

Disarmament, Demobilization and *Rearmament?*

The effects of disarmament in Afghanistan



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When President Karzai awarded the first medals to disarmed and demobilized soldiers during the DDR Programme Pilot Phase there were serious doubts about the feasibility and effectiveness of the programme tasked with dismantling the Afghan Militia Forces (AMF) that were nominally under the command of the Ministry of Defense (MoD).

The DDR Programme managed by the MoD and the Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) faced severe problems from its inception. Foremost were

- the political dimensions of the MoD prior to its reform
- the intransigence of Commanders refusing to cooperate
- an entirely new program and concept in Afghanistan.

These three issues were highlighted by three notable reports on disarmament and the security sector reform by AREU and the International Crisis Group.¹

In addition to this the information available about disarmament, the AMF and the reintegration has been sparse and incomplete. Since the acceleration of the DDR Programme from September 2004 (6 weeks before the Presidential Elections) the ANBP has successfully managed to feed the numbers of disarmament to the media who have gone on to deem the programme successful.²

However before it is possible to describe the DDR Programme as successful we must first assess its effects. Has it enabled ex-combatants to partake in 'civilian' life; has it improved local security; has it undermined the underlying power structures through which Commanders control and dictate people's lives at a local level? The numbers cannot tell us these things on their own.

The numbers

Numbers are notoriously fluid in Afghanistan, and early attempts at a total number of soldiers in the AMF were around 200,000. In comparison a UN estimate from 2002 stated that there were 750,000 armed people in Afghanistan,³ of which a third were full-time.⁴ The figure of 200,000 was quickly reduced to 100,000, which was the number the MoD thought actually existed.

This 100,000 became the benchmark, however flawed, for the DDR Programme. Since then numbers have again fluctuated between 40-60,000,⁵

with a final aim of 60,000 set for the end of the DDR Programme, however there is speculation that it may be slightly more than that at the final count.⁶ This final shift has been due to political pressure and the realization that senior Commanders had inflated their pay rolls so they could take the pay of non-existent soldiers.⁷

"the numbers indicate nothing about the reality of disarmament"

However the numbers indicate nothing about the reality of disarmament, its effects and outcomes across Afghanistan. It is even more difficult to assess what is happening when policy makers are themselves unable to access detailed information about the effects of the programme that is so crucial to the current political process.⁸

Seen from Kabul the programme is more of a diplomatic attempt to carve out space for the deployment of the Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP) and central government rather than a concerted attempt to deal with the reality and nuances that former combatants find themselves in. Seen from the Provinces, the statements of excellence and success in the programme are belied by the

worsening economic situation of some former soldiers, local power being concentrated in former Commanders' hands, and most damning, the rearmament of some of the units and Commanders who have been disarmed.

The beneficiaries of the DDR Programme

Soldiers, Commanders and Hangers On?

The DDR Programme has two sets of packages, one for soldiers and one for senior commanders. It is encouraging that the former soldiers are almost universally pleased to be disarmed. This is a long way from saying they are happy with the DDR Programme, but there is a genuine and consistent expression that being disarmed is 'better' than being armed. This is especially true in areas, like the North, where there was widespread forced conscription into the military structures. For the soldiers, the main positive effects of disarmament noted are firstly, spending more time with family and kin, and secondly, a more stable life. Despite these positive aspects participants often noted the negative economic and social effects of the \$700 reintegration packages.

"It would have cost an additional \$20m to provide better, more nuanced programmes"

The Senior Commanders' Programme has only targeted the 470 generals and 70plus Colonels who were in the AMF with command over a Ghund sized unit or larger.⁹ The Programme offers a stipend of \$1200 but this is not going to entice senior officers to stop some of their questionable activities. These people are actually the least in need of support. They have the money, the contacts and the authority to get positions in government or police forces, to set up businesses or live off their land holdings. Some senior Commanders have also gone to great lengths to present, real or fake, legitimacy in running businesses and

being involved in local power structures.¹⁰

Low and mid-level commanders who are not eligible for the Senior Commanders Programme are given the same packages as their soldiers. There are several thousand of these Commanders who have a higher drop out rate than the soldiers. The international communities' failure to find the money necessary to run a full and effective Commanders' Programme means that the Commanders who are now causing the greatest local problems are these low level commanders.

It would have cost an additional \$20m¹¹ to provide better, more nuanced programmes for the lower level Commanders. The failure to do so has undoubtedly had an adverse impact on local security and criminality in some areas. It is the lower level officers who are causing problems because they are not offered different packages from their soldiers. This lack of ability to deal with the most destabilizing forces in the AMF has opened the way for these Commanders to revert back to their informal power structures.

Now they are just out for survival. During many interviews, when disarmed soldiers were asked about former Commanders, the euphemistic phrase 'they are staying at home' came up repeatedly. It seems that low-level commanders are more likely to be absent from the Reintegration Phase of the DDR programme than any other group, but they still require an income and are turning to criminal activities in order to achieve this. Incidentally, the Commanders who seemed to be missing most often were those near known smuggling routes. Former combatants also noted that most of their Commanders still retained large arsenals of weaponry and were using them to retain their influence, or the influence of their patron.

These low level commanders also

keep alive the informal networks that sustain the more senior commanders, in keeping access open to smuggling routes, retaining party or ethnic loyalties or spheres of influence and thereby strengthening regional power holders as well.

There are also serious concerns that large numbers of participants should not have participated in the programme in the first place. A UNAMA report believed that 80% of participants in the Phases 1 and 2 of the DDR Programme in the central region did not meet the minimum requirement of 8 months service in a military unit.¹² The fact that so many of the units in the central region resemble self-defense groups rather than organized military units leads credence to the view that a large number of people in these units were 'selected' by their local leaders to participate.

Reintegration

Economic and Social Effects

Though the explicit aim of the DDR Programme is not long-term development work, the long-term sustainability of the packages is important in measuring the effectiveness of the programme. Positive outcomes would indicate that former soldiers and their communities have seen either a stagnation in incomes or a marginal increase, that they do not feel slighted or excluded because of the programme, and most importantly, that they are not susceptible to rearmament, either as a coping mechanism or under duress.

There are strong indications that the above measurements of sustainability and effectiveness have not been met, and that the programme has exacerbated the problems faced by some former soldiers and their communities.

The economic effects

Streaming and impoverishment -
Migration after training

It is apparent that literate soldiers who probably own a little land are benefiting more than illiterate soldiers with no land from the programme. Participants complained that they were being 'forced' to accept certain programmes, i.e. agricultural or husbandry schemes based on the fact that they were illiterate. Therefore soldiers are streamed in to a certain option that pre-determines their future economic status.

The agricultural packages that give the participants a fixed amount of grain does not actually improve their ability to make a living. Many of them, especially in the central region, had access to one to three jeribs of land that were already being used for crops. The addition of a new crop, though welcome, does not actually mean they can earn more money from their land; it merely diversifies their income. It would only be by buying additional land that income would be increased.

In some areas where there were a large number of AMF soldiers, there are groups of former combatants who have been given goats. For example, in Khoja Do-Koh, Jowzjan,

"There are nearly 2,500 former combatants in the north who have been waiting for six months"

exactly 50% of the disarmed soldiers have chosen the livestock package. The package in that area is goats, with 6 goats in each package. There are 36 participants with these packages, which means 216 goats will shortly be arriving. In a good year 6 goats may reach a good price. However, given a large increase in goats in a localized area that will reduce prices; issues with getting produce to markets; and the fact that animals in Afghanistan are often kept in poor conditions, means that a potentially good income is being jeopardized.

In contrast to the agricultural and livestock packages, which are precarious and can put added stress on households, the packages offered to literate soldiers offer quite different opportunities. There are options for vocational training, carpentry, metal work, small business start-up and teacher training. These options represent a set of skills and long term investment opportunities that are more stable and, in some instances, actually generate a higher income than land based vocations.

There are, however, negative aspects to these choices as well. There are doubts among both soldiers and local shura members that the training is not sufficient and former combatants do not know enough to make money independently. Secondly there are concerns that the programme is producing large clusters of carpenters (or whichever skill) who are often forced to migrate to find work. One shura member noted that in his village 90% of the people trained in tailoring and carpentry had to leave the area because there was no work for them.¹³ This negates one of the positive aspects of the programme: that of allowing former soldiers to spend more time with their families.

The social effects

Environment and Women & Disarmament

Furthermore there has been a complete lack of consideration or monitoring of the environmental and social effects of the programme. Again using Khoja Do-Koh as an example; the village is the district center and is the central point for 4 other villages all within 1-2km of Khoja Do-Koh itself. The village lies on the edge of the Dashte-Layli desert and the water source (a river) only supplies sufficient water to 2 of the outlying villages. The shura members are concerned that their land will not be able to support the

216 sheep that are about to be sent there because there is already too little water for their current level of human and animal usage.¹⁴

In the north where disarmament took place in two phases (one small phase at the beginning of 2004, and a large phase of around 5,000 soldiers just prior to the Presidential Elections), there is severe dissatisfaction among a large number of disarmed soldiers because they have been waiting for six months for their reintegration packages.¹⁵ This overly long period of waiting is critical because when the soldiers are disarmed they are given a food package that lasts for *two months*.¹⁶ The food package is supposed to mitigate the effects of lost earnings from their unit after disarmament prior to reintegration.

There are nearly 2,500 former combatants in the north who have been waiting for six months, and both they and their communities are extremely angry over

“...there has been no attempt to understand the impact of disarmament on women”

the delay, which has put them in a financially precarious situation and caused unnecessary social stresses on the communities. The responsibility for the delay lies largely with the donors and ANBP who did not sign contracts for the Reintegration packages until *two months* after most of the soldiers had been disarmed in late 2004. In fact one of the implementing partners started work two months before their contract was signed in an effort to mitigate the problems, and yet they are still facing a backlog of 2,268 former combatants.¹⁷

Finally there has been no attempt to understand the impact of disarmament on women. This lack of sensitivity masks at least two negative affects on households across Afghanistan. Firstly as former combatants are often left waiting at home for several months for their

packages to start, stress on the relations within the households and the wider support networks have increased.

Secondly women and children often had to care for fields and livestock while their husbands were attached to their unit. Now the units have been disbanded men are not necessarily taking on these tasks again and women and children continue to do much of the work. The actual benefits of the programme, animals or seeds, often means an increase in workload for women without a corresponding increase for the men who are supposed to be the beneficiaries.¹⁸

Ethnicity

One of the oft-stated fears about disarmament has been the 'ethnic' dimension. Tensions can arise after disarmament when a power vacuum appears but actual accounts of this have been sparse. In the Saighan and Shibar districts of Bamyan, and Kahmard district of Baghlan, Brigade 856 is in the process of being disarmed. The brigade is made up of Tajiks and Tatars. The local Hazara population in Bamyan blames the unit for allowing the Taliban to enter Bamyan in the 1990's (and by association, also blames it for the ensuing massacres of Hazaras).¹⁹

"The single biggest failure ... would be the group's subsequent rearmament or retention of significant weapons and organization that would pose a threat to local security."

Areas where there are Tajik and Tatar villages have seen very little reconstruction, according to the members of the unit, because the Hazara dominated provincial Government is discriminating against them, especially in the Shibar district around Ghandak.²⁰ To further

complicate matters the unit is largely responsible for the local security and insecurity in these districts. On the one hand they suppress the large number of 'illegal' armed groups in

these districts (34 groups totaling approximately 2,510 organized armed people)²¹ on the other hand they also may be connected with smuggling and security incidents in the local area.²²

The looming disarmament of the unit has led to great concerns amongst the unit's soldiers about possible retribution by the Hazara community, the lack of reconstruction in their areas and the resurgence of smaller armed groups who may increase local instability.²³ Additionally the DDR Programme has decided, because of funding restrictions, only to allow 400 soldiers to enter the DDR Programme with full benefits. An International Observer's Group (IOG) report indicates that people related to General Rahmatullah and his deputy may have been selected to enter the programme. The remaining 800 soldiers are said to be very upset that they were excluded from the programme's benefits. They will now be disarmed in the following Disarmament of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG) Programme, which will not give them individual benefits.²⁴

The DDR Programme is inadequate to respond to the challenges of the problems facing this area, and because of disarmament it is likely that this area, which is also a key smuggling route north, will remain an area of tension.

Rearmament

Force-retention, stockpiling, trafficking

The single biggest failure of any programme claiming to have disarmed a group would be the group's subsequent rearmament or retention of significant weapons and organization that would pose a threat to local security.

The essence of rearmament includes stockpiling of weapons, rearming new or former soldiers, re-selling

"Rates of rearmament range between 2-20%..."

weapons and trafficking in them. The wider disarmament issue is not about weapons collection but about the use and abuse of weapons. However claims that even some small commanders have stockpiled thousands of weapons, that other commanders are actively involved in the weapons trade and that some are still sustaining armed forces call in to question the effectiveness of the programme.

Rates of rearmament range between 2-20% depending on the source of information and the area discussed.²⁵ It is clear however that there is widespread rearmament of the type described above across the country and that the DDR Programme has in no way addressed the informal structures that sustained the façade of the cohesive AMF structure.

Disarmed officers and soldiers have been involved in a series of incidents this year alone;

1. In Sangcharak, Sar-i Pul the former commander of Division 26, Haji Rahim, has continued to collect the illegal tax 'ashour' from local villages. In January 2005 when about 100 people demonstrated against him at the district governors' office Haji Rahim rearmed 50-100 of his former soldiers to clear the demonstration. Following the demonstration local people wanted to take their complaints further and in late February sent a delegation to the provincial capital of Sar-i Pul. When the delegation returned Rahim's supporters beat all the delegation members.²⁶
2. In the Sholgara valley Haji Bashir (a disarmed officer) and 8 former soldiers attacked the Kuchis when they returned for pasture in April 2005. This was the second incident of this type

in the area within 6 weeks.²⁷

3. In Sharistan, Dai Kundi Commander Dawary is known to be paying \$50 monthly stipends to soldiers to remain loyal to him stunting any possibility of government control in the area.²⁸
4. One Commander in the central region has over 12,000 light weapons and is trafficking in them in order to replace the income that he has lost through disarmament.²⁹
5. The recent explosion of a weapons store held by Commander Jalal in Bajgah, Baghlan categorically shows that Commanders have stockpiled large amounts of weaponry.³⁰

These are not isolated incidents, but show recurring themes that came out across the country of stockpiling, rearmament and repression led by former AMF Commanders whom the DDR Programme has failed to deal with.

There are also known AMF units that have either not complied or have had a questionable disarmament process which indicates that they still retain some form of organization. Problems associated with Div 8 just north of Kabul, and the entire Division 1 based in and around the Panjshir, are the most notable elements causing concern in this group.

Division 8 has had a checkered and confusing disarmament process, with several hundred ex-soldiers turning up in the ANP and Highway Police.³¹ Additionally some were involved in a non-ANBP reintegration programme after the Commander himself collected some of his soldiers' weapons. There has been some ANBP disarmament and some soldiers still remain active.³² Even among former soldiers of the unit there is confusion, including some

who remain convinced that the unit is still functioning.

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This is given credence by the continuing presence of the Division 8's former Commander, Ammanullah Guzar, in a Highway Police post north of Kabul in the area of operations of Division 8.³³ What is of particular concern is that the relations between the commanders and the local shuras are very close. In fact one

shura member stated that it was not possible to define where the commanders stopped and the shuras began, they are essentially the same entity.³⁴ Thereby the DDR Programme has not enabled independent Afghan institutions to step in to fill the security gap. Instead the local Commander has consolidated his position, and his influence over the local communities.

Division 1, based in and around the Panjshir valley, officially consists of 4,696 soldiers and officers. Due to Commander Gada's close connections with the MoD they have essentially forestalled any attempt at disarmament. However recent pressure has elicited permission from the unit to commence disarmament, which is now scheduled for June. However there are serious doubts among ANBP officials that the disarmament of the unit will be comprehensive.³⁵

Meanwhile the ANBP has claimed that the Panjshir is virtually clear of heavy weapons.³⁶ Despite this NGOs are being advised to avoid certain areas by local commanders. One NGO did manage to gain access to the area recently and was presented with a valley full of weaponry, both light and heavy.³⁷

The size of Division 1 means that it is

the largest remaining fully functional armed unit, apparently with access to both heavy and light weaponry. There are also serious concerns that in the run up to the elections Division 1, or its remnants, will become a destabilizing force in the region as they seek to protect their assets and interests which could have knock on effects in Baghlan, Kapisa, Parwan and Kabul, in addition to the Panjshir.³⁸

The Disbandment of Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG)

The issue of illegally armed groups has slowly entered the policy arena as it became clear that the DDR Programme had not been a panacea and had not disarmed Afghanistan or any of its regions.³⁹ Currently more than 80,000 people are believed to be in armed groups, though key policy makers, including the MoD claim that the figure is far too low.⁴⁰ Present planning for the DIAG centers on the database which contains information on these illegally armed groups and a hope that robust action by the MoD, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the National Security Directorate (NSD) would be able to convince most people to disarm voluntarily. This is coupled with intended cooperation with reconstruction ministries such as the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). Underlying the policy is the possible use of force by the MoD, MoI and NSD to disarm these groups that range in size from a handful of people to several hundred.

However DIAG has not learnt the lessons of the DDR Programme. Beyond the programming failures outlined above there were two critical policy failures in the DDR Programme; firstly the insistence that support to former combatants could only be given to individuals. This failed to assist the wider community with absorbing them or with replacing the previous AMF security authority with a new

Government led regime. Secondly, the failure to expand the programme to include the lower level commanders has led to an entrenchment of their power and their links with senior political and national figures in Afghanistan.

"...there were two critical policy failures in the DDR Programme"

The pendulum is now swinging in the other direction with the DIAG only offering incentives to the communities, with nothing being supplied to 'illegal' armed groups. This is largely because of Japanese insistence that it would be politically untenable for them to be seen to be assisting criminals. This is despite the fact that there is widespread evidence of forced recruitment of men in to armed groups (both legal and illegal) and that individuals in the illegal groups may not be there by choice. Meanwhile instead of an increased effort to weaken the key interlocutors in criminal networks and armed groups (i.e. the low level commanders) there is a complete absence of this in current policy planning.

Furthermore the definition and identification of the 'illegal' groups sets potentially dangerous precedents. The legalization of groups of soldiers who are fighting for the coalition is of grave concern. The Coalition's continued dependence on soldiers who they hire from Commanders and local strongmen with connections to criminal activities is plainly undermining the efforts of the government to expand its writ. One of the clearest examples of the use of Hazrat Ali's soldiers on operations, including as guards for the Jalalabad PRT, is propping up the power of a man known to be involved in illegal activities.⁴¹

Private military companies such as USPI who are subcontracted by Louis Berger to hire guards are also supporting illegal groups. When a soldier is hired from a commander,

the commander takes a cut of his pay (or inflates the number of guards he is providing).⁴² Louis Berger and others are directly supporting illegal militias and commanders related to criminal activities. Conservative estimates of the number of soldiers employed by Louis Berger in its sub-contracted projects in Afghanistan are around 25,000.⁴³ Or the same sizes as the ANA is now, or 50% of the number of soldiers that have been disarmed through the ANBP.

Both of these groups would be legalized under the DIAG framework, meaning they would not be included in disarmament. However their commanders are not under government control and many have known links to criminal activities. It is only through the cessation by the Coalition of sub-contracting its efforts to soldiers recruited from local commanders and legislating for formalized security guard employment would the Afghan Government stand a real chance of expanding its control.

Finally, the collection of data on the 'illegal' groups, by their very nature, is fraught with difficulties and current planning for illegal disarmament is based on highly fragile figures. Using just the central region as an example, currently there are 202 illegal groups identified, but the ranking, prioritization and threat analysis of these groups is incredibly difficult and the database does not contain enough information to be able to assess realistically the effects of any disarmament programme in this region.

The entire concept of disarmament in Afghanistan must be re-thought if the DIAG is not to have disastrous consequences for local security in the next 1-2 years. A focus on local security must be prioritized with secure communities being the incentive and not 'illegal' groups. By labeling groups as illegal you are increasing the possibility of resistance and as DIAG calls for the

use of force, if many groups resist, this could cause serious challenges to the fledgling ANP and ANA.

By sequencing security developments, reconstruction and disarmament it would be possible to challenge the issue of armed groups from an angle that will probably not induce massive resistance to disarmament which the DIAG could cause.

Conclusion

The DDR Programme has allowed space for the deployment of the ANA and it has also allowed for the de-financing of units – hence assisting the Afghan Government to rationalize its budget. In addition the handing over of checkpoints to the ANP and ANA has helped increase the presence of Government forces. In addition to which the Heavy Weapons Cantonment and Ammunition Survey, whilst not perfect are positive steps to reducing the amount of weaponry circulating in Afghanistan.⁴⁴

"Their law is the law"

However the programme was never nuanced enough to deal with the complex regional variations across Afghanistan.⁴⁵ Some people have participated in the programme that should not have, while elements of other destabilizing units remain. The Reintegration options available to the former combatants have been inadequate and have actually impoverished some participants and their families. Delays in the deployment of the packages has led to widespread anger about the programme. Furthermore, the negative environmental and social affects of the packages do not seem to have been accounted for, even though this may push some marginal communities even harder.

Most disturbingly, some low-level commanders have rearmed or stockpiled weapons and the attempts by the ANBP in the Commanders Programme have been hobbled by

the lack of commitment by donors to tackle to main culprits of criminal activities, the low-level commanders. This oversight has allowed for a re-entrenchment of the commanders positions, strengthening their hands, and their criminal activities.

"Their law is the law"⁴⁶

In the run up to the Presidential Election in 2004, Human Rights Watch published a report entitled 'Rule of the Gun'. In the words of a UNAMA staff member quoted in the report, 'The Rule of the Gun continues, and warlords and lower and mid-level commanders continue to commit human rights violations with impunity'.⁴⁷ Nearly one year after the UN staff noted this, the problems have not gone away and in some areas they have got worse. The Eastern Region, which this quote refers to, is indicative of issues which are being faced by communities right across Afghanistan from Bamyan, Panjao, Sharistan, Kalakan, Kabul, Shiberghan, Mazar-e Sharif, Taloqan, Sar-e Pul, Herat, Kandahar, Gardez and so on. The failure of the international community to try and deal with the underlying structures and those who are the key protagonists (i.e. the low-level commanders) has partly contributed to the situation that Afghanistan faces today.

Though the AMF is far from perfect, and its members are involved in criminal activities, by only dealing with the problem half-heartedly a unique opportunity has been missed. Those most responsible for the criminal activities have been allowed to re-entrench themselves in Afghan society and cement their positions with arms and influence which the programme has failed to seriously tackle.

Policy actors are fully aware of the shortcomings of the programme but in Kabul there is an understanding that the programme must be 'sold' as a success.⁴⁸ The deeply ingrained

policy mistakes at the beginning of the process predetermined that the programme would not be able to have the effect the Afghan people wanted, which was total disarmament. Instead Afghanistan received a diplomatic fait accompli and was short changed.

Policy recommendations

For the remainder of the reintegration phase of the DDR Programme;

1. From all actors involved there needs to be a much greater effort to deliver the packages to the disarmed soldiers more quickly.
2. Donors must push for monitoring of the long-term effects with a view to supporting the participants once the programme finishes because many of the Reintegration packages are weak and there is growing anger among the participants and their communities. This is predisposing people to anti-government and criminal activities.

For the security sector;

1. The Afghan Government must initiate a government backed programme stipulating that all security guards must come from a known source, such as a government sponsored Department of Security Guards. This would allow companies to ensure they are only paying for the guards they need, permit government taxation on the sector and ensure that commander's linked to criminal activities are not also benefiting from legitimate commercial and reconstruction activities.
2. The Coalition must stop its policy of hiring soldiers from local commanders and warlords.

For the DIAG;

1. Disarmament of illegally armed groups should focus on securing communities before commencing disarmament; otherwise widespread resistance could be expected.
2. The EU sponsored concept of 'Secure Communities' would be a more effective and less disruptive way of tackling the problem of illegally armed groups and should be developed further.
3. The database of illegal groups should not be used as the key-planning tool for tackling the problem of illegally armed groups. It is not detailed enough. A subtler national mapping of local security and politics is required.

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¹ Minimal Investments, Minimal Results: The Failure of Security Policy in Afghanistan AREU June 2004; Disarmament and Reintegration in Afghanistan, ICG Asia Report N°65 30 September 2003; Afghanistan: Getting Disarmament Back on Track, ICG Asia Briefing N°35 23 February 2005

² As an example the BBC report on 24th March mirrored very closely the words of the two previous UN Press Conferences in Kabul, showing little understanding of the complexities that actually face the programme http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4377821.stm UN Briefings March 20th and 24th <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusRel.asp?infocusID=16&Body=Afghanistan&Body1=>

³ The paper goes on to state that around 500,000 households may be linked to organized armed groups. Respectable Warlords? The politics of state-building in post-Taliban Afghanistan, Antonio Giustozzi Development Research Centre LSE September 2003

⁴ It is worth noting that it is hard to define how much time soldiers were spending with their AMF units. In the North, where there was a higher degree of organization there was a more regular schedule, in the Central region where organization is, looser soldiers tended to do one month on one month off. Furthermore in the South-East, in Loya Paktia, traditional forms of armed organization, the *arbakee*, are on a much more ad hoc basis where soldiers are only called up for specific actions.

⁵ Prior to the Berlin Conference in March 2004 there was significant political wrangling over the number of soldiers that could be disarmed before the Presidential Elections. It was agreed that 40,000 soldiers was feasible, but only if their units was disarmed completely. Following the conference some units that had been prioritized were taken out of the list because of their political sensitivity. The 40,000 that had been prioritized were those considered to be most closely linked to criminal activities and human-rights abuses, their subsequent evasion of disarmament, either partially or totally stopped any significant advancement in the programme until just prior to the presidential elections, and the effects are still being felt now. Interviews with Kenji Isezaki during 2004.

⁶ Interview with ANBP official, Kabul April 2005

⁷ The most recent unit whose Commanders are accused of inflating numbers is Division 41, based in Chagchara where the number of disarmed soldiers is significantly lower than expected. IOG Weekly Report May 1st-7th 2005

⁸ During a series of interviews and meetings in January 2005 with senior disarmament policy makers I was frequently told that basic information did not exist about the status and effectiveness of the programme and there were serious doubts as to the usefulness of the ANBP's own Monitoring and Evaluation because of its quantitative focus.

⁹ The command structure of Afghan military groups generally (though not always) has the

following chain of command (top-bottom); Qol-e Urdu, Firqa, Liwa, Ghund, Kandak, Tolai, Blook and Dalgai. Ghund units generally have between 900-1200 soldiers. For comparison the British Army apparently has around 12 Generals, from Interview with ANSO staff member April 2005

¹⁰ Senior local Commanders in Balkh district have helped to organize a newly registered shura which consists of 105 members (from the 105 villages in the district), of these 30 are former commanders.

¹¹ Estimate from interview with ANBP official, November 2004

¹² UNAMA report received April 2004. It should also be noted that in the central region there was a very high proportion of children attached to units and thus far there have been no provisions for them. In some instances children made up 50% of a units size.

¹³ Interview with Kalakan Shura member, April 2005

¹⁴ Interviews with Shura members from 3 of the 5 villages in the cluster around Khoja-do Koh, April 2005. The villages are all within 1-2 kilometers of Khoja-do Koh (the district center) however the water supply in the area only reaches one side of the cluster.

¹⁵ Interviewees in Khoja-do Koh, Jawzjan, demanded to know the address of the implementing partner so that they could demonstrate in front of their office

¹⁶ The food package is 127.5 Kg of rice, oil, salt and chick peas

¹⁷ Interviews with former combatants, Shura members and IOM staff in the northern region April 2004

¹⁸ Interview with Implementing Partner, in the north, April 2005

¹⁹ Interview with UNAMA staff, Central Region, April 2005

²⁰ Interview with Brigade 856 Officers, April 2005

²¹ Data taken from the Illegally Armed Groups database.

²² Interview with UNAMA staff, Central Region, April 2005

²³ Interview with Gen Rahmatullah, Commander of Brigade 856, April 2005

²⁴ IOG Weekly Report 8th-14th May 2005 and personal communication with ANBP staff, May 2005

²⁵ Interview with DDR policy maker January 2005 and NGO staff April 2005

²⁶ Interview with UNDSS official, northern region, April 2005

²⁷ Interview with UNDSS official, northern region, April 2005

²⁸ Interview with UNAMA staff, Central Region, April 2005

²⁹ Interview with UNAMA staff, Central Region, April 2005

³⁰ BBC News http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4506005.stm

³¹ Afghanistan: Getting Disarmament Back on Track, ICG Asia Briefing N°35 23 February 2005

³² There are indications that the US-led Coalition is now involved in disarmament of

the remaining members of the unit, though this has not been made public. Interview with UNAMA Official, Kabul, April 2005

³³ Noted by both former soldiers and UNAMA staff, November 2004, and April 2005

³⁴ Interview with Shura member, north of Kabul, April 2005

³⁵ Personal Communication with ANBP staff, May 2005

³⁶ From UN Press Briefing 3rd March 2005 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocusnews.asp?NewsID=884&sID=1>

³⁷ Personal Communication with NGO staff April 2005

³⁸ Interview with UNAMA official, Kabul, April 2005

³⁹ Some ANBP and Japanese Embassy officials have claimed at various points that regions are 'disarmed', including the East and North at the end of the Disarmament phases. It seems disingenuous to claim that any area of Afghanistan is disarmed given the huge number of people known to own weapons and those in organized armed groups. Additionally the amount of weaponry collected by the ANBP pails in to comparison with 'unofficial' disarmament activities carried out locally. The MoD estimates that it can document the collected of over 130,000 weapons.

⁴⁰ Meeting with MG Payenda, MoD, January 2005.

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch 'Rule of the Gun' September 2004 and meetings with the US Jalalabad PRT, January 2004, and NZ PRT in Bamyan, April 2005

⁴² As noted by ICG in Kandahar, Afghanistan: Getting Disarmament Back on Track, ICG Asia Briefing N°35 23 February 2005

⁴³ Interview with security expert in Kabul, April 2005

⁴⁴ Interestingly the weapons survey that is being conducted by ANBP currently, and weapons dumps that have been taken over by coalition forces contain virtually no AK-47s (or their variants) or the ammunition for them. Therefore most of the weaponry that is actually being used in criminal activities, human rights abuses and government resistance *is not being collected*. Interview with security expert in Kabul, April 2005

⁴⁵ This is view expressed repeatedly by Coalition Forces, UN officials, ANBP staff and Implementing partners

⁴⁶ Interview with disarmed soldier, northern region, April 2005

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch 'Rule of the Gun' September 2004, quote noted as being from June 2004.

⁴⁸ This is also noted in the ICG report Afghanistan: Getting Disarmament Back on Track, ICG Asia Briefing N°35 23 February 2005