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AFGHANISTAN SECURITY

Further Congressional Action May Be Needed to Ensure Completion of a Detailed Plan to Develop and Sustain Capable Afghan National Security Forces

Following the withdrawal of US and coalition forces from Afghanistan, in August 2021 the State Department requested that GAO temporarily remove and review reports on Afghanistan to protect the safety of individuals associated with US assistance or programs. As a result of that review, GAO decided to redact some information from this report.



G A O

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Highlights of [GAO-08-661](#), a report to Congressional Committees

Why GAO Did This Study

Since 2002, the United States has worked to develop the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The Department of Defense (Defense), through its Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), directs U.S. efforts to develop the Afghan National Army (ANA) and, in conjunction with the Department of State (State), the Afghan National Police (ANP).

To follow up on recommendations from GAO's 2005 report on the ANSF, GAO analyzed the extent to which U.S. plans for the ANSF contain criteria we recommended. GAO also examined progress made and challenges faced in developing the ANA and ANP. To address these objectives, GAO reviewed Defense, State, and contractor documents and met with cognizant officials. GAO has prepared this report under the Comptroller General's authority to conduct evaluations on his own initiative.

What GAO Recommends

To ensure action on GAO's 2005 recommendation and a 2008 Defense Authorization Act mandate, Congress should consider conditioning a portion of future appropriations on completion of a coordinated, detailed plan for the ANSF, including a sustainment strategy. State expressed concerns about conditioning future funding, and Defense disagreed, stating that current guidance is sufficient. GAO maintains that a coordinated, detailed plan is essential to accountability of U.S. efforts to develop the ANSF.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-661](#). For more information, contact Charles Michael Johnson, Jr. at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov.

AFGHANISTAN SECURITY

Further Congressional Action May Be Needed to Ensure Completion of a Detailed Plan to Develop and Sustain Capable Afghan National Security Forces

What GAO Found

In 2005, GAO recommended that Defense and State develop detailed plans for completing and sustaining the ANSF. In 2007, Defense provided a document in response to this recommendation. This 5-page document lacks sufficient detail for effective interagency planning and oversight. For example, while the document includes some broad objectives and performance measures, it identifies few long-term milestones and no intermediate milestones for assessing progress, and it lacks a sustainability strategy. Although Defense and State are partners in police training, the document does not include State's input or describe State's role. Further, State has not completed a plan of its own. In January 2008, CSTC-A completed a field-level plan to develop the ANSF that includes force goals, objectives, and performance measures. While this is an improvement over prior field-level planning, it is not a substitute for a coordinated, detailed Defense and State plan with near- and long-term resource requirements. In 2008, Congress mandated that the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, provide a long-term strategy and budget for strengthening the ANSF, and a long-term detailed plan for sustaining the ANSF. These have not been provided. Without a detailed plan, it is difficult to assess progress and conduct oversight of the cost of developing the ANSF. This is particularly important given the limited capacity of the Afghan government to fund the estimated \$2 billion per year ANSF sustainment costs for years into the future.

The United States has invested over \$10 billion to develop the ANA since 2002. However, only 2 of 105 army units are assessed as being fully capable of conducting their primary mission and efforts to develop the army continue to face challenges. First, while the army has grown to approximately 58,000 of an authorized force structure of 80,000, it has experienced difficulties finding qualified candidates for leadership positions and retaining personnel. Second, while trainers or mentors are present in every ANA combat unit, shortfalls exist in the number deployed to the field. Finally, ANA combat units report significant shortages in about 40 percent of equipment items Defense defines as critical, including vehicles, weapons, and radios. Some of these challenges are due in part to competing U.S. global priorities. Without resolving these challenges, the ability of the ANA to reach full capability may be delayed.

Although the ANP has reportedly grown in number since 2005, after an investment of over \$6 billion, no police unit is fully capable and several challenges impede U.S. efforts to develop the police. First, less than one-quarter of the police have mentors present to provide training in the field and verify that police are on duty. Second, police units continue to face shortages in equipment items that Defense considers critical, such as vehicles, radios, and body armor. In addition, Afghanistan's weak judicial system hinders effective policing and rule of law, and the ANP consistently experiences problems with pay, corruption, and attacks from insurgents. Defense began a new effort in November 2007 to address these challenges, but the continuing shortfall in police mentors may put this effort at risk.

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Abbreviations

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANCOP	Afghan National Civil Order Police
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
AWOL	absent without leave
CM	capability milestone
CSTC-A	Combined Security Transition Command— Afghanistan
EU	European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	non-commissioned officer

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

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Congressional Committees

Since 2002, the United States, with assistance from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other coalition nations, has worked to develop the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP)—collectively referred to as the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)—to provide security for Afghanistan. The goal of these efforts is to transfer responsibilities for the security of Afghanistan from the international community to the Afghan government. From 2002 to 2008, the United States provided about \$16.5 billion to train and equip the Afghan army and police forces. In 2005¹ and 2007,² we found that the training and equipping of the army and police had made some progress, but that the Department of Defense (Defense) and the Department of State (State), the agencies responsible for implementing these efforts, lacked detailed plans and cost estimates for completing and sustaining the ANSF. We concluded that, without capable and self-sustaining Afghan army and police forces, terrorists could again create a safe haven in Afghanistan and jeopardize efforts by the United States and the international community to develop the country. Since 2005, security in Afghanistan has deteriorated significantly. Attacks by armed opposition groups have grown across Afghanistan, with numerous attacks directly targeting the ANA and ANP.

Because of broad congressional interest in this issue, we performed our work under the authority of the Comptroller General of the United States.³ In this review, we (1) analyzed U.S. plans for developing the ANSF and identified the extent to which these plans contained detailed objectives, milestones, future funding requirements, and sustainability strategies; (2) examined the progress made and challenges faced in developing the capabilities of the ANA; and (3) examined the progress made and challenges faced in developing the capabilities of the ANP.

¹GAO, *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police Have Made Progress, but Future Plans Need to Be Better Defined*, [GAO-05-575](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2005).

²GAO, *Securing, Stabilizing, and Reconstructing Afghanistan: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight*, [GAO-07-801SP](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 24, 2007).

³31 U.S.C. 712(3).

To address the objectives of this engagement, we reviewed Defense and State planning, funding, and evaluation documents related to the U.S. efforts to establish, train, and equip Afghan army and police forces. We discussed these efforts with Defense and State officials in Washington, D.C.; Kabul, Afghanistan; and the U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Florida, and with private contractors implementing U.S. programs. In Afghanistan, we viewed Afghan army and police training facilities and equipment warehouses and met with officials from the United States, the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior, NATO, and the United Nations. We are currently performing separate reviews on the accountability of equipment provided to the ANSF and U.S. efforts to reform the Afghan Ministry of Interior and National Police. Consequently, we do not assess these issues in depth in this report. See appendix I for a complete description of our scope and methodology.

We conducted this performance audit from March 2007 through June 2008 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Results in Brief

The Departments of Defense and State have not yet developed a coordinated, detailed plan for completing and sustaining the ANSF. We recommended in 2005, and reaffirmed in 2007, that the plans should include clearly defined objectives and performance measures, milestones for achieving these objectives, future funding requirements, and a strategy for sustaining the results achieved. Additionally, in 2008, Congress mandated that the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, provide a long-term strategy and budget for strengthening the ANSF, and a long-term detailed plan for sustaining the ANSF. In 2007, Defense provided GAO a document that, according to Defense officials, met GAO's 2005 recommendation.⁴ However, this 5-page document does not provide sufficient detail for effective planning and oversight. For example, while the document includes some broad objectives and performance measures, it identifies few long-term milestones, no intermediate milestones for judging progress, and no

⁴[GAO-05-575](#).

sustainability strategy. Further, even though Defense and State are partners in training the ANP, the Defense document does not describe the role of State or other key stakeholders. Moreover, State did not participate in the development of the Defense document and has not completed a plan of its own. In January 2008, the Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan (CSTC-A) completed a field-level plan for ANSF development, which includes force goals, objectives, and performance measures. However, this field-level plan is not a substitute for a coordinated Defense and State plan with near- and long-term resource requirements. Without a coordinated, detailed plan, it is difficult for Congress to assess progress and conduct oversight on the extent and cost of the U.S. commitment needed to develop capable and sustainable ANSF. This is particularly important given the recent calls for further increasing the size of the ANSF and the potential costs, currently estimated at approximately \$2 billion per year, of sustaining the ANSF for years into the future.

The United States has provided over \$10 billion to develop the ANA since 2002; however, less than 2 percent (2 of 105 units) of ANA units are assessed as fully capable of conducting their primary mission. Thirty-six percent (38 of 105) are assessed as capable of conducting their mission, but require routine⁵ international assistance, while the remaining ANA units (65 of 105 units) are either planned, in basic training, or assessed as partially able or unable to conduct their primary mission. Building an Afghan army that can lead security operations requires manning,⁶ training, and equipping of personnel; however, U.S. efforts to build the ANA have faced challenges in all of these areas. First, while the ANA has grown to approximately 58,000 of an authorized force structure of 80,000—nearly three times the 19,600⁷ Defense reported in 2005—the ANA has experienced difficulties finding qualified candidates for leadership positions and retaining its personnel. Second, while trainers or mentors⁸ are present in every ANA combat unit, less than half the required number are deployed in the field. Defense officials cited an insufficient

⁵International assistance may include logistics support, intelligence collection, or operations planning.

⁶In this report, the term manning includes recruitment of personnel, assignment to duty, promotion, and retention.

⁷As we reported in 2005, the number 19,600 consisted of 18,300 combat troops and 1,300 personnel assigned to sustaining commands ([GAO-05-575](#)).

⁸In this report, U.S. military personnel who train Afghan army units in the field are referred to as trainers and coalition personnel who train Afghan army units in the field are referred to as mentors.

number of U.S. trainers and coalition mentors in the field as the major impediment to providing the ANA with the training to establish capabilities, such as advanced combat skills and logistics, necessary to sustain the ANA force in the long term. Finally, ANA combat units report significant shortages in approximately 40 percent of critical equipment items, including vehicles, weapons, and radios. Some of these challenges, such as shortages of U.S. trainers and equipment, are due in part to competing global priorities, according to senior Defense officials. Without resolving these challenges, the ability of the ANA to reach full capability may be delayed.

Although the ANP has reportedly grown in number since 2005, after an investment of nearly \$6 billion, no Afghan police unit is assessed as fully capable of performing its mission. Similar to the effort to build the ANA, development of a national Afghan police force that is fully capable requires manning, training, and equipping of police personnel—all areas in which the U.S. continues to face challenges. First, less than one-quarter of the ANP has police mentors⁹ present to provide training in the field, evaluate police capability, and verify that police are on duty. According to Defense officials leading the effort in Kabul, the shortage of mentors is the primary obstacle to building a fully capable police force. Second, the ANP has not received about one-third of the equipment items Defense considers critical and continues to face shortages in several types of equipment, including vehicles, radios, and body armor. In addition, Afghanistan's weak judicial system hinders effective policing and rule of law, and our analysis of status reports from the field indicates that the ANP consistently experiences problems with police pay, corruption, and attacks from insurgents. Recognizing these challenges, Defense began a new effort in November 2007 to train and equip the Afghan police; however, the continuing shortfall in police mentors may put this effort at risk.

To help ensure that action is taken to address our recommendation from 2005 and the recently enacted mandate under the 2008 Defense Authorization Act, Congress should consider conditioning a portion of future appropriations for development of the ANSF on the completion of a coordinated, detailed plan, including development of a strategy for sustaining the forces.

⁹In this report, personnel who train Afghan police in the field are collectively referred to as mentors. U.S. military personnel who train Afghan police in the field are referred to as military mentors, while contractors who train Afghan police in the field are referred to as civilian mentors.

In commenting on a draft of this report, State expressed concerns about conditioning future appropriations on the completion of a detailed plan and highlighted ongoing coordination efforts with Defense as well as certain operational changes, many of which occurred after the completion of our fieldwork in August 2007. Defense disagreed that Congress should consider conditioning a portion of future appropriations on completion of a coordinated, detailed plan and stated that current guidance provided is sufficient to implement a successful program to train and equip the ANSF. Defense also disagreed with our conclusion that progress is difficult to assess without a detailed plan. While we acknowledge that changes may have occurred since August 2007, Defense and State have yet to develop a coordinated, detailed plan for completing and sustaining the ANSF. Furthermore, while Defense produces various documents that report on the current status of the ANSF, these documents do not contain intermediate milestones or consistent end dates necessary to determine if the program is on track to achieve its desired results within a set time frame. Therefore, we maintain that without a coordinated, detailed plan for the development of the ANSF, ensuring oversight and assessing progress of the program is difficult.

Background

Following the September 11, 2001, attacks, the United States, several allies, and Afghanistan's Northern Alliance forcibly removed the Taliban regime from Afghanistan for providing a safe haven to al Qaeda terrorists. After years of conflict and Taliban rule, the new Afghan government inherited a state with limited capacity to govern; an economy dominated by the narcotics trade; constraints on economic development due, in part, to resource limitations and mountainous terrain (see fig. 1); a poorly developed infrastructure with few roads and little household access to power and running water; and weak national security forces.

Figure 1: Mountainous Terrain in Afghanistan



Source: GAO.

In April 2002, the United States and other donor nations met in Geneva, Switzerland, to help Afghanistan address threats to its security. At the Geneva conference, the donors established a security reform strategy for Afghanistan: the United States would lead the training of the Afghan army and Germany would lead the police reconstitution effort. However, due, in part, to Afghanistan's pressing security needs and concerns that the German training program was moving too slowly, the United States expanded its role in the police training effort. As we reported in 2005, according to cognizant German officials, Germany viewed its role in the police sector as one of advising and consulting with donors and the Afghan government rather than as the major implementer or funding source.

The Role and Development of the Afghan National Army

In 2002, the international community endorsed the decision of the Afghan government to create an ethnically balanced and voluntary ANA force of no more than 70,000.¹⁰ In 2006, this vision was reaffirmed by the Afghan government and the international community through its integration into the Afghanistan National Development Strategy¹¹ and Afghanistan Compact,¹² documents that articulated economic, social, and security priorities for Afghanistan. These documents also set the end of 2010 as the timeline for the establishment of the ANA. In February 2008, citing increased security challenges, the Afghan government and its international partners endorsed a 10,000-person increase in the force structure of the ANA from 70,000 to 80,000.¹³

The strategic role of the Afghan Ministry of Defense and the ANA is to defend and deter aggression against Afghanistan, support and defend the Afghan Constitution, defeat the insurgency and terrorism, and support Afghanistan's reconstruction and reintegration into the regional and international community, among other things. To accomplish this, the army's current force structure includes (1) Ministry of Defense and general staff personnel, (2) sustaining institutions, (3) intermediate command staff, (4) combat forces, and (5) Afghan air corps personnel. Combat forces form the basic operational arm of the ANA and are divided into five corps, located in different regions of Afghanistan. A corps contains 1 or more brigades. A typical brigade consists of approximately 2,800 personnel: three light infantry battalions (with approximately 650 personnel each), one combat support battalion (with approximately 500 personnel), and one combat services support battalion (with approximately 350 personnel). (See app. II for additional details on the force structure and functions of the ANA.)

¹⁰The agreement occurred in December 2002 at the Bonn II donor conference near Bonn, Germany.

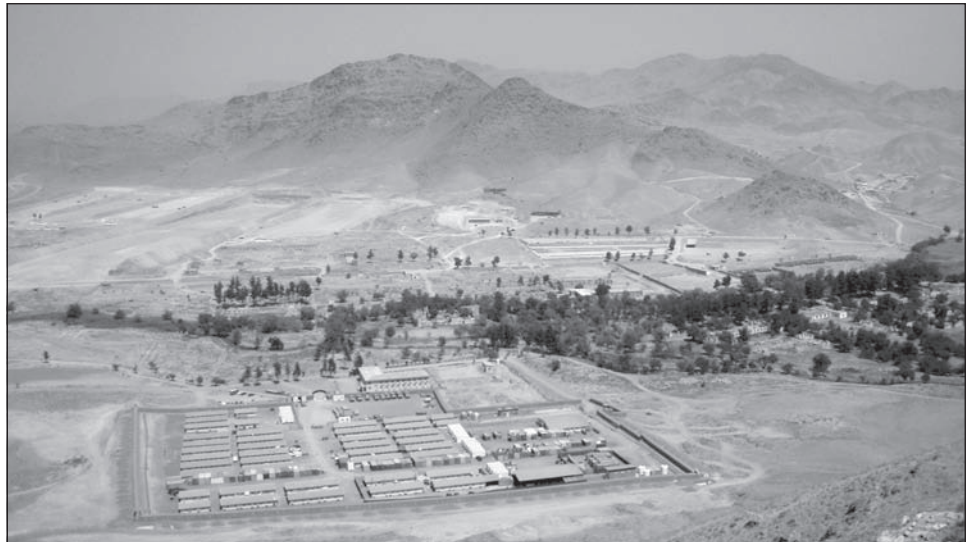
¹¹*Afghanistan National Development Strategy: An Interim Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth & Poverty Reduction*, Volume One, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2006.

¹²*The Afghanistan Compact*, The London Conference on Afghanistan, January 31-February 1, 2006.

¹³Along with increasing the force structure to 80,000 in February 2008, the Afghan government and its international partners also approved an additional 6,000 ANA personnel to account for personnel in training or otherwise not assigned to units.

U.S. efforts to establish the army are led by Defense, in partnership with the government of Afghanistan. The Defense-staffed CSTC-A oversees the Afghan army's training, facilities development, assessment, and equipment provision. Under CSTC-A is Task Force Phoenix, a joint coalition task force responsible for training, mentoring, and advising the Afghan army at the Kabul Military Training Center and elsewhere in the country (see fig. 2).

Figure 2: ANA Commando Training Facility Outside of Kabul



Source: GAO.

Reconstitution of the Afghan National Police Force

The reconstitution of the ANP began in February 2002 when donor nations agreed to establish a multiethnic, sustainable, 62,000-member professional police service committed to the rule of law. In May 2007, the Afghan government and its international partners approved an interim increase in the number of police forces from 62,000 to 82,000, to be reviewed every 6 months. The Afghan government and international community set the end of 2010 as the timeline for the establishment of the ANP force.

In addition to enforcing the rule of law, the role of the ANP is to protect the rights of citizens, maintain civil order and public safety, support actions to defeat insurgency, control national borders, and reduce the level of domestic and international organized crime, among other activities. The force structure for the police includes Ministry of Interior headquarters and administrative staff, uniformed police personnel, and several specialized police units. This report primarily focuses on U.S.

efforts to build the uniformed police, the largest component of the Afghan police force. (See app. II for further details on the force structure and functions of the ANP.)

U.S. efforts to organize, train, and equip the ANP are directed by Defense, through CSTC-A, with support from State, which provides policy guidance to the effort and oversight of civilian contractors implementing police training courses. The primary U.S. contractor involved in the police training effort is DynCorp International, which provides police training courses in criminal investigation, physical fitness, and weapons and survival skills, and civilian mentors to assist in developing the Afghan Ministry of Interior and the police forces it administers. Germany leads efforts to train commissioned and noncommissioned Afghan police officers at the Kabul Police Academy (see fig. 3).

Figure 3: Trainees Attending a Class at the Kabul Police Academy



Source: GAO.

U.S. Support to Train and Equip Afghan National Security Forces

The United States provided \$16.5 billion from fiscal years 2002 through 2008 to support the training and equipping of the Afghan army and police (see table 1). Slightly over 45 percent (approximately \$7.6 billion) of the funding was provided in fiscal year 2007, in an effort to accelerate the training and equipping and enhance the capabilities of the ANSF. These figures do not include certain operational costs, such as the personnel costs for U.S. servicemembers assigned to the training and equipping mission. (See app. I for further details on our methodology.)

Table 1: Defense and State Support to Train and Equip Afghan Army and Police, Fiscal Years 2002-2008

Dollars in millions								
Assistance program	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008 request ^a	Total ^b
Afghan Army ^c	\$76.9	\$362.7	\$723.7	\$1,736.6	\$767.1	\$4,884.2	\$1,721.7	\$10,273.0
Afghan Police	25.5	5.0	223.9	837.9	1,299.8	2,701.2	1,105.6	6,198.8
Total	\$102.4	\$367.7	\$947.6	\$2,574.5	\$2,066.9	\$7,585.4	\$2,827.3	\$16,471.8

Source: GAO analysis of Defense and State data.

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

^aFiscal year 2008 includes approximately \$1,450 million that has been appropriated (approximately \$1,108 million for the ANA and approximately \$342 million for the ANP) and approximately \$1,378 million that has been requested (approximately \$614 million for the ANA and approximately \$764 million for the ANP).

^bTotals include funding from a variety of Defense and State sources. Fiscal years 2007 and 2008 figures include Afghan Security Forces Funding, Defense Counternarcotics funding, International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement counternarcotics funding, and International Military Education and Training funds.

^cFunding for the Afghan Army includes detainee operations.

Other Donor Support

More than 40 nations and international organizations have also provided funds, equipment, or personnel to support U.S. efforts to train and equip the ANSF. As of March 2008, non-U.S. donors have provided about \$820 million in support of efforts to develop the ANSF: approximately \$426 million was provided to supplement efforts to train and equip the Afghan army and about \$394 million in support of the Afghan police. Over 15 nations contribute mentors to the army, providing approximately one-third of the personnel who assist in training ANA units in the field. The EU has provided 80 mentors to assist the police at the ministerial, regional, and provincial levels out of approximately 215 pledged. Additionally, the United Nations Development Programme administers the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, which provides reimbursement to the Afghan government for police salaries. Approximately 80 percent of international donations for the ANP have supported programs through the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (about \$311 million of about \$394 million).

Prior GAO Recommendations and Congressional Mandate

We previously identified the need for detailed plans to complete and sustain the ANSF. In June 2005, GAO reported that the Secretaries of Defense and State should develop detailed plans for completing and sustaining the ANSF that contain clearly defined objectives and performance measures, milestones for achieving stated objectives, future

funding requirements, and a strategy for sustaining the results achieved. Our report recommended that the Secretaries provide this information to Congress when the executive branch requests funding for the Afghan army or police forces. Although Defense and State generally concurred with this recommendation, both suggested that existing reporting requirements addressed the need to report to Congress their plans for completing and sustaining the Afghan army and police forces. Our analysis of Defense and State reporting to Congress determined that the departments did not have the detailed plans we recommended to guide the development of the ANSF and to facilitate congressional oversight. As a result, in our 2007 report, we reiterated the need for Defense and State to develop such plans.

Following our reports, in 2008, Congress mandated that the President, acting through the Secretary of Defense, submit reports to Congress on progress toward security and stability in Afghanistan, including a comprehensive and long-term strategy and budget for strengthening the ANSF. Reports must be submitted every 180 days after that date, through the end of fiscal year 2010.¹⁴ The first such report was due by the end of April 2008, but has yet to be provided to Congress. In addition, Congress also mandated that Defense submit reports on a long-term detailed plan for sustaining the ANSF. Reports must be submitted every 180 days after that date, through the end of fiscal year 2010.¹⁵ The first such report was due by the end of April 2008, but has yet to be provided to Congress.

The Departments of Defense and State Have Not Developed a Coordinated, Detailed Plan for Completing and Sustaining the ANSF

Defense and State have not developed a coordinated, detailed plan for completing and sustaining the Afghan army and police forces, despite our recommendation in 2005 and a mandate from Congress in 2008 that such a plan be developed. Defense provided GAO a 5-page document in January 2007 that, according to Defense officials, is intended to meet GAO's recommendation. However, it does not include several of the key elements identified in our recommendation and does not provide a sufficient level of detail for effective interagency planning and congressional oversight. Although CSTC-A has developed a field-level plan in Afghanistan that integrates the Afghan government's interest, this represents military planning and is not a coordinated Defense and State plan with near- and long-term resource requirements. Without a coordinated, detailed plan containing the elements identified in our 2005 recommendation, as noted

¹⁴National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, Pub. L. 110-181, sec. 1230.

¹⁵Pub. L. 110-181, sec. 1231.

earlier, congressional oversight concerning the extent and cost of the U.S. commitment to train and equip the ANSF is difficult, and decision makers may not have sufficient information to assess progress and allocate defense resources among competing priorities.¹⁶

Defense Document Is Limited in Scope and Detail

As of March 2008, neither Defense nor State had developed a coordinated, detailed plan for completing and sustaining the ANSF that includes clearly defined objectives and performance measures, milestones for achieving stated objectives, and a strategy for sustaining the results achieved, including transitioning program responsibility to Afghanistan. In January 2007, Defense provided us a 5-page document that, according to Defense officials, is intended to meet GAO's 2005 recommendation for detailed plans to complete and sustain the ANSF. Although Defense and State are partners in training the ANP, the Defense document does not describe the role of State or other key stakeholders. State also did not contribute to the development of this document and has not developed a plan of its own. In addition, U.S. military officials responsible for the effort to build the ANSF were not familiar with the document at the time of our visit to Kabul in August 2007—over 6 months after we received the document from Defense officials in Washington.

The 5-page document that Defense developed in response to our 2005 recommendation is limited in scope and detail. For example, although the document provides some broad objectives and performance measures for training and equipping the ANSF, it identifies few milestones. Further, these milestones are not consistent with long-term milestones identified in field documents generated by U.S. military forces operating in Afghanistan and do not include intermediate milestones for judging progress in the medium term. The document provides no mechanism for measuring progress over time against established baselines, other than monthly status reports from the field. These status reports, while useful in identifying month-to-month progress in unit capabilities, use baselines that

¹⁶GAO has previously reported on the need for agencies to take a more strategic approach to decision making that promotes transparency and ensures that programs and investments are based on sound plans with measurable, realistic goals and time frames, prioritized resource needs, and performance measures to gauge progress. See, for example, GAO, *Force Structure: Restructuring and Rebuilding the Army Will Cost Billions of Dollars for Equipment but the Total Cost Is Uncertain*, [GAO-08-669T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 10, 2008). GAO concluded in this report that until the Army provides a comprehensive plan for its modular restructuring and expansion initiatives, which identifies progress and total costs, decision makers may not have sufficient information to assess progress and allocate defense resources among competing priorities.

generally go back no more than 18 months. As such, it is difficult to identify progress since the start of the program and the effect that various factors, such as additional resources, have had on training and equipment availability, as discussed in prior GAO work.¹⁷

High-Level Plan Lacks Focus on Sustainment Funding

Defense's 5-page document, in response to our 2005 recommendations, does not provide a detailed strategy for sustaining the ANSF. Defense currently estimates that no additional money, beyond the approximately \$16.5 billion provided between fiscal years 2002 to 2008, is needed to complete the initial training and equipping of a 70,000-person army force and an 82,000-person police force. If the force structure grows, Defense officials acknowledged that budgetary requirements likely would also increase. In February 2008, the Afghan government and its international partners endorsed an increase in the force structure of the ANA by 10,000. A Defense official stated that increasing the force structure by 10,000 additional army personnel will cost approximately an additional \$1 billion.

In addition, Defense estimates that approximately \$2 billion a year will be needed for the next 5 years to sustain the ANSF—\$1 billion for the Afghan army and \$1 billion for the police.¹⁸ This is based on a 152,000-person end-strength—70,000 ANA and 82,000 ANP. Defense officials estimate that increasing the ANA force structure by 10,000 will cost about \$100 million annually to sustain. By comparison, in 2005, Defense and State estimated the cost to sustain an ANA force of 70,000 and an ANP force of 62,000 would total \$600 million per year. This sustainment estimate, however, did not include the cost of sustaining capabilities such as airlift, which is currently being developed for the Afghan army.

Defense expects the sustainment transition to begin in fiscal year 2009. According to U.S. military officials in Afghanistan and the recently approved CSTC-A Campaign Plan, U.S. involvement in training and equipping the ANSF may extend beyond a decade. However, neither Defense nor State has identified funding requirements or forecasts beyond 2013.

¹⁷GAO-05-575.

¹⁸Sustainment of the ANSF covers items such as salaries, equipment replacement, operations and maintenance costs, logistics support costs, and training for replacement soldiers and police.

As noted earlier, the United States has been a major contributor to this mission, providing approximately \$16.5 billion between fiscal years 2002 and 2008 to train and equip the forces. At present, Afghanistan is unable to support the recurring costs of its security forces, such as salaries and equipment replacement, without substantial foreign assistance. An international task force studying the effects of increasing the size of the ANP noted that by 2012, if the Afghan Ministry of Finance assumed responsibility for police salaries, the salary costs for an 82,000 police force could total nearly 9 percent of the Afghan government's budget—a cost that could mean large cuts in other programs, such as education, health, and other social services, according to the task force.

U.S. officials stated that until Afghan revenues increase substantially, the international community would likely need to assist in paying sustainability costs, including some salaries. However, despite what U.S. military officials in Afghanistan stated, Defense officials in Washington have not indicated how long and in what ways the U.S. government expects to continue assisting the ANSF. In a briefing on the U.S. approach to sustaining the ANSF, Defense and State officials stated that sustainment costs will be transitioned to the government of Afghanistan commensurate with the nation's economic capacity, and that the United States and the international community will need to assist Afghanistan in developing revenues and capacity to sustain the army and police. For example, Defense and State officials stated that greater revenues could be obtained by improving border management, noting that customs duties generate more than half of Afghanistan's revenues. These officials, however, did not identify any other ways to improve revenues for the security sector nor did they identify whether this information is being incorporated into a broader plan for developing and sustaining the ANSF when we inquired about such a plan.

CSTC-A Plan Provides Guidance for Field-Level Operations, but Is Not a Substitute for a Coordinated State and Defense Plan

Since GAO reported in 2005, field-level planning for the training and equipping of the ANSF has improved. In January 2008, CSTC-A completed a field-level plan for ANSF development, and an operations order with further detail on the development and execution of the fiscal year 2008 ANSF force generation program. The Campaign Plan for the Development of Afghan National Military and Police Forces (Campaign Plan) is a military plan.¹⁹ It provides field-level goals, objectives, and capability milestones for the development of the Ministries of Defense and Interior,

¹⁹The elements of a campaign plan are laid out in Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operations Planning*, December 26, 2006.

including Afghan army and police forces. With a new emphasis on quality training, the plan extends the time frames for ANSF development beyond those reported in our 2005 report.²⁰ However, while this military plan provides needed field guidance, it is not a coordinated Defense and State plan with near- and long-term resource requirements.

When we last reported in 2005, Defense had not fully implemented or been able to reach agreement on criteria for assessing an Afghan army unit's readiness to operate without training assistance. Since that time, Defense has developed criteria—called capability milestones (CM)—to assess army and police progress in manning, training, and equipping the forces. Units are assessed against four capability milestones that range from CM1 to CM4. A unit, agency, staff function, or installation rated at CM1 is fully capable of conducting its primary operational mission but may require assistance from the international community in certain situations. For instance, a combat unit capable of operating at CM1 is fully capable of planning, executing, and sustaining counterinsurgency operations at the battalion level; however, coalition support may be required for certain capabilities, such as close air support, medical evacuation, or indirect fire support.²¹ By contrast, a unit, agency, or staff function rated at CM4 has been established but is not yet capable of conducting its primary operational mission and can only undertake portions of its mission with significant assistance, and reliance on, international support. The table below provides descriptions of the capability milestones, as identified in the CSTC-A Campaign Plan.

²⁰In 2005, we reported that Afghan combat troops would complete basic training by the fall of 2007. The Campaign Plan has identified mid-2010 as the date when basic training for all ANSF forces would be completed.

²¹In previous planning documents, CM1 is known as “independent operating capability.” A senior U.S. military official in Afghanistan stated, however, that “full operational capability” is a more accurate description since Afghan army and police forces may require coalition support under certain circumstances.

Table 2: Capability Milestones for Afghan National Security Forces

Capability milestone	Description
CM1	The unit, agency, staff function, or installation is capable of conducting primary operational mission(s). Depending on the situation, units may require specified assistance from the Coalition or international community.
CM2	The unit, agency, staff function, or installation is capable of conducting primary operational mission(s) with routine assistance from, or reliance on, international community support.
CM3	The unit, agency, staff function, or installation is capable of partially conducting primary operational mission(s), but still requires assistance from, and is reliant on, international community support.
CM4	The unit, agency, staff function, or installation is formed but not yet capable of conducting primary operational mission(s). It may be capable, available, or directed to undertake portions of its operational mission but only with significant assistance from, and reliance on, international community support.

Source: Campaign Plan for the Development of Afghan National Military and Police Forces—Interim, January 29, 2008.

The Campaign Plan identifies three key phases in the development of Afghan army and police forces: fielding/generating forces, developing forces, and transitioning to strategic partnership. Table 3 describes these phases and their corresponding milestones. It is not clear from the Campaign Plan whether the milestones are based on an ANA force structure of 70,000 or 80,000. If based on 70,000, the milestones would likely need to be revisited.

Table 3: Description of Key Phases in the Training and Equipping of the ANSF

Campaign phase	Description	Milestone date
Phase 1: Field/Generate Afghan National Security Capability	Army and police forces are manned, have completed individual training, and are equipped to 85 percent or better.	Complete by mid-2010
Phase 2: Develop Afghan National Security Capability	Afghan and Coalition forces will jointly plan, coordinate, and conduct operations. Coalition forces will partner with army and police units to assist in the development of capabilities necessary to achieve CM1.	Complete by the end of 2011
Phase 3: Transition to Strategic Partnership	The Afghan government will assume the lead responsibility for its own security needs, with continued engagement by the international community. CSTC-A will have completed its current mission and should transition into a security assistance organization.	Extends beyond 2019

Source: CSTC-A, Campaign Plan for the Development of Afghan National Military and Police Forces—Interim, January 29, 2008.

Milestone dates for the accomplishment of certain objectives have been extended beyond those reported earlier. For example, our 2005 report states that Defense officials estimated that basic training for 43,000 ground combat troops would be accomplished by the fall of 2007. However, the Campaign Plan extends this date to mid-2010. According to the CSTC-A Commander, given resource constraints and the new emphasis on fielding quality forces, certain deadlines for the fielding, generation, and development of Afghan forces have had to be extended.

In addition to capability milestones, personnel and equipment requirements have also been established since our last report. In 2005, we noted that documents identifying personnel and equipment requirements for the Afghan National Security Forces were not complete. However, since that time, the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior, assisted by CSTC-A, have completed personnel and equipment requirements, known as Tashkils.²² The Tashkils list in detail the authorized staff positions and equipment items for the ANA and ANP. Moreover, ANA Tashkils have been converted into an electronic force management database by the U.S. Army Force Management Support Agency, which provides standardization and consistency given frequent CSTC-A personnel rotations. Agency officials expect that the ANP Tashkils will also be converted to a similar system.

Few Afghan Army Units Are Capable of Leading Operations and Efforts to Develop Their Capability Face Several Challenges

The United States has invested over \$10 billion to develop the ANA since 2002, but less than 2 percent (2 of 105 ANA units rated) are assessed at CM1—full operational capability. Building an Afghan army that can lead its own operations requires manning, training, and equipping army personnel; however, U.S. efforts to build the Afghan army have faced challenges in all of these areas. First, while the ANA has increased in size and basic recruiting is strong, the ANA has experienced difficulties manning the army, such as finding qualified candidates for leadership positions and retaining personnel. Second, the insufficient number of U.S. trainers and coalition mentors in the field is a major impediment to providing the ANA with the follow-up training, including in areas such as advanced combat skills and logistics, needed to sustain the force in the long term. Finally, ANA combat units report significant shortages in approximately 40 percent of items defined as critical by Defense, including machine guns and vehicles. Some of these challenges, such as shortages of mentors and

²² Afghan Tashkils are similar to the Military Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) found in the U.S. military.

equipment, are due in part to competing global priorities, according to senior Defense officials. Without resolving these challenges, the ability of the ANA to reach full capability may be delayed.

More Troops Trained, but Very Few ANA Units Rated as Having Capability to Lead Operations

Defense planning calls for the development of an 80,000-person ANA force structure that includes Ministry of Defense personnel, sustaining institutions, and infantry forces capable of accomplishing its mission with limited assistance from the international community. As of April 2008, Defense reports that approximately 58,000 army personnel received training and were assigned to the ANA. The chart below details the number of ANA forces authorized compared with the number currently assigned (see table 4).

Table 4: Afghan Ministry of Defense and ANA Force Structure, as of April 2008			
Forces	Authorized	Trained and assigned	Percent assigned
Ministry of Defense/ General Staff	3,185	2,596	82
Sustaining institutions ^a	2,001	1,679	84
Intermediate commands ^b	16,169	13,511	84
Combat troops	56,127	37,866	67
Afghan Air Corps	3,000	2,141	71
Total	80,482 ^c	57,793	72

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense and Afghan Ministry of Defense data.

Note: As discussed later in this report, the number of troops trained and assigned is greater than number on-duty due to attrition, absenteeism, leave, and battlefield casualties.

^aSustaining institutions include Military Intelligence Regional Offices, Communications Support Element, Acquisition Agency, Installation Management Department, Military Police Company (Kabul Area), and Detainee Operations.

^bIntermediate commands include Headquarters Support Brigade and the logistics, training, recruiting, and medical commands.

^cThe 482 positions above 80,000 account for the Afghan National Guard Force.

Since we reported in 2005, more personnel have been trained and assigned to the ANA. Specifically focusing on combat troops, Defense reports that 37,866 combat troops have been trained and assigned to the ANA as of April 2008, compared with 18,300 troops in March 2005. Although this represents more than a twofold increase in the amount of combat troops, it is approximately 5,000 forces less than Defense had predicted would be trained by fall 2007. Moreover, new positions have been added to the

ANA's structure since our 2005 report, including an expanded Afghan air corps²³ and the ANA force structure has increased to 80,000.

While more troops have received training, as of April 2008, only two ANA units—out of 105 rated—are assessed as CM1—fully capable. Thirty-six percent of ANA units (38 of 105 rated units) are assessed at CM2 and are capable of conducting their primary mission with routine international support. The remaining ANA units are less capable. Thirty-one percent (32 of 105 rated units) are CM3—capable of partially conducting their primary mission, but reliant on international support; 11 percent (11 of 105 rated units) are CM4—formed but not yet capable; and 21 percent (22 of 105 rated units) are not yet formed or not reporting (see table 5).²⁴

Table 5: Defense Assessment of ANA Capabilities, as of April 2008

Army units	CM1 Fully Capable	CM2 Capable with Support	CM3 Partially Capable	CM4 Not Capable	Unit Not Formed or Not Reporting ^a
Corps headquarters (5)	1	3	1	0	0
Brigade headquarters (14)	0	6	5	1	2
Combat battalions (49)	1	18	15	6	9
Combat support and combat services support battalions (33)	0	11	8	3	11
Air Corps headquarters (1)	0	0	1	0	0
Air Corps squadrons (3)	0	0	2	1	0
Number of ANA units (105)	2 (2%)	38 (36%)	32 (31%)	11 (11%)	22 (21%)

Source: GAO analysis of Defense data.

Note: Percentages in the table may not add to 100 due to rounding.

^aAn ANA unit that is categorized as "not formed or not reporting" is either a planned unit or a unit in basic training.

²³When we reported in 2005, the air wing planned for the Afghan army was to provide secure transportation for the President of Afghanistan. The currently planned air corps will provide support such as medical evacuation and light attack, in addition to presidential airlift.

²⁴As shown in table 5, CSTC-A provided us with the capability rating for 105 army units.

While few ANA units are rated as fully capable, Defense officials stated that ANA troops had performed well in combat situations.²⁵ Personnel assigned to mentor the ANA that we interviewed in Afghanistan praised the efforts of Afghan troops, and U.S. and Afghan officials stated they were pleased with the development of the army to date.

The expected date when the ANA will gain the capability to assume lead responsibility for its own security is unclear. As of April 2008, monthly reports provided by CSTC-A show the expected date of full ANA capability as March 2011.²⁶ However, this date does not account for shortfalls in the required number of mentors and trainers. Thus, Defense officials cautioned that currently predicted dates for the achievement of a fully capable Afghan army are subject to change and may be delayed.

Development of a Capable Army Faces Challenges in Manning, Training, and Equipping the Force

Afghan Army Faces Difficulties Reducing Absenteeism, Recruiting Qualified Candidates for Leadership and Specialist Positions, and Retaining Personnel

U.S. efforts to build the ANA have faced challenges in manning the army, such as recruiting for leadership positions and retaining personnel; shortfalls in the number of U.S. trainers and coalition mentors deployed with ANA units in the field to assist in developing capable ANA forces; and shortages of critical equipment items.

Although the ANA has grown in numbers, it faces manning challenges, including absenteeism, recruitment of leaders and specialists, and retention of personnel.

First, although approximately 32,700²⁷ combat personnel received training and were assigned to one of the five ANA corps, the number of combat troops on hand is less than those trained and assigned due to attrition, absenteeism, scheduled leave, and battlefield casualties.²⁸ As of February

²⁵ ANA units have participated with coalition forces in counterinsurgency operations, assisted in the rescue of hostages, and provided security for peace talks and local events, among other activities.

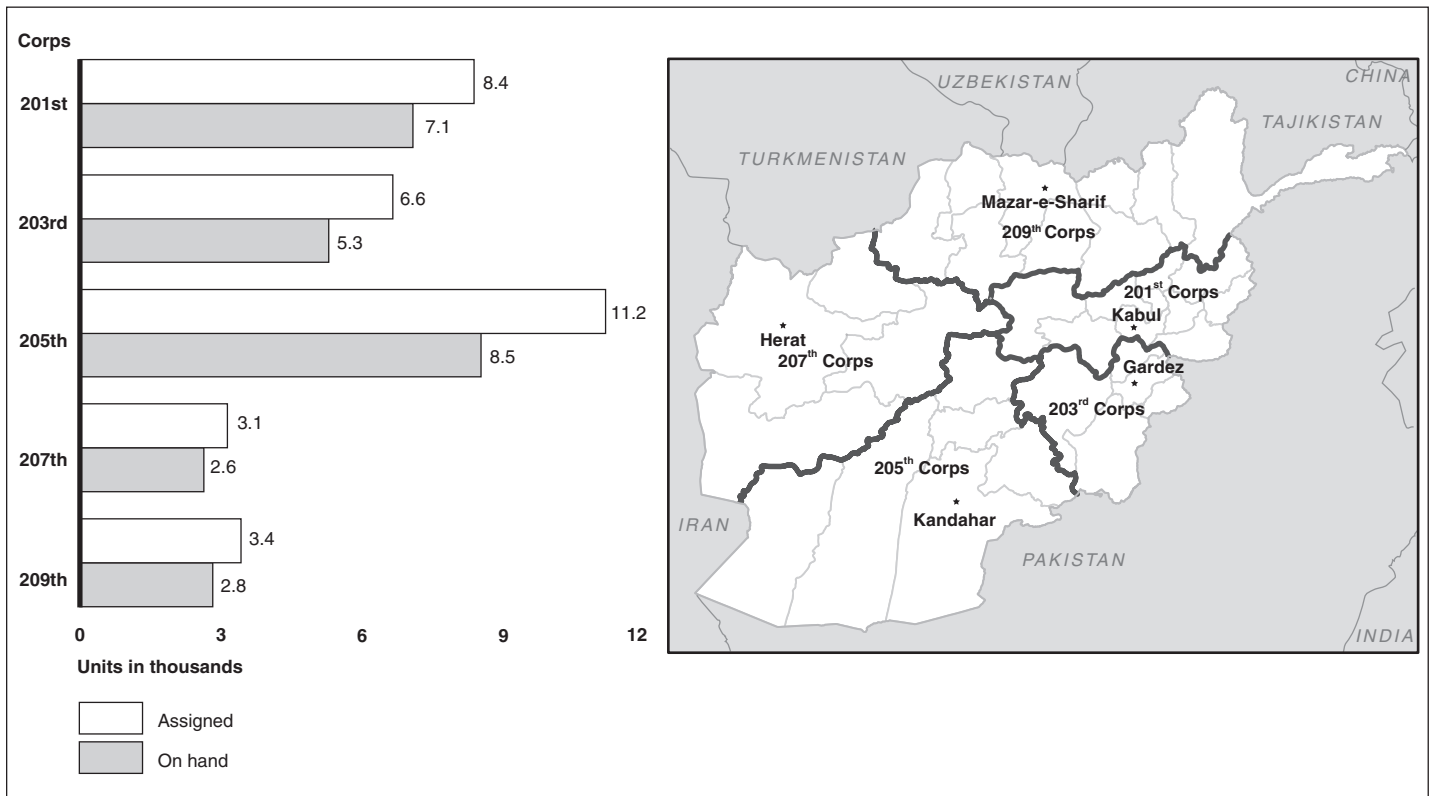
²⁶ While most of the ANA is projected to reach full capability before March 2011, the Afghan air corps, an important element to providing increased independence to Afghan forces, is not expected to achieve full capability before this date.

²⁷ The 32,700 figure represents the number of ANA combat forces trained and assigned to one of the five ANA Corps as reported by CSTC-A on February 20, 2008.

²⁸ Defense officials said that because the ANA lacks a death benefit system, soldiers who have died may remain on the payroll so that their families receive compensation.

2008, Defense reported that about 20 percent of combat personnel assigned were not present for duty (see fig. 4).

Figure 4: Comparison of ANA Corps Personnel Assigned to a Unit to the Number On Hand, as of February 2008



Source: GAO analysis of Defense data.

Note: This figure includes approximately 32,700 ANA combat personnel assigned to the five ANA corps, as well as civilians serving in support roles for the ANA.

Although some of those absent from the army may have scheduled their absence or been killed in duty, Defense assessment reports from November 2007 to February 2008 show between 8 and 12 percent of combat unit personnel were absent without leave (AWOL), with AWOL rates as high as 17 percent for soldiers in one ANA corps. For the ANA to achieve sustained growth, a senior Defense official stated that AWOL rates should be no higher than 8 percent. Officials attributed these absences to a variety of causes, such as soldiers leaving their units to take their pay home and the lack of significant penalties for such absences. To address these issues, the Afghan Ministry of Defense, assisted by CSTC-A, has initiated programs to allow soldiers to transfer their pay to family

members and to facilitate the deposit of ANA salaries directly into soldiers' bank accounts. CSTC-A officials stated these programs should reduce AWOL rates.²⁹

Second, although basic recruiting is strong, the ANA is experiencing difficulties finding qualified candidates for leadership and specialist positions. Defense reports that recruiting goals for ANA infantry positions have been met, despite adjustments to increase ANA training output by 6,000 soldiers annually. However, CSTC-A noted shortfalls in the number of candidates available for non-commissioned officer (NCO) and specialty skill positions, such as logistics and medical support. Between November 2007 and February 2008, ANA manning levels for NCOs ranged between 50 to 70 percent of the authorized number. NCOs provide a vital link between senior officers and soldiers and can provide leadership to ANA units in the field, according to a senior Defense official. Officials attributed the shortage to the low level of literacy among ANA recruits. CSTC-A is attempting to address this shortfall by promoting NCOs from within ANA ranks and implementing new programs to target literate recruits. CSTC-A expects to have greater than 90 percent of the ANA's authorized NCOs staffed by summer 2008. The ANA is also experiencing difficulties manning specialist positions such as logistics, medical support, and engineering. Although the ANA has developed courses to train military specialists, the current Afghan army is comprised primarily of infantry forces. This is, in part, because ANA recruits learn basic infantry skills first. However, this focus is also due to difficulties identifying candidates who are suitable for advanced training. According to Defense officials, without suitably trained support personnel, the ANA will need to rely on coalition forces to provide support services.

Third, the ANA is facing challenges retaining personnel. A typical ANA contract lasts for 3 years. At the end of a contract, ANA personnel are given the opportunity to re-enlist with the Afghan army. Between March 2006 and February 2008, just over half of those combat personnel eligible to re-enlist opted to do so, as shown in table 6.³⁰

²⁹Since its implementation, the electronic salary payment program has become more widely used among ANA personnel—increasing from 2 transactions in February 2006 to 4,227 transactions in July 2007.

³⁰CSTC-A documents place ANA re-enlistment rates into three categories: (1) greater than 65 percent; (2) 50-65 percent; and (3) less than 50 percent.

Table 6: Re-Enlistment Rates for ANA Combat Personnel, March 2006 to February 2008

ANA unit	Number eligible to re-enlist	Number who did not re-enlist	Number re-enlisted	Percent re-enlisted
Kabul Military Training Center	474	239	235	50
201st Corps	2,554	731	1,823	71
203rd Corps	1,319	554	765	58
205th Corps	963	523	440	46
207th Corps	1,037	864	173	17
209th Corps	730	401	329	45
Total	7,077	3,312	3,765	53

Source: GAO analysis of Defense data.

U.S. and Afghan officials attributed these re-enlistment rates to a variety of factors, such as stationing soldiers away from their families, the rapid pace of ANA military operations, and the higher salaries offered by private companies and insurgent groups looking to recruit trained Afghan soldiers. To address these factors, a senior Defense official stated that the Ministry of Defense and CSTC-A are discussing the implementation of several programs such as allowing re-enlisting soldiers greater choice in determining where they will be stationed and increasing re-enlistment bonuses. Without the ability to retain trained personnel, ANA units will continue to lack experience and thus may be delayed in reaching their ability to lead security operations. For instance, in November 2007, the capability assessment of the ANA's 209th corps in northern Afghanistan lowered the rating of one of its battalions from CM2 to CM3 when the battalion failed to retain approximately half of its NCOs. Further, the assessment noted that progress developing the capability of this battalion could be delayed nearly a year.

Shortage of U.S. Embedded
Trainers and Coalition Mentors
Delaying Advanced Skill
Training for the ANA

Although some U.S. embedded trainers or coalition mentors are present in every ANA corps, the ANA is experiencing shortages in the number of these required³¹ personnel to assist in its development. According to CSTC-A's Campaign Plan, after an ANA unit is fielded, either an embedded training team (comprised of U.S. personnel) or a mentoring team (comprised of coalition personnel) should be assigned to the unit.³² These teams are responsible for developing the skills of ANA army units from initial fielding until the unit has developed the capability to assume lead responsibility for its security mission. As the ANA unit builds capability, embedded trainers and mentors guide and assess the units and provide them with access to air support and medical evacuation.

Shortages exist in the number of embedded trainers and mentors fielded. For instance, as of April 2008, the United States has fielded 46 percent (1,019 of 2,215) of Defense's required number of embedded trainers. Officials attributed these shortfalls to competing U.S. priorities for Defense personnel, including the war in Iraq. CSTC-A has submitted requests for additional forces to act as embedded trainers to assist the ANA; however, the request has been deferred. As of April 2008, members of the international community assisting in this effort have fielded 32 out of 37 mentor teams promised, although the number of international mentors in the field is smaller than the number of U.S. embedded trainers. Approximately one-third of personnel in the field assisting ANA unit development are coalition mentors, while two-thirds are U.S. personnel.³³

³¹The requirement for the number and types of U.S. embedded trainers needed to assist in the development of the ANA and U.S. military mentors to assist in the development of the ANP is defined in detail by Defense in a classified, formal request for forces submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. GAO did not assess the adequacy of these requirements, but rather focused on whether the U.S. has been able to fill these requirements and the effects, if any, of not being able to do so.

³²The number of personnel assigned to assist the development of ANA units varies, depending on the type of ANA unit. As of April 2008, the required number of personnel for an embedded training team assisting an ANA maneuver battalion, combat support battalion, or combat services support battalion was 16.

³³Given the current U.S. embedded trainer shortage, Defense officials have advocated that NATO members field greater numbers of mentor teams to meet the rising demand for more trainers and mentors as the number of ANA forces completing basic training rises. Defense officials have cautioned, however, that increased numbers of mentoring teams may not necessarily correspond to decreased requirements for U.S. personnel, especially when mentoring teams operate with restrictions that will not allow them to accompany ANA units into combat operations.

Without adequate training or mentoring, the ANA's ability to take the lead in security operations may be delayed. First, Defense officials have cited an insufficient number of embedded trainers and coalition mentors deployed with units in the field as the major impediment to providing the ANA with the training it needs to establish the capabilities necessary to sustain the force in the long term, such as maneuver skills in battalion-level operations, intelligence collection, and logistics. Without these skills, smaller ANA units cannot operate collectively at the battalion level, must rely on the coalition for support tasks, and cannot assume the lead for their own security. Secondly, as ANA units achieve greater levels of capability, embedded trainers and mentors are responsible for assessing and validating their progress. CSTC-A's Campaign Plan states that the validation process is intended to improve collective training of ANA units; however, without adequate numbers of U.S. embedded trainers and coalition mentors, this validation will be slowed. CSTC-A officials stated that this delay in validation would lengthen the amount of time it will take the ANA to achieve full capability. Moreover, Defense officials noted that, as the number of ANA units fielded increases, the number of U.S. embedded training and coalition mentoring personnel needed also rises. For instance, when we visited Afghanistan in August 2007, Defense officials stated 73 U.S.-embedded training and coalition mentoring teams were needed to assist the development of the ANA; however, Defense officials projected that by December 2008 103 teams would be needed. Without additional training and mentoring personnel to meet this increased need, delays in ANA development will likely be exacerbated.

**Critical Equipment Shortfalls
Remain Due to Changing
Procurement Plans, Competing
Global Priorities, and
Production Limitations**

Since we reported in 2005, new equipment plans for the ANA have been implemented and the ANA has received more equipment items. In 2005, Defense planned to equip the Afghan army with donated and salvaged weapons and armored vehicles. However, much of this equipment proved to be worn out, defective, or incompatible with other equipment. In 2006, Defense began providing some ANA forces with U.S. equipment. Further, as security deteriorated, equipment needs changed and Defense planned to provide more protective equipment, such as armored Humvees, and more lethal weapons, such as rocket-propelled grenades.

In support of these efforts, approximately \$3.7 billion was provided between fiscal years 2005 and 2008 to equip the ANA.³⁴ As of February 2008, CSTC-A reports that the ANA combat forces are equipped with 60 percent of items defined as critical by Defense, a 7 percentage point increase since August 2007.

Despite these advances, shortages exist in a number of equipment items defined as critical by Defense. For instance, of 55 critical equipment items for ANA combat forces, CSTC-A reports having less than half of the required amount on hand for 21 of these items. Types of critical equipment items with significant shortfalls include vehicles, weapons, and communication equipment (see table 7).

Table 7: Critical Equipment Items for ANA Combat Forces with Less Than Half the Required Amount On Hand, as of February 2008

Item	Number required	Number on hand	Percent of required on hand
Vehicles and generators			
15-Kilowatt Generator	40	19	48
Excavating Vehicle	120	56	47
M872A4 Semi-trailer	316	82	26
30-Kilowatt Generator	75	16	21
Armored Humvee	4,580	469	10
Dump Truck	60	5	8
Humvee Ambulance	710	0	0
Eastern bloc^a weapons			
DsHK 12.7 mm Heavy Machine Gun	576	175	30
NATO-standard^b weapons			
M500 Shotgun	525	116	22
M224 60mm Mortar	68	15	22
M203A2 40mm Grenade Launcher	2,851	527	19
M16A2 Semi-automatic Rifle	53,287	6,018	11

³⁴Between fiscal years 2005 and 2008, funds were provided to support the training and equipping of the ANA through a variety of budget accounts, with the majority provided through the Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). ASFF funding allocations are reported to Congress in four categories: equipment and transportation, infrastructure development, sustainment activities, and training. The \$3.7 billion figure represents the amount of ASFF funding directed toward equipment and transportation for the Afghan army.

Item	Number required	Number on hand	Percent of required on hand
M249 Machine Gun	3,584	162	5
M240B Machine Gun	2,013	81	4
M24 Sniper Rifle	1,544	12	1
M2 .50 cal Heavy Machine Gun	576	0	0
M252 81mm Mortar	30	0	0
Communications technology			
High-Frequency Vehicle Mounted Radio	1,031	501	49
Omni-Directional Antenna Mast	503	180	36
Very High-Frequency Vehicle Mounted Radio	200	71	36
Field Switch Board	752	202	27

Source: GAO analysis of Defense data.

Note: Equipment requirements are defined in the ANA's Military Table of Equipment, known as a Tashkil.

^aEastern bloc equipment generally refers to equipment developed by the Soviet Union and produced in Eastern bloc countries.

^bNATO-standard refers to NATO approved standardization processes applied to equipment, which can include production codes and equipment specifications. According to NATO's Logistics Handbook, the aim of standardization is to enhance the Alliance's operational effectiveness and to improve the efficient use of available resources.

Although shortfalls exist for certain items defined as critical by Defense, such as NATO-standard machine guns, this does not necessarily mean that the ANA is unequipped. Defense officials stated that while ANA forces wait to receive NATO-standard weapons, Eastern bloc substitutes will be used. However, several ANA combat corps reported shortages in these items as well. For instance, each month between November 2007 and February 2008 at least 2 of 5 ANA corps reported shortages in Eastern bloc anti-tank weapons and 1 of 5 ANA corps reported shortages in Eastern bloc light machine guns. Moreover, shortfalls in items for which no Eastern bloc substitute is being used, such as communication equipment and cargo trucks, were reported in every ANA combat corps in February 2008.

Defense officials attribute these shortfalls to a variety of factors, such as competing global priorities for equipment, production delays, and delayed receipt and execution of fiscal year 2007 funding, among other reasons. As equipment orders are filled, ANA units may not be the top priority to receive certain equipment items. CSTC-A officials said that U.S. soldiers currently in combat have first priority to receive some of the equipment that is also requested for the ANA, while security forces in other nations,

such as Iraq, may also be higher priority than the Afghan army. When U.S. forces or other nations have higher priority to receive equipment, CSTC-A officials noted that ANA orders are delayed. Officials at the U.S. Army Security Assistance Command also stated that Iraq may be a higher priority than Afghanistan, while a senior official from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) stated that other nations, such as Georgia and Lebanon, may also receive higher priority. Furthermore, production delays for certain equipment items may contribute to equipment shortfalls. For instance, CSTC-A officials stated that due to production delays, certain equipment items, such as NATO-standard heavy machine guns and mortars, were not currently available and would not likely be delivered until 2009 or 2010. Similarly, Defense officials in Washington, D.C., stated that production limitations were responsible for some equipment shortages, particularly in the case of NATO-standard mortars. Additional factors cited as contributing to equipment shortages included delayed receipt and execution of fiscal year 2007 funding, accelerated fielding of ANA units, and difficulties distributing equipment to the field.

One method to help address shortages while western equipment is delayed is through increased equipment donations from the international community. CSTC-A is currently seeking additional contributions, particularly of Eastern bloc equipment, such as the basic soldier assault rifle. Between 2002 and March 2008, over 40 non-U.S. donors provided approximately \$426 million to assist in the training and equipping of the ANA. Eighty-eight percent of this support has been in the area of equipment; however, the value of equipment donations is determined by the donor, according to CSTC-A officials. The quality of this donated equipment has been mixed (see fig. 5), and delivery of some donations has been delayed due to limited funds to pay for shipments into Afghanistan.

Figure 5: Rifles of Variable Quality Donated to the ANSF



Source: GAO.

To address quality issues, NATO and CSTC-A have established procedures to verify that international donations comply with current needs for the ANA and, if necessary, verify the condition and completeness of equipment. Furthermore, to defray the cost of shipments into Afghanistan, a NATO-administered trust fund has been established to support the transportation of equipment into Afghanistan. However, Defense officials stated that the amount of money in the trust fund, which they estimated to be approximately \$1 million, is limited and may not support the transportation of a large number of donations. Additionally, CSTC-A has also set aside funding to transport donated goods when required.

The development of capable ANA forces may be delayed by shortages in equipment, as units cannot be certified as fully capable in equipment unless they have 85 percent or more of their critical equipment items. CSTC-A anticipates that all ANA brigades will be equipped to at least 85 percent of requirements for critical equipment items by December 2008; however, according to Defense's March 2008 monthly status report, expected dates for achieving CM1 in equipment were pushed back for 12

of 14 combat brigades by between 1 to 7 months due, in part, to delayed delivery and distribution of items such as vehicles and weapons. Moreover, shortages in equipment items may hinder training efforts, since having certain equipment items on hand, such as trucks, may be necessary to teach ANA personnel logistics and maintenance skills.

Several Challenges Impede Efforts to Improve Capability of Afghan National Police Forces

Although the ANP has reportedly grown in number since 2005, after an investment of nearly \$6 billion, no police unit is assessed as fully capable of performing its mission. Development of an Afghan police force that is fully capable requires manning, training, and equipping of police personnel. However, the United States faces challenges in several areas related to these efforts to build a capable police force. First, less than one-quarter of the ANP has police mentors present to provide training in the field and verify that police are on duty. Second, the Afghan police have not received about one-third of the equipment items Defense considers critical, and continue to face shortages in several categories of equipment, including trucks, radios, and body armor. In addition, Afghanistan's weak judicial system hinders effective policing, and our analysis of status reports from the field indicates that the ANP consistently experiences problems with police pay, corruption, and attacks, including by insurgents. Recognizing that these challenges hamper ANP development, Defense began a new long-term initiative in November 2007 to reconstitute the uniformed police—the largest component of the Afghan police. However, the continuing shortfall in police mentors may pose a risk to the initiative's success.

No Police Units Are Rated as Fully Capable of Performing Their Mission

Defense defines a fully capable 82,000-person ANP force as one that is able to independently plan, execute, and sustain operations with limited coalition support.³⁵ However, Defense reporting indicates that, as of April 2008, no police unit was assessed as fully capable of performing its mission (see table 8).³⁶ Furthermore, among rated units, about 96 percent (296 of 308) of uniformed police districts and all border police battalions (33 of 33), which together comprise about three-fourths of the ANP's

³⁵The 82,000-person end-strength for the ANP includes over 6,000 authorized positions in the Afghan Ministry of Interior, which oversees the police force.

³⁶CSTC-A provided us with capability ratings for 433 police units, which include uniformed police districts, civil order and border police battalions, and counter narcotics police units.

authorized end-strength, were rated at CM4—the lowest capability rating.³⁷ Six of the remaining 12 uniformed police districts were rated at CM2, and the other 6 at CM3. Overall, Defense assessed approximately 4 percent (18 of 433 units rated) of police units as partially capable and about 3 percent (12 of 433 units rated) as capable of leading operations with coalition support.

Table 8: Defense Assessment of ANP Capabilities, as of April 2008

Police units	CM1 Fully Capable	CM2 Capable with Support	CM3 Partially Capable	CM4 Not Capable	Unit Not Formed or Not Reporting ^a
Uniformed Police Districts (365)	0	6	6	296	57
Border Police Battalions (33)	0	0	0	33	0
Civil Order Police Battalions (20)	0	6	2	2	10
Counter Narcotics Police Units (15)	0	0	10	3	2
Number of ANP units (433)	0	12 (3%)	18 (4%)	334 (77%)	69 (16%)

Source: GAO analysis of Defense data.

^aA uniformed police district that is categorized as “not formed or not reporting” has not been rated by Defense. A civil order police battalion or a counter narcotics police unit that is categorized as “not formed or not reporting” is a planned unit or in training.

According to Defense reporting as of April 2008, the expected date for completion of a fully capable Afghan police force is December 2012—a date that conflicts with the Afghan government and international community benchmark of establishing police forces that can effectively meet Afghanistan’s security needs by the end of 2010.

³⁷This does not include 57 uniformed police districts that Defense assessed as not formed or not reporting.

Growth of Police Force Is Difficult to Quantify

Defense reporting indicates that, as of April 2008, nearly 80,000 police had been assigned out of an end-strength of 82,000 (see table 9).³⁸ This is an increase of more than double the approximately 35,000 we previously reported as trained as of January 2005.

Table 9: Afghan Ministry of Interior Forces, as of April 2008

	Number authorized	Number assigned	Percent assigned
Ministry of Interior Headquarters	6,015	5,237	87
Uniformed Police	44,319	42,969	97
Border Police	17,970	12,213	68
Auxiliary Police	0	9,318	N/A ^a
Civil Order Police	5,365	1,523	28
Criminal Investigative Division	4,148	2,815	68
Counter Narcotics Police	3,777	2,265	60
Customs Police	0	623	N/A ^a
Counter Terrorism Police	406	411	101
Standby/Highway Police	0	2,536	N/A ^a
Total	82,000	79,910	97

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense and Afghan Ministry of Interior data.

^aThe auxiliary police, customs police, standby police, and highway police are no longer authorized.

Despite this reported increase in police manning, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the police force has grown. As we noted in May 2007, the Afghan Ministry of Interior produces the number of police assigned and the reliability of these numbers has been questioned. A Defense census undertaken since our May 2007 report raises additional concerns about these manning numbers. Specifically, Defense conducted a census to check the reliability of ministry payroll records and reported in September 2007 that it was unable to verify the physical existence of about 20 percent of the uniformed police and more than 10 percent of the border police listed on the ministry payroll records for the provinces surveyed. Because Defense's census did not cover all 34 Afghan provinces, these

³⁸ According to Defense, the number of police assigned includes personnel who were already employed as police prior to coalition operations in Afghanistan and have not necessarily been trained by coalition forces. By contrast, since Afghanistan's army had largely dissolved under the Taliban, nearly all army personnel listed as assigned have been trained by coalition forces.

percentages cannot be applied to the entire police force. Nonetheless, the results of Defense's census raise questions about the extent to which the ANP has grown since our 2005 report.

Shortage of Police Mentors Hinders Training, Evaluation, and Verification of Police on Duty

According to Defense officials, the shortage of available police mentors has been a key impediment to U.S. efforts to conduct training and evaluation and verify that police are on duty. Police mentor teams in Afghanistan consist of both civilian mentors, who teach law enforcement and police management, and military mentors, who provide training in basic combat operations and offer force protection for the civilian mentors. As we reported in 2005, international peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor have shown that field-based training of local police by international police mentors is critical to the success of similar programs to establish professional police forces. Such training allows mentors to build on classroom instruction and provide a more systematic basis for evaluating police performance.

Defense reporting indicates that, as of January 2008, less than one-quarter of the ANP had police mentor teams present. DynCorp, State's contractor for training and mentoring the police, was able to provide about 98 percent (540 of 551) of the authorized number of civilian mentors as of April 2008. However, as of the same date, only about 32 percent (746 of 2,358) of required military mentors were present in country. Due to this shortage of military mentors to provide force protection, movement of available civilian mentors is constrained—a serious limitation to providing mentor coverage to a police force that is based in more than 900 locations around the country and, unlike the army, generally operates as individuals, not as units.³⁹ Moreover, a knowledgeable CSTC-A official stated that additional civilian mentors would not help to address the shortfall in military mentors because they could not be deployed to the field without military mentors to provide protection. According to Defense officials, the shortfall in military mentors for the ANP is due to the higher priority assigned to deploying U.S. military personnel elsewhere, particularly Iraq.

While the United States and the EU have taken steps to provide additional police mentors, the extent to which these efforts will address current

³⁹ Additionally, DynCorp officials stated that moving around Afghanistan to conduct mentoring operations is difficult due to the size of the country and the lack of roads. GAO is currently performing a separate review of U.S. and donor efforts to build roads in Afghanistan.

shortfalls is unclear. In January 2008, Defense announced that approximately 1,000 Marines would be sent to Afghanistan in the spring of 2008 on a one-time, 7-month deployment to assist in the training and development of the ANP.⁴⁰ However, this temporary deployment will neither fully nor permanently alleviate the underlying shortage of military mentors for the ANP, which stood at over 1,600 as of April 2008. In June 2007, the EU established a police mission in Afghanistan with the objective of providing nearly 200 personnel to mentor, advise, and train the Ministry of Interior and ANP. According to State, the number of EU personnel pledged has subsequently increased to about 215. However, State figures indicate that the EU had staffed about 80 personnel as of February 2008—less than 40 percent of its pledged total. Moreover, State officials said that restrictions in the EU mandate limit the extent to which its personnel are permitted to provide field-based training.

Defense, State, and DynCorp officials all identified the continuing shortfall in police mentors as a challenge to U.S. efforts to develop the Afghan police. Specifically, the mentor shortage has impeded U.S. efforts in three areas:

- *Field-based training:* Senior Defense officials, including the commanding general of CSTC-A, stated that the ongoing shortfall in police mentors has been the primary obstacle to providing the field-based training necessary to develop a fully capable police force. In addition, State has reported that a significant increase in mentoring coverage is essential to improving the quality of the police through field-based training. DynCorp officials also acknowledged the shortage of mentors to be a challenge to providing necessary training.
- *Evaluation:* According to a knowledgeable CSTC-A official, the shortage of police mentors is a serious challenge to evaluating the capability of the police and identifying areas in need of further attention. Defense recently introduced a monthly assessment tool to be used by mentors to evaluate police capability and identify strengths and weaknesses. However, CSTC-A identified extremely limited mentor coverage of the police as a significant challenge to using this tool to generate reliable assessments. As of

⁴⁰In January 2008, Defense announced the approved deployment of 3,200 additional Marines to Afghanistan—1,000 to assist in training and development of the ANP and 2,200 to conduct security operations in Afghanistan under the command of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission.

February 2008, police mentors were able to assess only about 11 percent of uniformed police districts using this new tool.

- *Verification of police on duty:* The shortage of available police mentors has impeded U.S. efforts to verify the number of Afghan police on duty. For example, as of April 2008, Defense could not verify whether any police were reporting for duty in 5 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces due to the lack of mentors. Furthermore, although Defense has planned to conduct monthly surveys to determine how many police are reporting for duty in selected districts, a knowledgeable CSTC-A official stated that mentors are not available to conduct surveys. However, a random sample of 15 police districts conducted by the United Nations found fewer than half of authorized police reporting for duty.

Without sufficient police mentors present to conduct field-based training and evaluation and verify police manning, development of fully capable, fully staffed Afghan police forces may continue to be delayed.

Efforts of Civilian Mentors Complicated by Dual Chain of Command

Although DynCorp has been able to provide nearly all of the authorized number of civilian mentors, DynCorp stated that the activities of these mentors have been complicated by a dual chain of command between State and Defense.⁴¹ According to a 2005 interagency decision, Defense is responsible for directing the overall U.S. effort to train and equip the Afghan police, while State is responsible for providing policy guidance and management of the DynCorp contract. According to DynCorp, this dual chain of command has affected its efforts in multiple ways, such as by producing conflicting guidance and complicating reporting, placement of personnel, the use of facilities, and training and mentoring activities.

⁴¹Prior work by the State and Defense inspectors general highlighted the same challenge over a year ago.

Police Continue to Face Difficulties with Equipment Shortages and Quality

Between fiscal years 2005 and 2008, Congress made available \$5.9 billion to support the training and equipping of the ANP. At least \$1.3 billion of that amount, or 22 percent, has been directed toward equipment purchases.⁴² Although equipping of the police has improved in recent months, shortages remain in several types of equipment that Defense considers critical.⁴³ Since our August 2007 visit to Afghanistan, the percentage of critical ANP equipment on hand has grown from 53 to 65 percent as of February 2008. This improvement includes increased totals of items on hand, such as rifles and grenade launchers. Further, Defense anticipates the ANP will be equipped with 85 percent of critical equipment items by December 2008. However, as of February 2008, shortages remained in several types of critical equipment, such as trucks, radios, and body armor. Defense officials cited several factors that have contributed to these shortages. First, according to CSTC-A officials, equipment shortages are due to competing priorities, particularly the need to equip U.S. forces deployed to operational situations and security forces in Iraq. Second, CSTC-A attributed the specific shortage in body armor to the inability of two supplying contractors to deliver the requested items on schedule. Third, Defense officials cited additional causes of equipment shortages such as delayed receipt and execution of fiscal year 2007 funding and instances where CSTC-A did not provide equipment orders in a timely manner. Defense officials and documentation also indicated that distributing equipment to police in the field once it is procured is challenging due to the unstable security situation, difficult terrain, weather conditions, and the remoteness of some police districts. In addition, Defense officials expressed concerns with the quality and usability of thousands of weapons donated to the police. For example, officials estimated that only about 1 in 5 of the nearly 50,000 AK-47 automatic rifles received through donation was of good quality.

⁴²The \$5.9 billion figure includes approximately \$736 million of fiscal year 2008 funding requests. Between fiscal years 2005 and 2008, funds were provided to support the training and equipping of the ANP through a variety of budget accounts, with the majority provided through the Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF). ASFF funding allocations are reported to Congress in four categories: equipment and transportation, infrastructure development, sustainment activities, and training. The \$1.3 billion figure represents the amount of ASFF funding allocated toward equipment and transportation of the Afghan police.

⁴³CSTC-A stated that they worked in conjunction with the Ministry of Interior to develop equipment requirements for the ANP, which are listed in a document referred to as a Tashkil.

Our analysis of weekly progress reports produced in 2007 by DynCorp civilian police mentors provides additional evidence of equipment-related challenges and other logistical difficulties.⁴⁴ Specifically, 88 percent (46 of 52) of weekly reports contained instances of police operating with equipment of insufficient quality or quantity or facing problems with facilities or supplies. For example, the reports include several cases where Afghan border police are inadequately equipped to defend their positions on the border or face insurgent forces. Recognizing this shortcoming, CSTC-A has planned to equip the border police with heavy machine guns, which it expects to arrive in the fall of 2008. In addition, 81 percent (42 of 52) of weekly reports contained examples of limited police ability to account for the equipment provided to them.⁴⁵ In July 2007, CSTC-A initiated efforts to train the police in basic supply and property accountability procedures.⁴⁶ According to CSTC-A, equipment is no longer being issued to police districts unless the districts' property officers are first trained. For example, more than 1,500 trucks have been on hand and ready for issue since late 2007 (see fig. 6), but the Afghan Minister of Interior has delayed distribution of these vehicles until adequate accountability procedures and driver training are established in the target districts. Similarly, as of February 2008, about half of the approximately 17,000 machine guns on hand had not been distributed to the police.

⁴⁴We limited our analysis to 2007 reporting because State was unable to provide a complete set of weekly reports for prior years. Instances discussed in more than one report were only categorized and counted the first time they appeared.

⁴⁵GAO is currently performing a separate review on the accountability of equipment provided to the ANSF.

⁴⁶Training in supply and property accountability procedures is being provided to the police by U.S. contractors.

Figure 6: Trucks Awaiting Distribution to ANP



Source: GAO.

Police Face Problems with Weak Judicial Sector, Pay, Corruption, and Attacks

Establishing a working judiciary in Afghanistan based on the rule of law is a prerequisite for effective policing. However, in 2005 and 2007, we reported that few linkages existed in Afghanistan between the Afghan judiciary and police, and the police had little ability to enforce judicial rulings. According to State, much of Afghanistan continues to lack a functioning justice system. In addition, according to CSTC-A, the slow rate at which the rule of law is being implemented across Afghanistan inhibits effective community policing.

Our analysis of DynCorp's weekly progress reports from 2007 indicates that police in the field also face persistent problems with pay, corruption, and attacks.⁴⁷

- *Pay problems:* 94 percent (49 of 52) of weekly reports contained instances of police experiencing problems with pay. These include numerous

⁴⁷The security situation in Afghanistan, police performance, and retaining and recruiting police were other top issues identified in our analysis. These topics are discussed elsewhere in this report.

examples of police who have not been paid in several months and multiple cases of police who quit their jobs as a result of pay-related problems, thereby potentially leaving their districts more vulnerable to insurgent forces. Our prior work found that one cause for the corrupt practices exhibited by many Afghan police is their low, inconsistently paid salaries. Furthermore, according to State, the Ministry of Interior's traditional salary distribution process afforded opportunities for police chiefs and other officials to claim a portion of their subordinates' salaries for themselves. To minimize skimming of salaries, CSTC-A is instituting a three-phase program to pay all salaries into bank accounts via electronic funds transfer by December 2008. According to Defense, electronic funds transfer had been implemented in 12 of 34 provinces as of August 2007. The government of Afghanistan also has decided to increase police salaries to achieve pay parity with the Afghan army.

- *Corruption:* 87 percent (45 of 52) of weekly reports contained instances of corruption within the police force or the Ministry of Interior. These include multiple examples of police personnel providing weapons or defecting to the Taliban and several cases of high-ranking officials engaging in bribery or misconduct. Moreover, State documentation notes that one branch of the ANP, the highway police, was disbanded in early 2007 because it was notorious for corruption. However, DynCorp weekly reporting indicates that several thousand highway police were still working and being paid by the Ministry of Interior as of September 2007. The ministry, in conjunction with CSTC-A and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, is currently engaged in an effort to reform and streamline the ANP rank structure according to several criteria, including evidence of previous corruption amongst ANP officers.⁴⁸
- *Attacks:* 85 percent (44 of 52) of weekly reports contained instances of attacks against the police. These include numerous cases where police are targeted by suicide bombers or with improvised explosive devices. According to DynCorp, insurgent attacks against the ANP have increased due to greater involvement of the ANP in counterinsurgency operations and the perception that the police are a more vulnerable target than the Afghan army and coalition forces. DynCorp weekly reports do include several instances where police were able to successfully fend off attack; however, they also contain multiple cases of the dangerous working conditions that police face causing difficulties in retaining or recruiting personnel.

⁴⁸GAO is currently performing a separate review of U.S. efforts to reform the Afghan Ministry of Interior and National Police.

New Initiative to Reconstitute Police Has Begun, but Limited Mentor Coverage a Risk Factor

Recognizing several of the challenges faced by the ANP, Defense began a new initiative in November 2007 to train and equip the Afghan uniformed police. Defense documentation that outlines this initiative acknowledges that the Afghan police lack capability, have been inadequately trained and equipped, and are beset by corruption. To target these and other challenges, Defense introduced the Focused District Development plan in November 2007 to train and equip the uniformed police—those assigned to police districts throughout the country who comprise over 40 percent of the intended ANP end-strength of 82,000. According to Defense, reforming the uniformed police—the immediate face of the Afghan government to citizens at the local level—is the key to the overall reform of the ANP.⁴⁹ Under the Focused District Development model, the entire police force of a district is withdrawn from the district and sent to a regional training center to train together for 8 weeks and receive all authorized equipment while their district is covered by the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), a specialized police force trained and equipped to counter civil unrest and lawlessness (see fig. 7).⁵⁰ The police force then returns to its district, where a dedicated police mentor team provides follow-on training and closely monitors the police for at least 60 days. Defense expects to be able to reconstitute about 5 to 10 districts at a time for the first year of Focused District Development, with each training cycle lasting about 6 to 8 months. Overall, according to State, it will take a minimum of 4 to 5 years to complete the initiative.

⁴⁹Defense documents indicate that the Afghan border police will also eventually be reconstituted through the Focused District Development initiative; however, according to a Defense official, it is uncertain when such efforts will begin.

⁵⁰Defense documents indicate that in addition to being trained, a district police force undergoing Focused District Development will also have corrupt leaders replaced by nationally vetted ones, receive new salaries on parity with Afghan army salary rates, and have electronic funds transfer accounts established. Defense has also identified development of the Afghan justice system as a goal of Focused District Development.

Figure 7: Afghan National Civil Order Police Trainees in Kabul



Source: GAO.

State documentation indicates that no districts had completed an entire Focused District Development cycle as of March 2008.⁵¹ Until an entire cycle is completed, it will be difficult to fully assess the initiative. However, limited police mentor coverage may complicate efforts to execute this new program. Defense documentation identifies sufficient police mentor teams as the most important requirement for successful reform. However, according to the commanding general of CSTC-A, the ongoing shortfall in police mentors available to work with newly trained district police will slow implementation of the initiative. In addition, a senior Defense official stated that unless the mentor shortage is alleviated, the number of police mentor teams available to provide dedicated training and monitoring will eventually be exhausted. Moreover, according to DynCorp, civilian mentors have an important role in Focused District Development—particularly in providing district-level mentoring—but are not accompanying military mentors into districts that are considered unsafe. Given that one selection criterion for districts is location in unstable areas of the country where better policing might improve the security situation, it is unclear how often civilian mentors will be able to

⁵¹According to State, the first cycle of training at the regional training centers was completed in February.

participate in district-level mentoring. Defense documentation also identifies sufficient equipment availability as a requirement for successful reform. According to Defense, adequate equipment is currently on hand to support the Focused District Development initiative. However, given current shortfalls in various ANP equipment items, it is unclear if having sufficient equipment on hand for the initiative may lead to increased equipment shortages for elements of the ANP, such as the border police, that are not currently being targeted through the initiative.

Conclusion

Establishing capable Afghan national security forces is critical to improving security in Afghanistan and the U.S. efforts to assist foreign allies and partners in combating terrorism. To date the U.S. has invested billions of dollars in this effort and estimates that billions more will be required to build and sustain the ANSF beyond the existing forces—few of which have been assessed as fully capable of conducting their primary mission. As such, measuring progress and estimating long-term costs are particularly important given that U.S. officials estimate that this mission could exceed a decade. The recommendations in our 2005 report called for detailed Defense and State plans that include clearly defined objectives and performance measures, milestones for achieving these objectives, future funding requirements, and a strategy for sustaining the results achieved, including plans for transitioning responsibilities to Afghanistan. In 2007, Defense provided a 5-page document in response to our recommendation. However, this document included few long-term milestones, no intermediate milestones for judging progress, and no sustainability strategy. In 2008, Congress mandated that Defense, in coordination with State, submit reports on a comprehensive and long-term strategy and budget for strengthening the ANSF and a long-term detailed plan for sustaining the ANSF. Defense has yet to provide these reports. As such it remains difficult to determine if U.S. efforts are on track and how much more they will cost to complete. Until a coordinated, detailed plan is completed, Congress will continue to lack visibility into the progress made to date and the cost of completing this mission—information that is essential to holding the performing agencies accountable. Consequently, we believe that future U.S. investments should be conditioned on the completion of a coordinated, detailed plan for developing a capable ANSF.

Matter for Congressional Consideration

To help ensure that action is taken to facilitate accountability and oversight in the development and sustainment of the ANSF, and consistent with our previous 2005 recommendation and the 2008 congressional mandate, Congress should consider conditioning a portion of future appropriations related to training and equipping the ANSF on completion of a coordinated, detailed plan that, among other things, includes clearly defined objectives and performance measures, milestones for achieving these objectives, future funding requirements, and a strategy for sustaining the results achieved, including plans for transitioning responsibilities to Afghanistan; and the timely receipt of the reports mandated by sections 1230 and 1231 of Pub. L. 110-181, the first of which are already late.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

State and Defense provided written comments on a draft of this report. State's comments are reproduced in appendix III. Defense's comments, along with GAO responses to selected issues raised by Defense, are reproduced in appendix IV. The agencies also provided us with technical comments, which we have incorporated throughout the draft as appropriate.

State appreciated GAO's views on how to improve efforts to develop the ANSF, which it considers critical to long-term sustainable success in Afghanistan. State expressed concerns about conditioning future appropriations on the completion of a detailed plan. In addition, State highlighted ongoing coordination efforts with Defense as well as certain other operational changes, many of which occurred after the completion of our fieldwork in August 2007. For example, while we note that civilian mentors are not accompanying military mentors into districts that are considered unsafe, State notes in its comments that civilian police mentors are now deployed with their military counterparts to all ongoing Focused District Development districts and that all efforts are made to enable the deployment of civilian police in support of the program.

We acknowledge State's concerns and appreciate its efforts to coordinate with Defense. However, we believe that a coordinated, detailed plan that clearly identifies the various agencies' roles would be beneficial, given the continuous turnover of U.S. government staff in Afghanistan. We believe a coordinated, detailed plan with intermediate milestones is also important particularly in light of the new Focused District Development initiative for ANP training, which will entail considerable resources and time to complete. Further, intermediate milestones would provide policymakers with more information regarding the transition to a normalized security assistance relationship, as discussed by State in its comments.

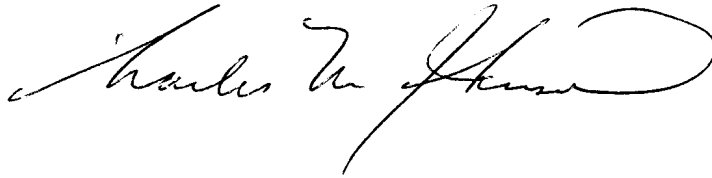
Defense disagreed that Congress should consider conditioning a portion of future appropriations on completion of a coordinated, detailed plan to develop the ANSF, and stated that current guidance provided by State and Defense to the field is sufficient to implement a successful program to train and equip the ANSF. Defense noted that the 5-page document it provided to GAO in January 2007 articulated goals for the size, capabilities, and requirements for the ANSF, and reflected an approach approved by multiple agencies—including State. Defense also cited a number of other documents it considers to be part of the effort to develop the ANSF. Furthermore, Defense disagreed with our conclusion that, absent a detailed plan, progress in developing the ANSF is difficult to assess, and stated that monthly progress reports and communication with Congress provide legislators with the information needed to assess the program and allocate resources.

We do not believe that the 5-page document provides a strategic-level plan for the development of the ANSF. The document does not represent a coordinated Defense and State plan for completing and sustaining the ANSF with sufficient detail and transparency for Congress and others to make informed decisions concerning future resources. This 5-page document, which Defense now refers to as a “Strategic Vision” and which CSTC-A officials were unaware of at the time of our review, does not identify or discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Department of State, Defense’s key partner in training the ANP. This is an element that one would expect in a strategic planning document for ANSF development. Furthermore, the document contains just one date—December 2008, by which time the 152,000 person ANSF would be completed. Defense’s document lacks any other intermediate or long-term milestones by which progress could be measured. While the U.S. role in training and equipping the ANSF could exceed a decade, according to CSTC-A representatives, neither the 5-page document nor the documents identified by Defense in its comments to GAO constitute a sustainability strategy. For example, while Defense states that the international community will need to sustain the ANSF for the “near-term” until government revenues increase in Afghanistan, the document lacks further detail regarding the expected time frames for increasing government revenues, as well as a definition of “near-term.” As such, it remains unclear how long Defense and State expect to support the ANSF.

Furthermore, we maintain that, without a coordinated, detailed plan, assessing progress in developing the ANSF is difficult. While Defense produces various documents that report in detail on the current status of the ANSF, these documents do not contain intermediate milestones or

consistent end dates necessary to determine if the program is on track to achieve its desired results within a set timeframe. For additional details, refer to GAO comments that follow appendix IV.

We are sending copies of this report to interested congressional committees. We will also make copies available to others on request. In addition, this report is available on GAO's Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>. If you or your staff have any questions concerning this report, please contact me at (202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov. Contact points for our Office of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report are listed in appendix V.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles M. Johnson, Jr.", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Charles Michael Johnson, Jr.
Director, International Affairs and Trade

List of Congressional Committees

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Chairman
The Honorable Richard G. Lugar
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
The Honorable Ted Stevens
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
The Honorable Judd Gregg
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Ike Skelton
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The Honorable Duncan L. Hunter
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Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

The Honorable Howard L. Berman
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The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
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House of Representatives

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The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
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Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
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The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

The Honorable John F. Tierney
Chairman

The Honorable Christopher Shays
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
House of Representatives

The Honorable Tom Davis

Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

To analyze U.S. plans for developing and sustaining the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and identify the extent to which these plans contain detailed objectives, milestones, future funding requirements, and sustainability strategies, we reviewed planning documents from Combined Security Transition Command—Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, including draft and CSTC-A-approved versions of the Campaign Plan for the Development of Afghan National Military and Police Forces (Campaign Plan); a planning document provided by the Office of the Secretary of Defense; and a Defense briefing on ANSF sustainment. We evaluated these documents to determine the extent to which they contain the four criteria previously recommended by GAO and discussed them with cognizant Defense officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We also spoke with officials from the U.S. Central Command and State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs to discuss their contribution to the Campaign Plan. In addition, while in Kabul, we discussed the Campaign Plan with officials from Embassy Kabul; the commanding general of CSTC-A and other CSTC-A officials; and the Afghan Minister of Defense. Finally, we examined the Afghanistan Compact and Afghanistan National Development Strategy to gain familiarity with documents developed by Afghanistan and the international community. The information on foreign law in this report does not reflect our independent legal analysis but is based on interviews and secondary sources.

To determine the progress made and challenges faced by the United States in building the Afghan National Army (ANA), we reviewed monthly assessment reports produced by Task Force Phoenix and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as documents obtained from several other Defense offices and agencies, including the Office of the Secretary of Defense, CSTC-A, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, and the U.S. Army Force Management Support Agency. In addition, we met with the following officials to discuss the progress made and challenges faced by the United States in building the ANA:

- In the Washington, D.C., area, we met with officials from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the U.S. Army Force Management Support Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and State’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.
- In Kabul, Afghanistan, we met with personnel mentoring the army; officials from CSTC-A, including its commanding general; Task Force

Phoenix; Embassy Kabul; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; MPRI; and the Afghan Ministry of Defense, including the Minister of Defense. We also visited an equipment warehouse and army training facilities. Moreover, we interviewed officials based in Afghanistan by telephone, including several CSTC-A representatives.

To determine the progress made and challenges faced by the United States in building the Afghan National Police (ANP), we reviewed monthly assessment reports produced by Task Force Phoenix and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as documents obtained from several other Defense offices and agencies, including the Office of the Secretary of Defense, CSTC-A, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, and the U.S. Army Force Management Support Agency. In addition, we met with the following officials to discuss the progress made and challenges faced by the United States in building the ANP:

- In the Washington, D.C., area, we met with officials from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, the U.S. Army Force Management Support Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, State's Bureaus of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and Political-Military Affairs, and DynCorp International.
- In Kabul, Afghanistan, we met with U.S. police mentors; officials from CSTC-A, including its commanding general; Task Force Phoenix; Embassy Kabul; the United Nations; DynCorp International; MPRI; and the Afghan Ministry of Interior, including the Minister of Interior. We also visited an equipment warehouse and police training facilities. Further, we interviewed officials based in Afghanistan by telephone, including representatives of CSTC-A, DynCorp International, and the United Nations Development Programme's Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan.

Additionally, we asked State to provide weekly progress reports produced by DynCorp International for 2005, 2006, and 2007. To identify challenges faced by the police, we conducted a content analysis to categorize and summarize the observations contained in these reports. Specifically, we independently proposed categories, agreed on the relevant categories, reviewed reports, and categorized the observations contained therein. Instances discussed in more than one report were only categorized and counted the first time they appeared. To ensure the validity and reliability of this analysis, we reconciled any differences. Once all differences were reconciled, we analyzed the data to identify the challenges most often

discussed. Because State did not provide us a complete set of reports for 2005 or 2006, we were only able to perform this analysis on 2007 reports.

To determine the reliability of the data we collected on funding, mentors, equipment, and ANSF personnel numbers and capability, we compared and corroborated information from multiple sources and interviewed cognizant officials regarding the processes they used to compile the data.

- To determine the completeness and consistency of U.S. and international funding data, we compiled and compared data from Defense, State, and other donor countries with information from cognizant U.S. agency officials in Washington, D.C. We also compared the funding data with appropriations and authorization legislation, congressional budget requests, and reports to Congress to corroborate their accuracy. Additionally, we compared the funding data with our May 2007 Afghanistan report.¹ Differences between table 1 in this report and the funding chart presented in our May 2007 report are due to the following factors:
 - Certain funds were removed, such as those provided to support a protective detail for Afghanistan's President, because agency officials later clarified that these dollars did not support efforts to train and equip the ANSF, while certain funds were added, such as those used to provide support for counter narcotics police, because agency officials later clarified that these dollars supported efforts to train and equip the ANSF.
 - For fiscal years 2007 and 2008, totals printed in May 2007 included budget requests. Subsequently, some of these requested totals changed, such as the allocation of money in Defense's 2008 Global War on Terror request and Defense's support of efforts to train and equip Afghan counter narcotics police.

Although we did not audit the funding data and are not expressing an opinion on them, based on our examination of the documents received and our discussions with cognizant agency officials, we concluded that the funding data we obtained were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this engagement.

¹[GAO-07-801SP](#).

- To determine the reliability of data on the number of military mentors, we corroborated figures in unclassified progress reports against classified mentor requirements and discussed Defense progress reports with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We checked the reliability of data on the number of civilian mentors by comparing Defense and State figures for consistency and speaking to State officials. Finally, we assessed the reliability of data on European Union police mentors by comparing Defense, State, and European Union data and checking for inconsistencies. Based on these assessments and interviews, we determined that these data on mentors were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this engagement.
- To assess the reliability of equipment data, we compared different lists of equipment on hand to corroborate their accuracy and interviewed cognizant officials by telephone to discuss shortages of equipment and procedures for keeping track of equipment provided to the ANA and ANP. Based on these comparisons and discussions, we concluded that the equipment data provided to us were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this engagement.
- To assess the reliability of ANSF capability figures, we spoke with officials from CSTC-A, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and State to discuss the processes by which these data are generated. Additionally, while in Kabul, we attended the monthly meeting during which Defense officials discuss and determine ANA capability figures. Moreover, we requested after-action reports to evaluate the capability of ANA troops in the field. However, Defense officials were not able to provide us with this documentation. To evaluate the reliability of ANSF personnel numbers, we spoke with officials from CSTC-A and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Overall, based on our discussions with cognizant officials, we concluded that ANSF capability and ANA personnel data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this engagement. However, based on concerns expressed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and highlighted in our prior work, as well as the results of the census conducted by Defense, we note in this report that the number of ANP reported as assigned may not be reliable. Because Defense relies on the number of ANP reported as assigned as a measure of progress in building the ANP, we include this figure in our report as evidence that the ANP appear to have grown in number over the last 3 years. However, we also note that due to concerns about the reliability of the figure, it is difficult to quantify the exact extent to which the ANP has grown.

We conducted this performance audit from March 2007 through June 2008 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our

findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Appendix II: Structure of the Afghan National Security Forces

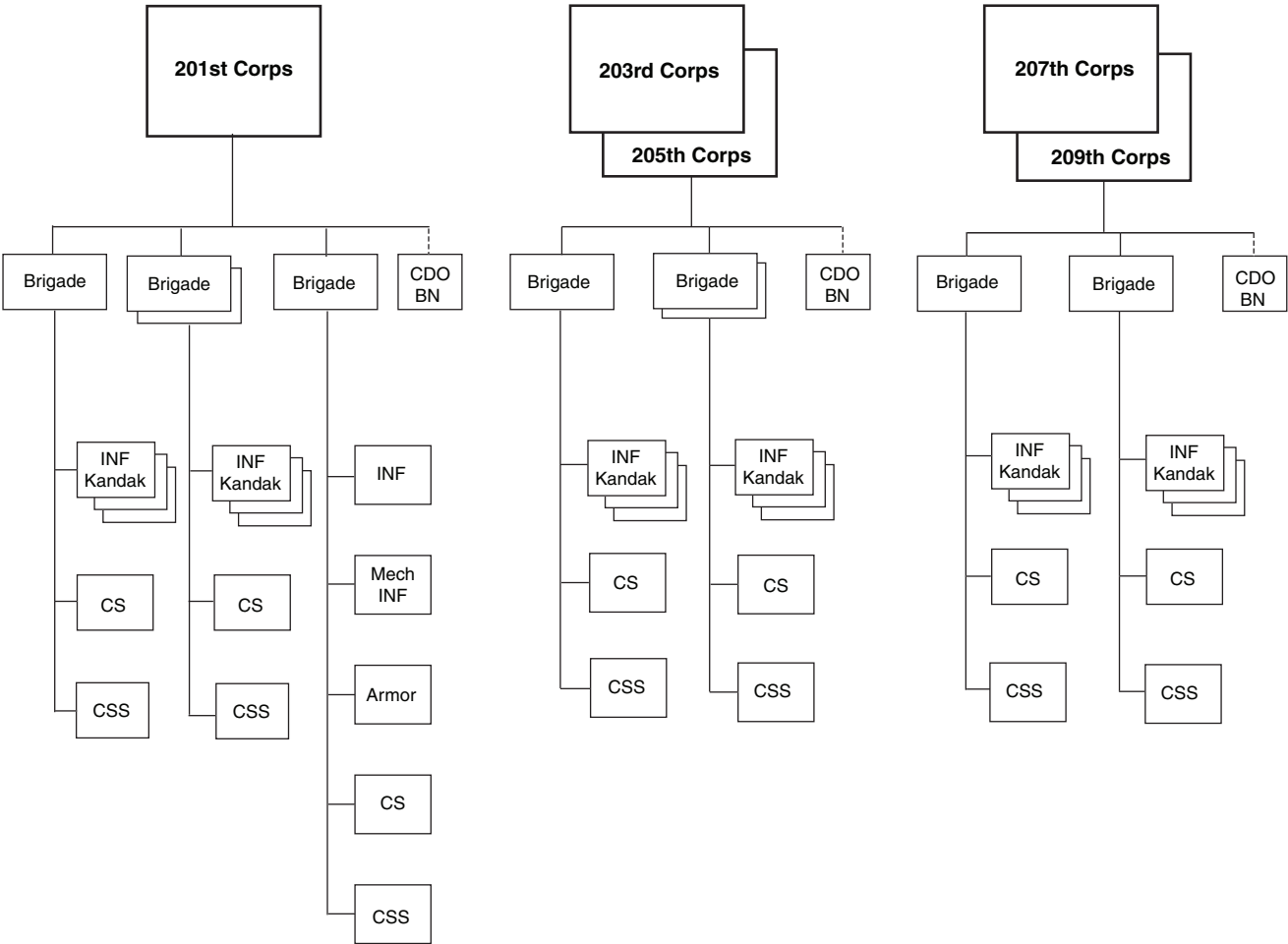
The Afghan National Security Forces are comprised of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. The structure of these organizations is described below. (See table 10 for the Afghan army and table 11 for the Afghan police.)

Table 10: Structure of the Ministry of Defense and Afghan National Army	
Component	Description
Ministry of Defense and General Staff	Department of the Afghan government responsible for developing, fielding, and ensuring the operational readiness of the ANA. The Ministry of Defense develops strategic plans for the defense of Afghanistan. The General Staff implements Ministry of Defense policies and guidance for the ANA.
Sustaining Institutions and Intermediate Commands	Sustaining institutions and intermediate commands support the Ministry of Defense at an institutional level and include facilities installation and management, acquisitions, logistics, communications support, regional military intelligence offices, detainee operations, medical command, ANA training and recruiting commands, military police, and the Headquarters Support and Security Brigade, an ANA unit that performs specialist tactical and ceremonial missions.
Combat Forces	Operational arm of the ANA, comprising about 70 percent of the total personnel. Combat forces are divided into five corps, with responsibility for different regions of Afghanistan.
Afghan Air Corps	The air corps provides support for Afghan army and police forces. Once trained, it will perform missions such as presidential airlift, medical evacuation, training, and light attack.

Source: GAO analysis of Defense documents.

Combat forces comprise 70 percent of the ANA’s personnel and are divided into five corps, located in different regions of Afghanistan. Each corps contains a number of brigades, most of which consist of five battalions: three light infantry battalions, one combat support battalion, and one combat services support battalion. The exception is the quick reaction force in 201st corps, which is comprised of one infantry battalion, one mechanized infantry battalion, and one armored battalion, in place of the three light infantry battalions. Each corps also includes one battalion of the National Commando Brigade (see fig. 8).

Figure 8: Structure of the ANA Combat Forces



CDO BN Battalion from the National Commando Brigade
INF Kandak Infantry Battalion
CS Combat Support Battalion
CSS Combat Services Support Battalion
INF Infantry Battalion
Mech INF Mechanized Infantry Battalion
Armor Armored Battalion

Source: GAO analysis of Defense documents.

Note: The dashed lines in figure 8 depict the organizational relationship between ANA Corps and battalions of the National Commando Brigade. Each ANA Corps contains a battalion of the National Commando Brigade. These battalions are controlled from the Commando Brigade Headquarters. However, each ANA Corps has the responsibility to provide housing and administration to the Commando battalions located within its Corps.

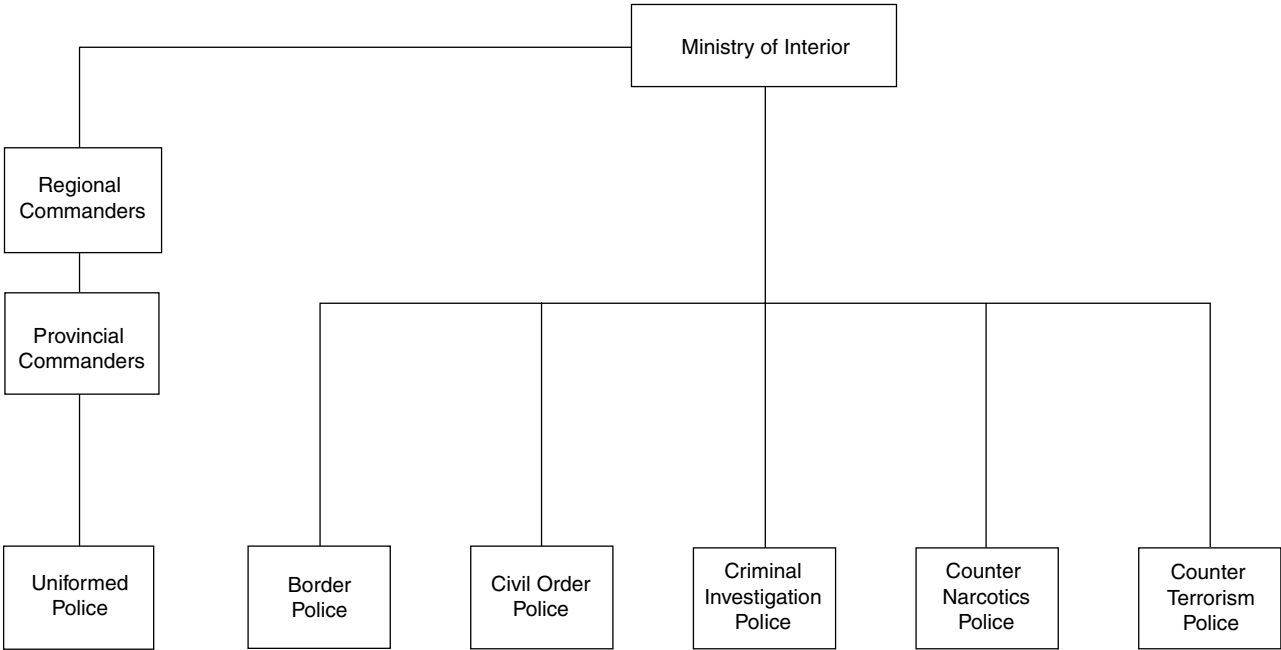
Table 11: Structure of the Ministry of Interior and Afghan National Police

Component	Description
Ministry of Interior	Department of the government of Afghanistan responsible for the protection of the country's international borders and the enforcement of the rule of law
Afghan Uniformed Police	Police assigned to police districts and provincial and regional commands; duties include patrols, crime prevention, traffic duties, and general policing
Afghan Border Police	Provide broad law enforcement capability at international borders and entry points
Afghan National Civil Order Police	Specialized police force trained and equipped to counter civil unrest and lawlessness
Criminal Investigative Division	Lead investigative agency for investigations of national interest, those with international links, and those concerned with organized and white-collar crime
Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan	Lead law enforcement agency charged with reducing narcotics production and distribution in Afghanistan
Counter Terrorism Police	Lead police and law enforcement efforts to defeat terrorism and insurgency
Standby Police/Highway Police/Auxiliary Police/Customs Police	No longer authorized

Source: GAO analysis of Defense documents.

The ANP currently consists of six authorized components under the Ministry of Interior. The uniformed police, the largest of these six components, report to the police commanders of each Afghan province. Provincial commanders report to one of five regional commanders, who report back to the Ministry of Interior. The other five authorized components of the ANP all report directly to the ministry (see fig. 9).

Figure 9: ANP Chain of Command



Source: GAO analysis of Defense and State data.

Appendix III: Comments from the Department of State



United States Department of State

*Assistant Secretary for Resource Management
and Chief Financial Officer*

Washington, D.C. 20520

MAY 30 2008

Ms. Jacquelyn Williams-Bridgers
Managing Director
International Affairs and Trade
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001

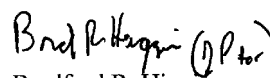
Dear Ms. Williams-Bridgers:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your draft report, "AFGHANISTAN SECURITY: Further Congressional Action May Be Needed to Ensure Completion of a Detailed Plan to Develop and Sustain Capable Afghan National Security Forces," GAO Job Code 320488.

The enclosed Department of State comments are provided for incorporation with this letter as an appendix to the final report.

If you have any questions concerning this response, please contact Nisha Singh, Desk Officer, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at (202) 647-5985.

Sincerely,


Bradford R. Higgins

cc: GAO – Hynek Kalkus
SCA – Richard Boucher
State/OIG – Mark Duda

Department of State Comments on GAO Draft Report

**AFGHANISTAN SECURITY: Further Congressional Action May Be Needed
to Ensure Completion of a Detailed Plan to Develop and Sustain Capable
Afghan National Security Forces**
(GAO-08-661, GAO Code 320488)

The Department welcomes this report and appreciates the GAO's views on how to improve our efforts to develop the Afghan National Security Forces, which we consider critical to long-term sustainable success in Afghanistan.

The Department is however deeply concerned with the GAO's recommendation that Congress consider conditioning a portion of future appropriations on completion of a detailed plan to develop the Afghan National Security Forces, including a strategy for sustaining the forces. Afghan National Security Forces are the backbone of our counterinsurgency efforts and are increasingly shouldering combat duties that would otherwise require U.S. or allied forces; a requirement that would withhold funding would be counterproductive to our fundamental interests and would send the wrong signal to the Afghan people about the American commitment. We do however recognize that there are significant challenges, and appreciate the GAO report highlighting them.

As detailed in GAO's report (GAO-08-661), the Department of Defense executes the overall Afghan National Security Forces Development program. The Department of Defense has directive authority of Department of Defense funded efforts to organize, train and equip the Afghan National Security Forces and – through its executive agent the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan – determines overall program requirements in accordance with policy direction from the U.S. Chief of Mission. The Department views the development of the Afghan National Security Forces as critical to the overall strategic mission, and our collaborations in the field and in Washington are serious and substantive. The Secretary of State is required to concur on the use of the Afghan Security Force Fund to ensure that this funding is consistent with U.S. foreign policy objectives in Afghanistan.

With regard to the Afghan National Police, in late 2007 the Departments of Defense and State agreed to establish a joint police program planning board to ensure a coherent and consistent approach. Based in Kabul and staffed by key representatives of Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan and the Embassy, the Board provides a formal mechanism for short-, medium- and long-

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term program planning and offers the opportunity to include other relevant parties (e.g., Ministry of Interior, EUPOL). In addition to USG inter-agency coordination, international police strategy can be coordinated through the International Police Coordination Board.

To further strategic planning, Embassy Kabul and Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan have significantly improved informal coordination in Kabul and in the field. Through daily and weekly consultation as well as joint field visits, Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan provides Embassy Kabul proposals for Afghan National Police development and Embassy Kabul provides expert guidance on whether and how the proposals can be implemented.

To address concerns about the chain of command in the field where military and civilian police frequently work together on program implementation, issues and concerns are filtered up to Kabul through respective Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan and Embassy channels. As a result, minor concerns are more frequently resolved at the field level, and those that filter back to Kabul are addressed jointly by program experts at Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan and the Embassy for a coordinated response. Joint operations with police mentor teams (PMT) have been significantly improved with the implementation of the Focused District Development program and clear instruction on mission mandate.

With regard to the deployment of civilian police at the district level in support of Focused District Development, at the time of this report, civilian police have been deployed with their military counterparts to all cycle I and cycle II Focused District Development districts and are actively mentoring Afghan National Police at the district level, as well as at the provincial and regional level. Security assessments are conducted for every Focused District Development site and all efforts are made to enable the deployment of civilian police in support of the program.

With regard to the Afghan National Army, the Department's assistance consists of International Military Education and Training funding to the Afghan military. This funding supports the professional military education for about sixty Afghani military officers – the State Department does not currently provide significant amounts of funding to train and equip the Afghan National Army on a large scale level. As a long-term relationship with Afghanistan is vital to the security interests of the United States, the Department endeavors to transition to a normalized security assistance relationship with Afghanistan in the near future, whereby the

3

Department would provide Foreign Military Financing in addition to International Military Education and Training to fund the training and equipping of the Afghan National Army. The Department of Defense and Department of State have always agreed that the pivotal point in this funding shift would be when we transition from building the Afghan National Army (providing large equipment and training) to sustaining the Afghan National Army. This report is helpful in identifying Congressional concerns as we move forward.

Appendix IV: Comments from the Department of Defense

Note: GAO comments supplementing those in the report text appear at the end of this appendix.



ASIAN & PACIFIC
SECURITY AFFAIRS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

2700 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2700

MAY 27 2008

Mr. Charles Johnson Jr.
Director, International Affairs and Trade
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Mr. Johnson:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO draft report (GAO-08-661), "AFGHANISTAN SECURITY: Further Congressional Action May Be Needed to Ensure Completion of a Detailed Plan to Develop and Sustain Capable Afghan National Security Forces," dated May 9, 2008 (GAO Code 320488).

My point of contact is Ms. Madeline LePage, (703) 695-2859, or email: madeline.lepage@osd.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Shinn".

James J. Shinn

Attachment: DoD response to draft GAO report



GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED MAY 9, 2008
GAO-08-661 GAO CODE 320488

"AFGHANISTAN SECURITY: FURTHER CONGRESSIONAL
ACTION MAY BE NEEDED TO ENSURE COMPLETION OF A
DETAILED PLAN
TO DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN CAPABLE AFGHAN NATIONAL
SECURITY FORCES"

The Department of Defense (DoD) disagrees with the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) draft report conclusion that progress in developing the ANSF is difficult to assess. DoD also disagrees with the GAO's recommendation that Congress consider conditioning a portion of future appropriations on completion of a detailed plan to develop the ANSF, including a strategy for sustaining the forces. We believe DoD and Department of State (DoS) have provided sufficient guidance to Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and Embassy Kabul for implementing a successful train and equip program. Withholding funding will delay the development of the ANSF, which is critical to long-term stability and security in Afghanistan. The ANSF development program is a well-reasoned, successful program that, despite numerous challenges, is building the Afghan Government's capacity to respond to the insurgency, provide stability, and implement rule of law in Afghanistan.

The Strategic Vision for the ANSF provided to GAO in January 2007 provided strategic-level guidance for the development of the ANSF, articulated goals for the size, capabilities, and requirements in the development of the ANSF in response to the insurgency. This new approach to the ANSF was approved by the Principals Committee (National Security Advisor, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and others) in November 2006 as part of a comprehensive review of U.S. Government efforts in Afghanistan that concluded we must do more to help build Afghan capacity.

Moreover, DoD shared with GAO other elements of the U.S. Government's comprehensive effort to develop the ANSF, including financial guidance on the use of appropriated Afghan Security Forces Funds; interagency guidance, such as annual Memorandums of Agreement between DoD and DoS for implementing the police program; and field-level planning, such as the recent CSTC-A Campaign Plan.

Responding to the GAO's specific criticisms:

- Identifies few long-term and no intermediate milestones: The Strategic Vision establishes both quantitative and qualitative measures to assess the development of Army and Police units and Ministerial capacity. Progress along these measures is assessed in a monthly report that tracks manning, training, equipment, and capability of independent operations. These metrics are projected and tracked, allowing senior officials to monitor progress.

See comment 1.

See comment 2.

- Also, in accordance with the 2007 NDAA, DOD submits the Training and Readiness Assessment (TRA) every 90 days to the Defense Congressional Oversight Committees. The TRA specifically assesses both the training and readiness of the Afghan Army and Afghan Police by unit, to include narrative explanations.

See comment 3.

- Milestones are not consistent with CSTC-A's milestones. CSTC-A's milestones include campaign phases and capabilities milestones, and are consistent with DoD strategic guidance. Any differences that exist are a result of developments in the security situation over the past year. DoD's Strategic Vision document was produced in November 2006 and finalized in January 2007, and CSTC-A's campaign plan was finalized in 2008. The overarching goals, objectives, and requirements are consistent.
- Lacks a sustainability strategy: In the near-term, the key to accomplishing our goal of a secure and stable Afghanistan is for the international community to sustain the ANSF until Government of Afghanistan revenues increase. DoD, where appropriate, has supported efforts by the Government of Afghanistan to increase revenues (e.g., border security contributes to customs revenues), and to encourage increased international contributions (e.g., establishing an International Security Cooperation directorate in CSTC-A to facilitate donations to the ANSF).
- DoD provides timely and transparent information about the ANSF requirements to those U.S. Government agencies (e.g., Departments of Treasury and State), and international organizations (e.g., World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) with responsibility for developing the Afghan economy. The February 2008 World Bank assessment of the sustainability of the ANSF demonstrates this cooperation.

See comment 4.

- Does not include the DoS's input: The Strategic Vision shared with the GAO was a longer articulation of a plan approved by the Principals Committee for the Afghan National Security Forces, in which DoS was represented by the Secretary of State, as well as the U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Ronald Neumann.

See comment 5.

- Does not describe the DoS's role: The DoS's role in the development of the ANSF is articulated clearly in other documents, including the Afghan Security Forces Fund appropriation ("with the concurrence of SecState..."), a 2005 classified cable from Secretary of State, and an annual Memorandum of Understanding between DoD and DoS on the implementation of the training of the Afghan National Police, each of which was provided to the GAO.

See comment 6.

DoD also disagrees with the GAO's conclusion that progress in developing the ANSF cannot be assessed because of the lack of detailed plans. Progress towards quantitative and qualitative goals is consistently monitored and regularly reported to Congress through DoD monthly reports, briefings to Congressional staff, and testimony by senior Defense officials, all of which provide legislators with the information needed to assess progress and allocate resources. GAO's report notes that limited numbers of Afghan National Army (ANA) units are now capable of independent operations with

coalition support, a significant development considering the ANA started from nothing six years ago. This progress is even more impressive considering DoD only began to support ANA development of independent operations capability in 2006. In March 2008, the first ANA unit became capable of operating independently and in April 2008, President Karzai announced that the ANSF would assume responsibility for security in Kabul in summer 2008. The ANA is expected to be manned, trained, equipped, and capable of independent operations with limited coalition support by March 2011.

Although the police continue to trail the Army in capability because of smaller resources initially invested, there is demonstrated evidence of their improvement beyond the number of forces cited by the GAO. As of April 2008, 12 Afghan National Police (ANP) units are assessed capable of independent operations with coalition support. This includes six Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) battalions and six Afghan Uniformed Police district units. The ANP are expected to be manned, trained, equipped, and capable of independent operations with limited support by December 2012. Although this is two years after the Afghanistan Compact benchmark, it includes an 82,000-person force, compared to the 62,000 originally targeted in the Compact.

Technical corrections have been provided separately to the GAO including comments on the availability of transportation funds.

The following are GAO's comments on Defense's written response, dated May 27, 2008, to our draft report.

GAO Comments

1. Defense states that its document establishes quantitative and qualitative measures to assess ANSF development. While the 5-page document contains some qualitative measures to assess ANSF development, it contains only one milestone date, December 2008, when, according to the document, the ANSF will have achieved initial independent operating capability. However, this one milestone is not consistent with dates contained in monthly reports that track manning, training, equipment, and capability, which have fluctuated. While the monthly updates are useful in providing the status of ANSF capability, each monthly report is a snapshot in time without consistent baselines that would facilitate an assessment of progress over time. For example, even though the United States began funding and training the ANA in 2002, the February 2007 report that was provided to GAO as an attachment to the 5-page document uses three different baselines for assessing the ANSF—July 2005 for the number of trained and equipped Afghan army and police, June 2006 for the status of the ANA battalion Training and Readiness Assessments, and the first quarter of 2007 for the status of ANA and ANP embedded training teams and mentors. However, the report does not refer back to 2002 in measuring progress. Similarly, the Training and Readiness Assessments that are provided on a quarterly basis to congressional oversight committees are also snapshots in time.

2. Defense maintains that the CSTC-A milestones are consistent with those in the 5-page Defense document. We disagree. The three phases and associated time frames of ANSF development are articulated differently in the 5-page document and the CSTC-A Campaign Plan. For example, Phase III in CSTC-A's Campaign Plan—Transition to Strategic Partnership—is not identified as a phase in the 5-page document.

Defense also contends that differences between the two documents are due to developments in the security environment. While this may be true, absent a detailed plan with specific time frames, it is difficult to assess the extent to which deteriorating security delayed ANSF development.

3. Defense notes that until government revenues increase in Afghanistan, the international community will need to sustain the ANSF and that such international support is required for the “near-term.” Moreover,

Defense states that, where appropriate, it supports efforts to increase government revenues in Afghanistan. However, in the absence of further detail regarding the expected timeline for increasing government revenues—or the definition of “near-term”—it remains unclear how long the United States will need to support the ANSF. As we note in our report, the United States has been a major contributor to this mission—investing about \$16.5 billion to develop the ANSF. Furthermore, current costs to sustain the force are estimated to be at over \$2 billion annually. Given that the Afghan government is currently unable to support the recurring costs of its security forces and that U.S. officials estimate this mission could exceed a decade, additional clarity on the estimated length of time and amount of money needed to complete this mission, and the potential for Afghan financial contributions, could assist in conducting oversight of the program.

4. Defense states that the 5-page document received by GAO was a longer articulation of a plan approved by State. However, although Defense and State are partners in training the ANP, the fact remains State did not participate in the development of the 5-page document Defense provided to GAO, nor has State developed a plan of its own. Defense’s 5-page document does share basic end-strength and capability information with two slides on ANSF development approved by the Principals Committee for ANSF Development. However, these slides do not themselves constitute a coordinated plan and do not contain elements, such as intermediate milestones, identified by GAO in our 2005 recommendation and agreed to by Defense and State as needed.
5. Defense contends that the role of State in ANSF development is articulated in documents other than the 5-page document provided to GAO. However, while State’s role may be discussed elsewhere, the 5-page document provided to us by Defense does not describe the role of State or other key stakeholders. If, as stated, Defense intends this document to provide strategic-level guidance for the development of the ANSF, including in it an articulation of the roles and responsibilities of partners and key stakeholders could assist in implementing and coordinating the program’s efforts. For instance, we note in our report that the dual chain of command between State and Defense has complicated the efforts of civilian mentors assisting with the program.
6. We maintain that, without a detailed plan, assessing progress in developing the ANSF is difficult. While Defense produces various documents that report in detail on the current status of the ANSF, these documents do not contain consistent baseline data, intermediate

milestones, or consistent end dates necessary to determine if the program is on track to achieve its desired results within a set time frame. For example, after 6 years and a U.S. investment of about \$16.5 billion in the program, Defense status reports show that, as of April 2008, less than 2 percent (2 of 105) ANA units and no ANP units (0 of 433) are rated as fully capable and the estimated completion date of these forces is March 2011 and December 2012, respectively. Defense asserts this is impressive, particularly for the ANA. However, without interim milestones against which to assess the ANSF, it is difficult to know if this status constitutes progress or will allow Defense to meet its currently projected completion dates. Moreover, the completion dates cited by Defense do not constitute firm goals and have shifted numerous times during the course of our review. For instance, in monthly Defense reports dated June 2007, November 2007, and May 2008, completion dates for the ANA fluctuated from December 2008 to September 2010 to March 2011. Likewise, over the same period, completion dates for the ANP fluctuated from December 2008 to March 2009 to December 2012, with a 3-month period when the completion date was reported as “to be determined.” Moreover, as we note in our report, Defense officials stated that completion dates contained in its monthly status reports did not account for shortfalls in the required number of mentors and trainers and, therefore, could be subject to further change.

Defense also states that it only began to support independent operations capability for the ANA in 2006. While it is true that planned capability for the ANA was upgraded in 2006, absent a detailed plan, it is unclear the extent to which this planned capability upgrade should be expected to affect the timeline for the development of individual ANA units. Had Defense implemented GAO’s 2005 recommendation to produce such a plan, it might be able to provide more clarity on the relationship between planned capability upgrades and program timelines. Moreover, even though planned ANA capability was upgraded in 2006, prior to that time, the U.S. invested nearly \$3 billion to develop the ANA and reported approximately 20,000 troops trained as of May 2005. Absent a plan with performance measures, such as planned capability, linked to intermediate milestones and end dates, it is difficult to assess the results achieved by this financial investment.

Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Charles Michael Johnson, Jr., Director, International Affairs and Trade,
(202) 512-7331 or johnsoncm@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

Key contributors to this report include Hynek Kalkus, Assistant Director; Lynn Cothorn; Aniruddha Dasgupta; Mark Dowling; Cindy Gilbert; Elizabeth Guran; Al Huntington; and Elizabeth Repko.

Related GAO Products

Combating Terrorism: U.S. Lacks Comprehensive Plan to Destroy Terrorist Threat and Close Safe Haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas. [GAO-08-622](#). Washington, D.C.: April 17, 2008.

Combating Terrorism: State Department's Antiterrorism Program Needs Improved Guidance and More Systematic Assessments of Outcomes. [GAO-08-336](#). Washington, D.C.: February 29, 2008.

Operation Iraqi Freedom: DOD Assessment of Iraqi Security Forces' Units as Independent Not Clear Because ISF Support Capabilities Are Not Fully Developed. [GAO-08-143R](#). Washington, D.C.: Nov. 30, 2007.

Securing, Stabilizing, and Rebuilding Iraq: Iraqi Government Has Not Met Most Legislative, Security, and Economic Benchmarks. [GAO-07-1195](#). Washington, D.C.: September 4, 2007.

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