afghan Taliban's Quetta *shura* leadership council on January 8 in Dubai.
- **Saudi Arabia has offered to act as a mediator in talks with the Taliban, but only if the Taliban agree to expel Osama bin Laden**. Karzai is visiting Mecca on Wednesday, and then meeting with King Abdullah to discuss reconciliation efforts.

## Key Issue: Training Afghan Security Forces

- **The NATO International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan will have a shortfall of up to 2,400 people to train Afghan security forces.** (Reuters)
- The coalition forces need 21 more teams for Afghan Army training and need more than 100 teams for police training. This training is instrumental for preparing the Afghan government to take over responsibility for security.
- The chief of Pakistan's military, Gen Kayani, discussed Pakistan's offer to assist training Afghan soldiers in a rare press briefing on Monday. Pakistan formally offered training assistance at the NATO conference in Brussels last week.
- The proposal is being considered by Afghan and U.S. officials, and it could be a means of improving trust between the Afghan and Pakistan militaries.
- Pakistan's training offer could be motivated by unsubstantiated rumors in Pakistan that its rival India is training Afghan forces.
- Last month U.S. General William Caldwell visited Pakistan to discuss the possibility of training assistance.

## Budget News:

The current fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, is the first year that more money has been allocated to Afghanistan (\$72.3 billion) than Iraq (\$64.5 billion), according to the [National Priorities Project](#), a nonpartisan budget research group.

The [Afghanistan Congressional Communications Hub](#) serves Members and staff by providing relevant and accessible information on Afghanistan. It is non-partisan.

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