



Afghanistan Update

2 March
2010

A twice-weekly, one-page situation report from the [Afghanistan Congressional Communications Hub](#) on the latest developments affecting U.S. policy and engagement in Afghanistan.

In the News:

- 4,500 of the additional 30,000 troops ordered to Afghanistan by President Obama have now arrived.
- The UK has appointed William Patey, a former diplomat in Iraq, as its new ambassador in Afghanistan. Patey will take over in May from Mark Sedwill, who has been appointed NATO's senior civilian representative in Afghanistan.
- The Pakistani Taliban released a video of their militant chief, Hakimullah Mehsud. The video failed to prove he survived a U.S. missile strike earlier this year, as it was undated.
- Ambassador Holbrooke's tour of Central Asia brought mixed results. He was well received in Georgia, which has 600 soldiers in Afghanistan, and received vague promises of support from Uzbekistan. His trip to Turkmenistan was cancelled at the last minute, and his appearance in Dushanbe Tajikistan was described as terse with no questions. A joint press briefing with Kyrgyz President Bakiyev in Bishkek was abruptly canceled without explanation. [Asia Times](#)

In Quotes:

"There is no military solution to this challenge in Afghanistan. The military can only enable a political solution. And so the political dimension that is ongoing is absolutely paramount, it is critical to the overall success."

General William Caldwell IV
BBC interview, 1 March 2010.

In Quotes:

"What we have done in the past, there has been a tremendous focus on producing quantity of troops, quantity of army soldiers. One of the things we have taken on since the NATO training mission stood up about 100 days ago is we are injecting just as must focus on quality also. It had not been there before.... It's a real change in our dynamics."

General William Caldwell IV
BBC interview, 1 March 2010.

Who's Who:

Lieutenant General William Caldwell IV is currently Commander, NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan and Commander, Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan.

Lieutenant General Caldwell is responsible for mentoring, training, and capacity building for the Afghan army and police.

He has considerable experience in military training, as he was the Commanding General of the US Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Commandant of the US Army Command and General Staff College, and Deputy Commanding General for Combined Arms, US Army Training and Doctrine Command.

Lieutenant General Caldwell graduated from West Point in 1976, and served in Iraq, Haiti, and was Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita civil support operations.

Key Issue: Military trainers in Afghanistan

- A [recent Pentagon report](#) worries that the State Department failed to carry out proper contract oversight, and that their police training does not meet the Pentagon's needs in developing the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), to counter the insurgency.
- The US State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) was responsible for police training. INL relied heavily on the contractor DynCorp, which has recently [come under criticism](#) for producing police perceived as ineffective.
- The Pentagon was due to take over police training from the State Department in February, but DynCorp filed a protest, delaying the transfer of police training to NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan.
- Trainers are crucial for the development of the Afghan National Security Forces. Competent and confident Afghan soldiers and police are needed to take over for the coalition forces before they can safely leave Afghanistan.
- There are many hurdles for developing the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), including high illiteracy, low salaries, and possible problems with corruption; training is of paramount importance.
- In recent months there have been shortages of international trainers in Afghanistan from NATO coalition countries; in January only 37% of the needed trainers were available for police recruits.

Key Issue: New Media Guidelines Announced

- The Afghan government is developing new guidelines to prevent live media footage of insurgent attacks from aiding fighters at the scene.
- On Monday Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS) announced a ban on live news coverage of militant attacks as coverage assisted insurgents. This was contradicted on Tuesday by Waheed Omar, a spokesman for President Karzai, who explained the goal is to prevent militants' tactical use of live media reporting as well to protect reporters.
- Saeed Ansari, a spokesman for the NDS, said there had been cases during last Friday's attack when television footage from the scene provided insurgents with tactical information about the counterattack launched by Afghan security forces.
- The Afghan government banned reporting violence for a single day during a presidential election last year, but otherwise there have not been formal restrictions on filming security incidents. However, some journalists claim to have been beaten by security forces while filming at the scene of past incidents.
- It is believed that insurgents often use the media to manipulate public opinion with false or exaggerated reports of civilian casualties caused by coalition forces.

US Social Media News

The Pentagon announced a new social media policy which will allow soldiers access to websites like Twitter and Facebook, provided they follow rules concerning operational security. Furthermore, the new regulations for social media access are also supposed to encourage the troops to tell their stories. Department of Defense Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Price Floyd said he wants "more, not less" blogging from the front lines. [Danger Room](#)

The [Afghanistan Congressional Communications Hub](#) serves Members and staff by providing relevant and accessible information on Afghanistan. It is non-partisan. Contact ACCH@NewStrategicSecurityInitiative.org if you would like a specific issue paper or to be placed on the distribution list.