

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration in Afghanistan

12/2/04

Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan covers several areas including creating the army, police and judiciary. However it is the area of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), which has seen the Japanese Government take the position of lead donor that has been the focus of our research. The issues that it raises and the fact that the Japanese Government is so heavily involved mean that the Japanese NGO community needs to understand what their own government is doing if they are going to be able to voice their concerns.

History of disarmament

Disarmament in its present form is only part of a series of spontaneous disarmament that have occurred since the end of the Mujahadeen wars in the early and mid 90's. For example in Jalalabad, when the Taliban arrived they made households hand over all but one weapon. Households were allowed to keep one weapon for 'personal security'.¹ Alternatively, since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, there were examples of some disarmament in northern areas, around Mazar-I Sharif, under the inter-party Security Commission. It managed to arrange localized disarmament during 2002, and arranged for light arms to be stored in depots.² Furthermore the Commission, strengthened by the oversight presence of the British led PRT, collected 400 heavy weapons from Junbesh and Jamiat as of late 2003.³

DDR is part of the wider Security Sector Reform, which includes not only DDR but also the creation of the army, police and judiciary. Different countries have taken the lead donor role in each area and Japan is the lead donor for DDR. Started with the creation of the ANBP under the UNDP in July 2003. The pilot phase was supposed to be in 6 centres and started in Kunduz in October 2003, each center had a target of 1,000 troops.

The 1st phase of DDR is the pilot scheme. Main Phase DDR is aiming to disarm 100,000 combatants. It should be stressed that disarming these 100,000 people is very specific. They come from Afghan Militia Forces (AMF), which nominally support the central government. This includes the forces of people like Atta, Dostum and Ismail Khan, Hazrat Ali, Din Mohammed et al, but not other significant groups such as Hekmatyar, the Taliban or smaller renegade commanders like Zadran (who shelled Gardez). In addition it does not deal with disarming the wider population.

Funding

Funding currently comes mainly from Japan (\$35.5m given so far). The programme is expected to cost \$167m over three years, of which the first year will finish in March 2004, when the new budget year arrives. Currently \$42m has been pledged, which will fund the programme until mid 2004, but there is still a \$125m gap in funding, which must be met if the programme is to be completed. There is some indication that the US Government may be interested in giving funding, but only after the end of the pilot phase.⁴

Please see the Appendix for the structural workings of DDR.

1 Source from Afghan JVC staff worker in Jalalabad January 2004

2 Disarmament and Reintegration in Afghanistan, International Crisis Group 30 Sept 2003

3 Relief Web: <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/s/8A4EB6DF1D317D29C1256D9000465E39>

4 From <http://www.af/resources/mof/nationalbudget/pss/3.7.pdf> see note on Page 3

Pilot Phases

Please see the Appendix for information about the Pilot Phase.

Lessons learned from the Pilot Phase

There are several issues that ANBP and other actors have identified which need to be improved in the DDR process.

1. There will be a greater emphasis on disarming child soldiers, which UNICEF estimates number 5,000. UNICEF is planning to disarm child soldiers this year however while this disarmament is happening under the auspices of UNAMA, it is not clear what role if any ANBP will have at the moment is looking in to their role in child disarmament.⁵ It has also been noted that some disarmament of child soldiers (especially in Kunduz) has already taken place. It should be noted that the process started by UNICEF does not intend to focus on the South and South east of the country, where many of the security problems of the past few months have been concentrated.⁶
2. It has been recognized that the public and participants in DDR were not fully aware of its role, function or implications in some cases. In response ANBP is forming a new public awareness strategy that will be first tried out in Herat in the next month in order to smooth the running of the ANBP.⁷

Heavy Weapons

There have been three encouraging signs with regard to heavy weapons disarmament,

1. The handing over of 400 weapons by Junbesh and Jamiat in late 2003
2. The removal of Heavy Weapons from Kabul, as stipulated by the Bonn Agreement in early 2004
3. The delivery, by General Fahim of some of his heavy weapons from the Panjshir Valley in late 2003

However there are still doubts over the heavy weapons programme and it is unclear how that will proceed. There still remains significant issues about how heavy weapons can be transferred to the central authority, especially regarding some of the more powerful players such as Ismail Khan and indeed, Gen. Fahim himself.

The next 6 months

DDR is behind schedule, and while the donors may like to claim that Main Phase DDR will be finished by summer 2004,⁸ others are a little more realistic about what can be achieved in the next 5 months. ANBP will finish opening its regional offices in Kandahar, Herat and Jalalabad and engage in a more thorough public awareness campaign. The original plan to have 6 pilot phases has been scrapped to save time, but even so ANBP estimate that it

5 Interview with Imai Chihito Project Formulation advisor with JICA seconded to ANBP, Kabul January 2004

6 An initial group of 2,000 former underage soldiers associated with Afghanistan's fighting forces will benefit from a reintegration and rehabilitation programme this week, supported by UNICEF. The programme -- which follows a successful pilot project in 2003 -- begins on February 10 in the north-eastern province of Badakhshan and will be followed by similar exercises in Kunduz, Taloqan, Baghlan and the Central Highlands region throughout February. A total of 5,000 underage soldiers will receive assistance from the programme by the end of 2004. The programme has been established in consultation with the Afghan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP), which is leading on the disarmament of former combatants across Afghanistan.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/VOCHARUAllLatestEmergencyReports/4E6C73BA651B298149256E350007C878?OpenDocument>

7 Interview with Hiroko Tagaki, Reporting Officer, ANBP, Kabul January 2004

8 Interview with Nobutaka Miyahara, Deputy Ambassador, Japanese Embassy Kabul, January 2004

may be able to disarm 10,000 by the summer.⁹

Unresolved Issues

There remain several areas that are of concern, even beyond the lessons learnt from the Pilot Phase;

1. One of the main assumptions of DDR was that it would target the senior commanders from the soldiers, disarming both groups. However it left the mid-level commanders out, this has led to issues at a localized level which need to be sorted out, because mid-level commanders still control a sizeable group (500-2500 troops) and can cause serious local trouble. If these groups are not involved in the process they may become totally disenfranchised with the process and try to attack it, as Bacha Zardari did last year in Gardez and Khost. Please see the chart about Afghan Military structures for more information. As such the Commanders Programme has been proposed, whereby they will probably be offered one of three choices:
 - A cash pay-off to disarm their troops
 - A scholarship/placement abroad to study
 - A position in local Government¹⁰

However the details of the proposal are not clear, and there are doubts whether mid-level commanders who may not support the Karzai Government could be enticed to give up their positions. In addition some may face criminal charges if they gave up their power and may be unwilling to give themselves over to a process which may see them imprisoned.

2. There is a recognition that there needs to be a greater effort put in to obtaining local political agreements with various warlords so that the transition of weapons and the changing political power relationships are handled smoothly.¹¹ Again the actual details for this proposal are lacking, and there needs to be greater clarification as to what the proposed outcomes are of 'political agreements'.
3. There needs to be greater clarity on the heavy weapons disarmament. While ANBP seems happy to run 2 parallel heavy weapons programmes, one through them and one solely in the hands of the MoD¹², other actors may not be happy to see unchecked disarmament that could upset very complex and delicate political relationships.¹³
4. Finally, when looking at the parameters agreed for DDR at the Tokyo Conference, the provision was made for

"Actual disarmament will be conducted by ATA authorities in a transparent and accountable manner with international observers."¹⁴

The current system does not allow for sustained and thorough international checking of the process to ensure that the Panjsheri clique who control the MoD

9 Interview with Imai Chihiro Project Formulation advisor with JICA seconded to ANBP, Kabul January 2004

10 Interview with Imai Chihiro Project Formulation advisor with JICA seconded to ANBP, Kabul January 2004

11 Interview with Nobutaka Miyahara, Deputy Ambassador Afghanistan, Kabul, January 2004

12 Interview with Paul Occiti, Public Information Officer, ANBP, Kabul January 2004

13 Interview with Nobutaka Miyahara, Deputy Ambassador Afghanistan, Kabul, January 2004

14 <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/s/86E6D2899E7AEFA549256CD8000EEBEE>

do not use DDR to strengthen their own positions.¹⁵ This is especially apparent with the role of the Regional Verification Teams, please see chart describing the structure of DDR, which have no independent oversight and are controlled by the Tajik dominated MoD.

¹⁵ Identifying options and entry points for DDR in Afghanistan, Barnett R. Rubin, Center on International Cooperation, New York University
March 2003