



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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In the News: Afghan Police Commander Arrested

- On 5 February NATO forces arrested the Afghan police commander Col. Attaullah Wahab, in Mahmud Raqi, a district in the Kapisa province, for involvement in the storage, distribution, and installation of improvised explosive devices.
- The Interior Ministry, which oversees the police, was not informed about the arrest in advance according to ministry spokesman Zmary Bashary.
- Colonel Attaullah Wahab is also accused of murder, bribery, and corruption related to road refurbishment.
- Col. Wahab was captured along with a bodyguard in a helicopter raid while he was at home in Mahmud Raqi.
- Hundreds of residents staged a protest at the arrest of an Afghan police commander by foreign soldiers. Kapisa's governor, Abu Bakr said these sorts of arrests, "harmed their efforts for maintenance of security" in the area.

In Quotes:

"If they want to fight, then obviously that will have to be an outcome. But if they don't want to fight, that's fine too... We're not interested in how many Taliban we kill. We'd much rather have them see the inevitability that things are changing and just accept that." General **Stanley McChrystal**, on Taliban supporters, 4 February 2010.

In Quotes:

"For the past many years I've been visited by Afghan community leaders who are advising me to go back to some form of conscription for the Afghan army so the young boys of the Afghanistan countryside can ... come to training centers, get acquainted with the rest of the country, get familiarized with other young men around the country and learn something and go back home... This will be philosophically one of our pursuits as we move ahead into the future in consultation with the Afghan people." **President Karzai** on conscription, 7 February 2010

Who's Who:

General **Stanley McChrystal** is the commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, as well as the commander of all U.S. forces in Afghanistan. He has filled this role since 15 June, 2009.

McChrystal (b. 14 August 1954) was the commander of the Joint Special Operations Command from 2003 - 2008. Under his command Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, was killed.

A 1976 graduate of West Point, he was a member of the Joint Staff at the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003.

On progress in Afghanistan: *"I am not prepared to say that we have turned the corner. I am saying that the situation is serious. But I think we have made significant progress in setting conditions in 2009, and ... we'll make real progress in 2010."*

Key Issue: Karzai Considering Conscription

- At the Munich Security Conference this past weekend Karzai announced he is considering conscription to meet the manpower needs for the Afghan National Security Forces.
- Afghanistan has not had conscription since 1992.
- Full-strength Afghan National Security Forces are necessary for NATO to handover the planning and conducting of military operations to in order to facilitate a coalition withdrawal in the summer of 2011.
- The NATO coalition and Afghan government have agreed to expand the army from 97,000 men today, to 171,600 by the end of 2011. Additionally, the police force will increase from an estimated 92,000 officers today to 134,000.
- Some worry that the high rates of desertion and corruption issues could make these force targets unobtainable. However, last week, Afghanistan's defense minister told reporters the army had no shortage of recruits and that there was no need to force people to serve.

Key Issue: Avoiding Civilian Casualties in the Marjah Offensive

- Over 20,000 NATO coalition and Afghan troops will soon commence "Operation Moshtarak" to take the town of Marjah in the southern Afghan province of Helmand.
- "Moshtarak" means "together" in Dari, and it will be the largest joint Afghan-coalition operation since 2001.
- The upcoming operation has been widely publicized to in order to warn civilians; Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand Province, is filling with refugees fleeing the upcoming battle.
- Coalition forces are putting heavy emphasis on the central tenant of population-centric counterinsurgency: avoiding civilian casualties in the upcoming offensive.
- General McChrystal has emphasized protecting civilians in the upcoming offensive: *"We're trying to signal to the Afghan people that we are expanding security where they live. We are trying also to signal to the insurgents ... that it's about to change."*

Budget Numbers:

The cost to U.S. taxpayers of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001 has topped \$1 trillion, and President Barack Obama is expected to request another \$33 billion to fund more U.S. troops this year, as well as \$11.6 billion for training the Afghan security forces in 2011, draft Pentagon budget documents say. [Reuters](#)

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