

A Plan to Stabilize Afghanistan

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Governance Innovation
Centre pour l'innovation dans
la gouvernance internationale

Addressing International Governance Challenges

ABSTRACT

Afghanistan's problems are well known: rampant insecurity, endemic corruption, deep-seated poverty and weak governance. Unfortunately most of the strategies advanced to address these issues have lacked clear, effective and culturally-adapted implementation frameworks, making them more like wish lists than concrete roadmaps. Based on wide experience and engagement in Afghanistan's state-building project since 2001 – in the United Nations, Afghan government, and civil society – the author provides a broad outline for a new strategy to stabilize Afghanistan. At the core of this new strategy is a focus on priority areas, or centres of gravity, and an emphasis on local-level participation in program design and implementation. While the window of opportunity to stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan is closing, there are straight forward steps that can be taken to turn the tide of Afghanistan's current crisis. This new approach will not require massive new infusions of resources, but rather robust political will and resolve among both Afghans and international actors, something that is increasingly in short supply.

The author wishes to express thanks to Donna Singmaster of Fallbrook, CA for her assistance in editing the paper.

ISSN 1921-2119

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

| | | | |
|------|---|-----------|--|
| ASCI | Afghan Civil Service Institute | IED | Improvised Explosive Device |
| ADB | Asian Development Bank | ISAF | International Security Assistance Force |
| AMF | Afghan Military Forces | JCMB | Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board |
| ANBP | Afghan New Beginnings Programme | NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| ANDS | Afghanistan National Development Strategy | NSP | National Solidarity Programme |
| ARTF | Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund | NWFP | North-West Frontier Province |
| CERP | Commanders Emergency Response Program | PRT | Provincial Reconstruction Team |
| DDR | Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration | SAARC | South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation |
| ECC | Electoral Complaints Commission | SCO | Shanghai Cooperation Organization |
| ECO | Economic Cooperation Organization | UNAMA | United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan |
| FATA | Federally Administered Tribal Areas | UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| IDLG | Independent Directorate of Local Governance | USCENTCOM | US Central Command |
| IEC | Independent Election Commission | USSOCOM | US Special Operations Command |

About the Author

Shahmahmood Miakhel is the Chief of Party in Afghanistan for the US Institute of Peace (USIP). Prior to that he was a Governance Advisor for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and, from 2003-2005, a Deputy Minister of the Interior in the Government of Afghanistan. In 1994-1995 he worked for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in South and Southeastern Afghanistan, helping to establish District Rehabilitation shuras. He also worked as a reporter for the Pashto service of the *Voice of America* from 1985-1990.

INTRODUCTION

For the past seven years, I have occupied senior positions within the Government of Afghanistan and in United Nations structures in the country. I am familiar with most of the programs and strategies implemented by both the government and the international community. Most of those strategies are supported by bulky documents replete with sophisticated language describing lofty goals, but seldom contain a succinct implementation plan clear to the average Afghan government employee or citizen.

In February 2009 I attended a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) conference at the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul attended by roughly 250 high-level representatives from international organizations and institutions along with officials from the Afghan government. Various programs and strategies such as the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), Afghanistan Compact, Afghanistan Sub-National Governance Policy,¹ and a new Anti-Corruption Strategy to be implemented by the nascent High Office of Oversight (HOO)² were presented and discussed. I was surprised by the lack of substance during the discussions, a sentiment I found was shared by other participants. This compelled me to compile a set of ideas on how to address Afghanistan's many problems in a straight forward, understandable manner that could be implemented in the short and medium terms. This paper lays out those ideas in the form of a strategic plan for Afghanistan, in the hope that it can spur new thinking among Afghan and international policy makers on how to address Afghanistan's myriad of problems.

Among the seemingly self-evident but rarely achieved benchmarks for success in Afghanistan is close cooperation and coordination between the international community and the Afghan government. It is equally important that the three pillars of power in Afghanistan – the government, religious establishment³ and local/traditional leaders – work together and trust each other. These three pillars

1 The Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), in consultation with several government departments, has drafted a sub-national governance policy but it has yet to receive government approval.

2 The HOO was established by the Government of Afghanistan in 2008 to combat corruption.

3 There are roughly 166,000 mosques in Afghanistan along with 100,000 religious students studying in 322 official madrassas. Six thousand leaders of prayers and 7,500 religious scholars are currently on the government payroll (Samem, 2009).

can act in unison only if there is transparency in the decision-making process and local engagement in security, governance and development programming. However, this does not obviate the need for the government to play a lead role in the reconstruction and stabilization process; no plan, program or strategy in Afghanistan can succeed without government leadership at all levels.

Afghanistan has a unique geographic position, standing at the crossroads of the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia, but with a culture, values and history that diverge from them. In this light, it is important to appreciate that reconstruction programs that may have worked in other post-conflict countries, even in adjacent regions, may not have traction in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has been at war for 30 years – experiencing occupation, civil war and proxy wars – but, in contrast with many other troubled states surrounding it, no secessionist movement has ever taken hold. For this reason Afghanistan is often considered as a strong nation with a perpetually weak state.

THE FAILURE OF PREVIOUS SECURITY, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

Afghanistan's numerous stabilization strategies and programs have suffered flaws. First, they have largely been supply-driven, designed on the basis of donor capabilities rather than the needs of the Afghan people. Second, most have been designed to achieve short-term stability rather than long-term sustainable peace and development. For instance, the Afghan National Police (ANP) have largely been developed as a paramilitary force to support counter-insurgency operations rather than as a service able to uphold the rule of law and provide security for Afghans at the community level. While this militaristic approach may advance immediate counter-insurgency objectives, it will likely inhibit the ability of the state to establish community-level security and win public trust over the long-term.

Stabilization strategies and programs in Afghanistan feature a set of common characteristics:

- Most could be described as wish lists with no implementation frameworks. Even when aspects of an implementation framework are discussed,

the goals and mechanisms identified tend to be unrealistic. For instance, the Afghanistan Compact set the goal of establishing

a more effective, accountable and transparent administration at all levels of Government; and implement[ing] measurable improvements in fighting corruption, upholding justice and the rule of law and promoting respect for the human rights of all Afghans.

These objectives, to be achieved over a five-year time horizon, while valid and admirable, could take decades to achieve.

- Most programs and strategies are devised by foreign consultants rather than local experts, and often borrow liberally from strategies and programs from other countries without adequately adapting them to Afghanistan's unique socio-cultural and political milieu. Many of these experts and consultants hold the belief that there has never been a functional government in Afghanistan, necessitating the building of state structures from the ground up. Quite to the contrary, Afghanistan had a functional government for nearly four decades prior to the 1978 coup. Governance structures and traditions existed in Afghanistan prior to 2001; what is needed is renewal, modification and reform, not wholly new structures and practices.
- Persistent personnel changes have undercut their momentum. When one donor official or consultant leaves, the replacement often re-starts programs or processes without reviewing or building upon previous work. This problem is compounded by the limited capacity of Afghan government officials to monitor foreign advisors, mentors and consultants and properly exploit their expertise. Too often, donors form relationships with individual ministers or high-ranking government officials, tying their aid and assistance to them rather than institutions. Accordingly, when a favoured government actor shifts to a new ministry, agency or department, they often take key donor resources with them. The power accumulated by these individual technocrats has prompted some to refer to them as "civil society warlords."

- Most strategy and program documents are overly technical, lack context and are poorly translated, if at all, into Pashto and Dari. They are incomprehensible to the average Afghan or government employee who is expected to implement them.

Over the past eight years, Afghanistan's existing administrative system has been dismantled, and the government and international community are having difficulty putting the pieces back together. Contrary to popular belief, in 2001 Afghanistan did have an administrative system in place that had developed over several decades. Afghan officials were familiar with the system and its machinery, but unfortunately the international community arrived with the mentality that Afghanistan was a governmental blank slate. Instead of implementing gradual reform, they tore down the old administrative, judicial and security systems, replacing them with Western-oriented structures alien to the average Afghan. Many of those imposed systems and structures are out of place and unworkable in the Afghan context.

THE REALITY ON THE GROUND

In my conversations during the past few months across Afghanistan, in Kunduz, Takhar, Paktia, Khost, Kunar and Nangahar provinces, most citizens complained about the lack of security and competent governance in their areas. When asked, however, about progress in development and changes to their standard of living, there was unanimous agreement that since 2001 there has been unprecedented improvement despite problems with government mismanagement, corruption and insecurity. Most admitted that life is better today than it was under Taliban rule, but cited the need for more security, accelerated development and better governance.

The Government of Afghanistan and the international community must undertake a comprehensive review of the performance of the government, assessing every ministry, department and agency to identify problems and explore solutions. In some cases the problem may be poor leadership or inadequate human capacity, while in others it could be irrational organizational structures or deficits in resources. None of these issues can be resolved solely from Kabul. They must be addressed through local initiatives, decisions and actions. Authority must be delegated to the local level to identify problems and make quick decisions if

current governance bottlenecks are to be addressed. This is not to say that the central government should have no role in local reforms, only that it should be led and implemented at the local level. Afghanistan will not achieve stability until both the national and sub-national tiers of government are functional and able to work together.

PRINCIPLES OF A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The Government and the International Community Must Unite

Together, they must agree on a common agenda with both sides fully dedicated to delivering on their commitments. The people of Afghanistan do not distinguish between the government and the international community; they consider them two sides of the same coin. Therefore, the success of one depends on the other. They must work closely as partners, showing good faith.

Take Action Now

The people of Afghanistan do not have high expectations of their government and the international community. In fact, their expectations are very basic – to be safe in their houses, to have food on their tables, and to be able to travel within the country without fear. The government and international community must rapidly demonstrate that they can deliver basic services to the Afghan population, otherwise they risk losing their trust and support.

Utilize Capable Civil Servants

It is often suggested that there is no capacity in the Afghan government to implement projects, improve security and provide good governance. That is untrue. There are many qualified officials within the government's various ministries and departments. These people can move the ship in the right direction if their expertise is properly utilized and if they are engaged in the planning and implementation of all programs. At present, in most ministries and departments, there is huge communication gap between top, middle and low-level leadership. Although overlooked due to their lack of English skills, middle and low-level officials tend to be the engine of the Afghan government. They may not know how to charm donors, but they do know how to get things done.

Appoint Impartial Officials

Existing social and leadership structures in many parts of Afghanistan allow for local decision making. It is through these structures—jirgas and shuras (councils)—that people address day-to-day issues and resolve grievances. Each district is divided into sections, villages (qarya) or tribes (Miakhel, 2009). If representatives of the Government of Afghanistan—whether a governor, district governor, or police chief—are seen to be playing an impartial role and willing to respect local norms and structures, they will receive the trust of the people. Unfortunately, in most cases government offices are not occupied by impartial actors, especially at the local level. In many areas, powerful local elites have asserted control over government posts and use their authority to support their kinship groups and political allies at the expense of their rivals. This has had the effect of excluding and disenfranchising segments of the population, breeding distrust in the state. If local government officials are perceived as biased, local communities, particularly in Pashtun areas, will not only refrain from supporting the state but may seek to undermine its authority. The state should take measures to avoid becoming embroiled in complex local rivalries and feuds among families and tribal groups.

Recognize that “All Politics is Local”

As former Speaker of the US House of Representatives Thomas “Tip” O’Neill once famously stated, “all politics is local.” Nowhere is this more apt than in Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan believe it is more important to know what is happening locally than to know what is happening in Kabul. The exclusion of local communities from governance and planning, and the imposition of lengthy technocratic strategies incomprehensible to local actors, have alienated communities and fuelled insecurity. This provides a fertile ground for insurgents to infiltrate communities and secure their allegiance against the state. The government must give local communities a stake in the reconstruction process.

Address Corruption

The Government of Afghanistan must remove all individuals openly engaged in corrupt practices. If the government and international community continue to appease corrupt individuals, they will further lose the support of the Afghan people.

TEN STEPS TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND STABILITY

Create Centres of Gravity

Afghanistan has been in a downward spiral since 2005. The security crisis has escalated and is no longer confined to the south and east of the country. While the stubborn insurgency presents a major challenge to Afghanistan's state building project, it is often said in Afghanistan that it accounts for only 20 percent of the country's problems. The remaining 80 percent can be attributed to poor governance, drugs, warlords and communal disputes (UNAMA, 2008). The starting point for any effort to address Afghanistan's diverse array of challenges is to identify priority districts or centres of gravity where assistance can be concentrated. With resources limited and the problems immense, the Afghan government and the international community cannot be everywhere at once. These centers of gravity should anchor the stabilization and state-building project, providing a launching pad to spread stability and development across the country. Natural centres are Kabul and other major urban areas, as well as strategically vital rural districts along the border and in key trade and drug trafficking corridors. Counter-insurgency operations should be led and coordinated from these centres of gravity to isolate and eventually defeat the insurgency.

Form Competent and Representative Regional Teams

A regional team comprised of police, military and civilians from Kabul should be assigned to each centre of gravity to consult with the local authorities. The team leader must be an adequately vetted and trusted professional appointed by the President in consultation with the international community. An observer group, comprising representatives from UNAMA, the PRTs, key donors and civil society actors, should also be formed to monitor the process. The regional team should be based in the centre of gravity with full authority to make decisions, including the hiring and firing of personnel, the direction of police operations and the distribution of resources.

Prioritize Urban Districts

After selecting a regional team for each centre of gravity, urban districts (naheyas) should be prioritized for assistance. If the centre of the province is not secured, it

will not be easy to operate in rural areas. The clear, hold and build formula for counter-insurgency operations should be adhered to.⁴ Once the urban centres are stabilized the approach should be expanded to rural districts.

Form Shuras in Each Urban and Rural District

The regional team should establish a shura (local council) in each naheya (urban district) and rural district to serve as a conduit to engage the local community in dialogue on security, governance and development issues. The locals know best how to find solutions to their problems. Various actors should be included in each shura to ensure adequate representation from all three pillars of power in Afghanistan: government, religious authorities and community leaders. The government and international community should support the recommendations made by the shura; it cannot merely be perceived as a deliberative body with no real power.

Every naheya consists of several guzars (sections), which are led by chiefs or wakeel-e-guzar.⁵ All guzar chiefs should be part of the urban district shuras. Similarly, the prayer leaders of each Jami mosque (those mosques which perform Friday prayers) should be included in the shura. Lastly, the police chief and administrative head of the district should also be members of the shura. The formation of the shura in the urban districts should not take more than a week, while in rural districts two weeks may be necessary. Participation in the shura should be framed as a public service, thus no remuneration will be required.

The selection of the shuras should be based on two guidelines: First, it is critical that each of the sections, sub-tribes or qaryas (villages) are consulted in the establishment of the shura. Second, each section should be able to select and appoint their representatives, rather than having them chosen by government officials.⁶

⁴ Kabul City has 22 naheyas and only 17 police districts (hawza). There should be 22 police hawzas in Kabul City to correspond with the number of naheyas, but unsettled issues between the Municipality and Province of Kabul has prevented the synchronization of administrative structures.

⁵ It is important to understand the role of wakeel guzar or maliks in local society. The wakeel guzar or maliks are always appointed by a majority of the people in their guzar (section of a district). They are registered with the naheya or wuleswali and each are given their own stamp to notarization purposes. They form the link between village and district administration. One cannot get proof of residency, ID cards, marriage certificate, and so forth, without the attestation of a wakeel guzar or malik.

⁶ In 1994-1995, I worked for UNDP/UNOPS in eastern Afghanistan to establish District Rehabilitation Shuras (DRS). In one instance, I dispatched a team to Khost province to establish a shura in the provincial capital. The shura that the team selected

Government officials must play an impartial role in the selection of the shura in order for it to be representative and legitimate. It is up to the local population to decide who will represent them in the council. They may choose an educated person, tribal elder, mullah or even in some cases an anti-government actor. If the latter is the case, it will provide an opportunity for those actors to reconcile with the government and reintegrate into society.

After establishing the shura, all competing shuras in the district should be abolished. Numerous types of shuras have been established since the fall of the Taliban by different government and non-government institutions such as the IDLG the Ministry of Education, and the Community Development Councils (CDCs) under the auspices of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP). The proposed new district-level shuras should function until the government is able to hold district council elections as envisioned in the constitution of Afghanistan.

Conduct Security Surveys in Each District

Investment in the police force is a necessity rather than a choice; a functional state requires an efficient and effective police service. As part of their first steps, the regional team should conduct a two-week security survey with the provincial and district police chiefs. The survey would determine how many police officers are needed to protect each district and to implement the rule of law. Currently, there are wide variations in estimates of police personnel requirements.

At present, police officers are assigned to each district based on whether it is a category one, two or three district.⁷ The regional team should have the authority to approve the recruitment of new police officers in each district on the basis of the survey and local consultations through the shura.

was disbanded within a year by the local population, who complained that it had been chosen without adequate local consultation. After agreeing to accept local input in the selection of shura members, the public selected the same individuals from the previously disbanded shura. When queried as to why they insisted upon a local process to appoint an identical shura, community members explained that individuals selected by external actors would not exhibit the same level of accountability to the community as they would when directly selected by the community. This was an instructive experience demonstrating both the democratic nature of governance structures at the village level in Afghanistan and the dangers of imposing external solutions.

7 All provinces and districts in Afghanistan are divided into one of three grades based on population and geography. At the provincial level there are seven grade one provinces, ten provinces at the grade two level, and 17 grade three provinces. At the district level, there are 66, 177 and 121 grade one, two, and three districts respectively.

New police officers could be recruited very quickly with the consultation of the police chief and the inhabitants of each district shura. The new recruits should be absorbed into the regular police, not informal militia structures such as the Community Defence Initiative (CDI) currently being proposed by ISAF. In Afghanistan, militias or forces created outside of regular police structures do not have a good record or reputation and are widely perceived by Afghans as a potential source of insecurity.⁸ The new recruits should receive accelerated training by the Ministry of Interior (MoI) at one of the country's regional training centres. There is no shortage of qualified trainers in the MoI to expedite the training. This training can be provided at the district level by existing commissioned police officers as was the case in Afghanistan prior to 1978. There is no need to contract foreign firms to provide six weeks of training to rank-and-file officers.

Address Local Conflicts in Each District

The first item on the agenda of the shura should be to resolve communal conflicts. The shura can act as a mediator in existing conflicts and launch a process of reconciliation among aggrieved groups. There may be long-standing unresolved disputes between tribes or villages that must be addressed through the shura in conjunction with the regional team. It is important to address these conflicts at the outset of the process, as insurgents often use local disputes as a means to influence and even coopt local populations.

Establish Benchmarks

Clear benchmarks to assess trends and developments in security and governance should be established by the shura in conjunction with the regional team. Key indicators could include the number of security incidents, crime statistics, trends in communal disputes, and levels of domestic violence. It is important for benchmarks to consider both formal and informal security structures, as more than 80 percent of local disputes in Afghanistan are resolved through traditional security and justice structures.⁹ The

8 In 2008, I wrote a White Paper on the role of the Arbacki in Afghanistan's security system. It can be accessed at: <http://www.dawatfreemedia.org/english/index.php?mod=article&cat=Articles&article=22>.

9 The 80 percent figure was derived by The Centre for Policy and Human Development in its *Afghanistan Human Development Report* (2007). Given the rise of insecurity and the resultant breakdown of formal state institutions in many parts of the country, the prevalence of the informal system has probably increased.

monitoring of the benchmarks could be overseen by the regional team in conjunction with the police.

Encourage Responsible District Governance

A important role of the regional teams will be to ensure that the district administration is responsible and reliable. The chief of the naheya (raes-e-naheya) who is equivalent to a woleswal (district governor) and is the head of all government units in a naheya (district) should be provided with the tools to monitor civil servant activities and ensure that all public grievances regarding service delivery are heard and addressed. Monitoring the performance of government officials is very important due to the endemic problems of corruption and absenteeism. The regional team should therefore be given the authority to remove incompetent officials. Any new staff should be appointed in consultation with the shura, the line departments, the governor and the police chief of the province. Addressing incompetence and poor performance in the local administration will demonstrate the resolve of the government to improve service delivery and its overarching commitment to good governance.

Implement Community-Level Development Projects

Communities supportive of reform and stabilization processes should be rewarded with block grants of US\$2-3 million to facilitate development. The disbursement of the grants should be directed by the shura. Only the local population can legitimately determine which projects are most pressing in their community. Projects could be anything from the building of roads, water supply systems and recreational facilities to improving garbage collection and sanitation systems. There would be no need to create an institution to implement these projects since the NSP of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) already has a good system in place. Money for these initiatives could be channelled through the NSP.

Mobilize Engineering Capacity

Currently there are thousands of engineers in different departments of the government who are idle or not spending their time efficiently. Creating one department with responsibility for managing this important resource, a Corps of Engineers based on the US model, would be a positive step. This body could assemble units on an ad hoc basis to survey, design and execute projects requested by district shuras.

The inability of the government to mobilize engineering capacity quickly has had disastrous results in the past. For instance in 2007, the Afghan government in cooperation with the international community called for the building of a mosque in the insurgency-ridden district of Musa Qala in Helmand province. Even though money was made available to implement the building project, the relevant line ministries were not able to prepare the design of the mosque and commence construction. It was setbacks like this that paved the way for the Taliban to twice take Musa Qala from the government. It is critical that the government and international community fulfill their reconstruction promises lest they squander scarce trust and goodwill on the ground.

RESOURCING THE PLAN

The strategy outlined above could be applied simultaneously in several areas. For instance, in stable areas in northern Afghanistan, the process could be implemented rapidly. Where representative and effective shuras exist in a district, there is no need to create new councils. Since the shura is a familiar governance structure for most Afghans, the time period required to form them will not be excessive. None of the elements of this strategy require major infusions of funding. They do, however, require the investment of extensive political capital on the part of national and international actors. A key to the success of the strategy is the prompt delivery of resources and support. Bureaucratic roadblocks to the provision of assistance will only undermine public trust in the government and the wider reconstruction process. Moreover, perceived manipulation of the process by factional actors, inside or outside of the government, will undercut public support, raising the importance of strict transparency and accountability mechanisms.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The various aspects of this strategy—the security surveys, the establishment of the shuras, the delivery of block grants—should be well publicized through media and public outreach activities. All government and international community actors should agree upon the message and “sing the same song” to the media. Conflicting statements create confusion, mistrust and a lack of confidence in the government and international community.

The dissemination of information as a means to raise awareness and counter misinformation should be viewed as a critical part of the strategy. The media should receive regular updates about the implementation of the strategy; otherwise they will glean details from less reliable sources. The Taliban has been very effective in its propaganda efforts. The government and international community must do a better job of ensuring that the media covers the many positive developments occurring in Afghanistan on a daily basis.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

Develop Five Year Plans

Afghanistan cannot be developed in the same manner as Europe or the United States due to scarce resources, geography and a history of dependence on foreign assistance. Developing a viable and vibrant economy takes a long time. Therefore, it is imperative to have realistic and implementable strategies to improve the living standards of ordinary Afghans. Strategic planning should focus on five-year increments rather than one- or two-year cycles. Short-term planning tends to focus on immediate stabilization objectives rather than the long-term goals of sustainable peace and prosperity. It is impossible to see progress in large-scale development programming in one- to two-year time horizons.

Distribute Resources Evenly

If resources are distributed evenly to everyone, then no one will be able to criticize the government or the international community. This is not currently the case. On the one hand, people in peaceful provinces, primarily the north, often complain that they are ignored because there is no fighting in their region. On the other hand, people in insecure areas, particularly the south and east, argue that the government and the international community have intentionally imposed the war on them to keep them underdeveloped. Equitable and transparent aid delivery will help to allay these concerns and reduce inter-communal friction.

Reduce Waste

In the long term, there will be a need to restructure large segments of the current government machinery. Redundant departments or ministries created for political purposes must be abolished. A review of each ministry with the goal of streamlining administrative procedures and improving service delivery would be a fruitful exercise.

Prohibit “Off-Budget” Funding

The budget of the central government should reflect all current costs and expenditures. Many donors and government agencies implement “off-budget” programs to circumvent bureaucratic procedures and oversight and, in some cases, to avoid corruption. However, such practices inhibit the development of sound public finance management procedures, a key element of the good governance and poverty reduction agenda.¹⁰

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGING COURSE

The strategy outlined here should be piloted in one or more regions before being rolled out across the country. The results of the pilot phase should inform changes to the strategic framework prior to a countrywide launch. These ideas could be easily implemented in Afghanistan right now. They would not be time- or cost- intensive. There is no need to create new institutions, write more complex strategies and pass more laws to implement the above principles. It primarily requires human resources and political will. The people of Afghanistan do not have high expectations. They only wish to be safe in their homes, to have food on their table and to be able to move around their country without fear. There is no more time for long, drawn out deliberations. It is time for action. Time, unfortunately, is not on the side of Afghan government and international community.

¹⁰ See World Bank (2005).

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DARI/PASHTO TERMS

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Guzar:</i> | Section of a District |
| <i>Hawza:</i> | Police District |
| <i>Jami Mosque:</i> | Mosque that performs Friday prayer |
| <i>Malik:</i> | Tribal Leader or Chieftain |
| <i>Naheya:</i> | Urban District |
| <i>Qarya:</i> | Big Villages |
| <i>Raes-e-Naheya:</i> | Chief of a Naheya, equivalent to a Woleswal |
| <i>Shura:</i> | Council |
| <i>Wakeel-e-Guzar:</i> | Chief of a Guzar |
| <i>Woleswal:</i> | District Governor |
| <i>Wuleswali:</i> | Local Districts |

ABOUT CIGI

The Centre for International Governance Innovation is an independent, nonpartisan think tank that addresses international governance challenges. Led by a group of experienced practitioners and distinguished academics, CIGI supports research, forms networks, advances policy debate, builds capacity, and generates ideas for multilateral governance improvements. Conducting an active agenda of research, events, and publications, CIGI's interdisciplinary work includes collaboration with policy, business and academic communities around the world.

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CIGI was founded in 2002 by Jim Balsillie, co-CEO of RIM (Research In Motion), and collaborates with and gratefully acknowledges support from a number of strategic partners, in particular the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario. CIGI gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the Government of Canada to its endowment Fund.

Le CIGI a été fondé en 2002 par Jim Balsillie, co-chef de la direction de RIM (Research In Motion). Il collabore avec de nombreux partenaires stratégiques et exprime sa reconnaissance du soutien reçu de ceux-ci, notamment de l'appui reçu du gouvernement du Canada et de celui du gouvernement de l'Ontario. Le CIGI exprime sa reconnaissance envers le gouvernement du Canada pour sa contribution à son Fonds de dotation.

