



Afghanistan Policy Page

A one-page brief on a major issue concerning U.S. policy and engagement in Afghanistan.

15 January
2010

Afghan National Police

Take Aways

- The Afghan National Police (ANP) is governed by the **civilian leadership** of the **Ministry of Interior**, which analysts say needs reform to rid itself of **endemic corruption**.
- There have been **difficulties for the ANP to perform their key functions of providing security and preventing crime**; some police are loyal to regional war lords, and many abuse drugs - estimated 60% in Helmand Province.
- Successful police reform depends more on the **quality of the police officers** that are being produced and the effects that they have on local security and the rule of law, than simply on the number of officers that can be amassed through more recruitment.
- The ANP is critical in the fight against the violent Taliban, it is **essential for "Hold" and "Build" elements of the Allied military counterinsurgency campaign**. Furthermore, the ANP is a foundational piece in the criminal justice system, which includes the courts and prisons (under the Ministry of Justice).

Key Issues

- **Casualty and Attrition Rate** - The ANP suffered **1,504 Killed in Action** between 2007 and 2009, which was **triple the casualty rates of the Afghan Army**. The ANP annual **attrition rate was 20% in 2009**.
- **ANP Salaries** - Historically low police salaries were raised in 2008 to equal the army's levels, and further boosted in 2009 with the goal of improving recruitment and retention levels. A patrolman's base wage increased from \$70 to **\$165 per month**.
- **Role of the ANP**: There is confusion amongst both Afghan and international governments over the exact role of the ANP. Analysts worry that the ANP is often regarded as **an auxiliary security force rather than a guarantor of the law**, and do not fully address that organized crime and the lack of rule of law which fuel much popular disillusionment and instability.
- **Training** - ANP training occurs over **eight weeks**; in comparison, police training in Haiti was 28 weeks. International training assistance is primarily provided by military actors; some analysts criticize an **over-militarization of the civilian police force**.
- **Local Capacity**: Raising police capacity at local levels is a critical component of ANP reform. New initiatives include regularizing traditional tribal militias in the **Afghanistan Public Protection Force Program (AP3)**. Furthermore, the **Focused District Development (FDD)** training initiative removes all police from a district for eight weeks of intensive training and provides mentors for on-the-ground training.
- **Public Perceptions** - Many analysts fear that the ANP is widely **perceived as predatory, corrupt, and involved in Afghanistan's opium trade** and so the Taliban can gain popular support in their attacks against the ANP.

Possible Questions

- Is there a comprehensive plan by the international community to **reform of the Afghan Ministry of Interior**, and are there benchmarks to support that plan?
- What is the plan to provide the ANP with civilian law-enforcement trainers, rather than soldiers and combat troops?
- What is being done to **further the mandate and improve the effectiveness of the International Police Coordination Board**?
- How effective has international assistance and the AP3 and FDD initiative been to raise the quality of the ANP at local levels?
- How clearly is the **proper role of the ANP** understood? Is there common agreement amongst the Afghan government, Afghan population, and the international community about the ANP's role?

Top Key Facts

- The ANP is composed of **several distinct forces**: the *Afghan Uniform Police*, for general police duties; the *Afghan National Civil Order Police*, the elite quick reaction forces; the *Afghan Border Police*, for border patrols; the *Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan*; the *Criminal Investigation Division*; and the *Counter Terrorism Police*.
- Funding for police training since 2001: **\$10 billion** (US and International).
- ANP total force is believed to be **76,000**; **target strength of 123,000**.
- 75% of police recruits are illiterate.
- Percentage of **ANP weapons that are currently unaccounted for: 40%**.
- International responsibility for training and capacity building is split between the US Departments of State and Defense and several different NATO coalition members' Provincial Reconstruction Teams. As a result the **International Police Coordination Board** had to be created to coordinate the fragmented assistance to the ANP.
- Afghanistan's police force was destroyed during the 1990s civil war and left **non-existent by the fall of the Taliban**. Germany began the initial training effort in 2002.
- The NATO coalition currently only has **37% of the required trainers** to reach target police and army levels by July 2011.

In the News

- The ANP training has gained attention in the US domestic discussion: Senators Carl Levin and Al Franken have drawn attention to the **shortage of trainers necessitating a pause from signing up new police recruits**. 13 Jan 2010 Associated Press.

Further Reading

Perito, R. "Afghanistan's Police: The Weak Link in Security Reform." USIP 2009. www.longwarjournal.org

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