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NATO's Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the security policy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and investigate NATO's Security Sector Reform (SSR) approach in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2014. The primary research question in this study asked the following: In terms of NATO's SSR approach in Afghanistan, what worked, what did not work, and why did certain aspects of SSR fail? The analysis sheds light on the policy-relevant, logistic and doctrinal intricacies associated with NATO's now almost twenty-year record of involvement in Afghanistan, as well as liberal institutionalism's policy relevance. This research benefits the security policy community by asking whether NATO's SSR agenda in Afghanistan was progressive, and whether its weaknesses call for the reform of its approach and execution – or its abandonment. The research findings indicate there were faults with the SSR project in Afghanistan, and modes of execution and stages of policy development were incoherent and inconsistent, but liberal institutionalism helps explain how to establish vital institutions and ensure more democratic transitions of power so that the international community and multilateral institutions like NATO remain engaged.

KEYWORDS:

Afghanistan, conflict resolution, defense policy, multilateralism, Liberal Institutionalism, NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Security Sector Reform

SUMMARY

This research demonstrates that the NATO's attempts to reform the security sector in Afghanistan have been marred by both progress and faults. The majority of the problems were with the way in which stages of security policy development were crafted. This research found that they were inconsistent and incoherent, but liberal institutionalist theory helps explain how to establish vital institutions and ensure more democratic transitions of power so that the international community and multilateral institutions like NATO remain engaged.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS (ENGLISH)

AAF – Afghan Armed Forces

ABP – Afghan Border Police

ALP – Afghan Local Police

ANA – Afghan National Army

ANATC – Afghan National Army Training Command

ANP – Afghan National Police

ANSF – Afghan National Security Forces

APPF – Afghan Public Protection Force

ARDS – Afghanistan Reconstruction and Development Services

ASNF – Afghan Special Narcotics Force

BSA – Bilateral Security Agreement

CMO – Contract Management Office

CMR – Capability Milestones Rating

CNPA – Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan

CRU – Crisis Response Unit

CSAC – Combined Security Assistance Command

CSTC-A – Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan

CTF – Counter-Terrorism Force

CTSOF – Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Forces

CVE – Countering Violent Extremism

EBPM – Evidence-Based Policy Making

EU – European Union

EUPOL – European Union Police Mission

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GDPC – General Directorate of Prison Centers

HUMINT – Human Intelligence

IED – Improvised Explosive Device

ISAF – International Security Assistance Force

KhAD – *Khadamate A'etlati-Dawlati* (State Intelligence Agency)

KMTC – Kabul Military Training Command

MIU – Military Intelligence Unit

MoD – Ministry of Defense

MoI – Ministry of Interior

MP – Military Police (MP)

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NDS – National Directorate of Security

NPA – National Procurement Authority

NPC – National Procurement Commission

NSA – National Security Agency

NTM-A – NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan

PMT – Police Mentor Teams

POMLT – Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams

PPU – Procurement Policy Unit

SAT – Strategic Advisory Team

SIGAR – Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

SPC – Special Procurement Commission

SSR – Security Sector Reform

SSS – Security Sector Stabilization

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNAMA – United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

US – United States

WWII – World War II

ABBREVIATIONS (FARSI)

AAF – Afghan Armed Forces – *Neerohay – e – Musalle Afghanistan*

ABP – Afghan Border Police – *Police – e- Sarhadi Afghanistan*

ALP – Afghan Local Police – *Police-e-Mahali Afghanistan*

ANA – Afghan National Army – *Urdoo-e-Milli Afghanistan*

ANATC – Afghan National Army Training Command – *Farmandahi Ta'leem wa Tarbiyat e Urdoo-e-Milli Afghanistan*

ANP – Afghan National Police – *Police – e – Milli Afghanistan*

ANSF – Afghan National Security Forces – Qu'waaye Amniyati Afghanistan

APPF – Afghan Public Protection Force – *Neerohaye Hifazat –e– Aama*

ARDS – Afghanistan Reconstruction and Development Services – *Khadamat – e – Baazsazi wa Taws'e Afghanistan*

ASNF – Afghan Special Narcotics Force – *Neroohaye Wizhae Mawad –e Mokhader Afghanistan*

BSA – Bilateral Security Agreement – *Tawafoqnama – e – Amniyati Do Janeba*

CMO – Contract Management Office – *Daftar – e – Mudeeriyat – e – Qaraardad*

CMR – Capability Milestones Rating – *Rotba Bandi Noqaat – e – Quwat – e – Qabiliyat*

CNPA – Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan – *Police Mobareza ba Mawade Mokhader Afghanistan*

CRU – Crisis Response Unit – *Wakenesh e Saree*

CSAC – Combined Security Assistance Command – *Farmandahi Komakaye Amniyati Tarkibi*

CSTC-A – Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan – *Farmandahi Enteqaal Amniyati Tarkibi Dar Afghanistan*

CTF – Counter-Terrorism Force – *Neerohay – e – Zed – e- Terrorism*

CTSOF – Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Forces – *Neerohay – e – Mobareza ba Terrorism Wa Amalyat Haye Khaas*

CVE – Countering Violent Extremism – *Moqabela Ba Afraat Gerayee Khashen*

EBPM – Evidence-Based Policy Making – *Shawahed – e – Mobtani Baraye Tadorakat Gozari*

EU – European Union – *Etehadiyeh Europa*

EUPOL – European Union Police Mission – *Mamooriyate Police Etehadiyeh Europa*

GDP – Gross Domestic Product – *Tawleed – e- Mokammal – e Dakheli*

GDPC – General Directorate of Prison Centers – *Mudeer – e – Kol Maraakez – e – Zendaan.*

HUMINT – Human Intelligence – *Estekhbarat – e – Ensaani*

IED – Improvised Explosive Device – *Destgah – e – Enfejaari Dastsaaz*

ISAF – International Security Assistance Force – *Neerooy – e – Amniyati Baynul Melali*

KhAD – State Intelligence Agency – *Khadamate A'etlati-Dawlati*

KMTC – Kabul Military Training Command – *Farmandahi Amouzishi Nezaami Kabul*

MIU – Military Intelligence Unit – *Bakhsh – e – Estekhbarat – e – Nezaami*

MoD – Ministry of Defense – *Wezarat – e – Defaa*

MoI – Ministry of Interior – *Wezarat – e – Dakhela*

MP – Military Police – *Police – e – Nezaami*

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization – *Saazman – e – Mu'aheda Atlaantike Shamali*

NDS – National Directorate of Security – *Riyasat – e – Amniyat – e – Milli*

NPA – National Procurement Authority – *Moqaam – e – Khareed – e – Milli*

NPC – National Procurement Commission – *Komisiyun – e – Khareed – e – Milli*

NSA – National Security Agency – *Ajaans – e – Amniyat – e – Milli*

NTM-A – NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan – *Mamooriyat – e – Amouzishi NATO Dar Afghanistan*

PMT – Police Mentor Teams – *Team – e – Morrabi Police*

POMLT – Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams – *Markaze Modiriyat Wa Hamkari Police Wa Team Haye Ertebati*

PPU – Procurement Policy Unit – *Bakhsh – e – Tadaarokaat – e – Khareed*

SAT – Strategic Advisory Team – *Team – e – Moshaware Strataazhik*

SIGAR – Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction – *Baazrase Weezha Baraye Baazsazi Afghanistan*

SPC – Special Procurement Commission – *Komisiyun – e – Weezhe Kharid*

SSR – Security Sector Reform – *Eslahaat – e – Bakhshe Amniyati*

SSS – Security Sector Stabilization – *Tasbeet – e – Bakhshe Amniyati*

UK – United Kingdom – *Englistan*

UN – United Nations – *Saazman – e – Millal*

UNAMA – United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan – *Mamooriyate*
Komakhaye Millal – e – Motahed Dar Afghanistan

UNSC – United Nations Security Council – *Shoraaye Amniyati Saazmane Millal – e –*
Motahed

US – United States – *Ayaalat – e – Motahade America*

WWII – World War II – *Jang – e – Jahani Dowom*

CHAPTER 1

Security Sector Reform: NATO's intent and processes in Afghanistan:

Introduction

The Taliban regime in Afghanistan was toppled by the United States (US) in 2001 with relative ease in military terms yet the US-led invasion appears to have failed to produce strong social cohesion, effective institution-building mechanisms and sufficient implementation of the constitutional rule of law. Since the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) involvement in 2003, considerable emphasis has been directed toward building and rebuilding the nation's security apparatus – its military, police and intelligence sectors – for the purposes of tackling a resilient Taliban insurgency. Since 2003, NATO's overall intent and processes in Afghanistan have come to be known as Security Sector Reform (SSR) but there is considerable debate among academics and other experts as to whether SSR has been wholly successful, moderately successful, somewhat successful or entirely unsuccessful. Questions about NATO's success or failure in Afghanistan remain important – despite the US and Canada's intended withdrawal from the country over time – because the lessons learned from Afghanistan could be applied to other Out-of-Area conflicts in the decades to come. They are also useful for understanding NATO's record of success, mixed success or failure – in Afghanistan and have important implications for NATO itself, particularly given the billions of dollars of aid and funding that were spent– and could be promised in future years.

The rapid fall of the Taliban regime following the US-led invasion in October 2001 temporarily ended more than two decades of ethnic conflict which had virtually

destroyed all structures of a functioning state in Afghanistan. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 to preserve the communist sphere of influence in the region, millions of Afghans were displaced and forced into neighbouring countries and beyond while another million civilians were killed by relentless shelling between Soviets and *mujahideen* fighters. Following years of ethnic conflict among the Hazara, Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Uzbeks, subsequent Taliban rule in Afghanistan destroyed most major cities in Afghanistan.

The collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001 following the US-led intervention brought about an era of uncertainty, instability, and security-related issues which continue today. With the establishment and international recognition of the Afghan Interim Administration during the Bonn conference in 2001, which declared Hamed Karzai the transitional leader of Afghanistan, there was much speculation as to how the new administration would curb the influence of warlords and contemporaneously maintain order and security in both major cities and rural parts of the country. Without hesitation, US-allied groups such as the Northern Alliance and the National Islamic movement of Afghanistan came to dominate key security ministries in the new administration and merged their militias into the police, intelligence, and the military apparatuses. These unforeseen developments, which came about with the integration of *mujahideen* fighters into Afghan security institutions in 2001, came to be a major impediment to the NATO-led SSR process which began in 2003 and continues today.

In the realm of post-conflict settings, SSR, as a policy initiative, has emerged in the past two decades as a progressive policy prescription to improve state security in keeping with the liberal democratic objectives of accountability, good governance, and

transparency. In attempting to institute liberal democratic objectives, SSR aims to systematically differentiate and professionalize the functions of the intelligence, military, and police apparatuses in post-conflict situations. Afghanistan, as an experimental case study for SSR, provides essential insight into the practicality and feasibility of such an approach. This section aims to highlight and discuss the prominent theoretical literature relevant to the SSR process in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2014. In addition to the prominent policy aspects of SSR discussed earlier, this section aims to acquaint the readers with the foundational and theoretical basis of the SSR literature about Afghanistan and to underscore the gap in security studies literature which this research study aims to bridge.

This research does not grapple with the advantages and disadvantages of NATO's decision to insert itself directly in to the conflict, but is rather intended to investigate whether liberal institutionalism's policy relevance for understanding the merits and demerits of the NATO security framework's attempt to institute the rule of law in Afghanistan. Although Taliban power has greatly diminished since the invasion and many opportunities were granted to some Afghans as a result, NATO intervention struggled to secure Afghanistan from some remaining forms of insurgency that were primarily driven by extremist ideologies rooted in ethnic relations and politics.

Additionally, the lack of formal military discipline and morale in Afghanistan's nascent security apparatuses galvanized both the US and NATO to professionally organize the security sector of Afghanistan in accordance with Western standards and with full international support. Yet, SSR requires certain prerequisites in order to be fully implemented. In post-conflict situations, these requirements include minimum levels of

stability, security and institutional capacity; upholding the sanctity of core liberal principles which SSR emanates from; professional training of armed forces in accountability; responsibility to civilians; and a clear understanding of legal procedures according to democratic values. Therefore, the main purpose of this dissertation is to gain a comprehensive insight into the following overarching research questions:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In terms of NATO's Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2014, what worked, and what did not work? The secondary question pertaining to this research study asks: Why did certain aspects of SSR fail? This study aims to understand the operational issues of NATO's security policy to investigate the SSR approach's record of SSR in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2014. It will demonstrate that this record was not uniform, but rather mixed. Careful analysis of this set of outcomes may shed light on the doctrinal- and policy-relevant intricacies associated with NATO's intervention in Afghanistan. The single most important contribution of this research will directly benefit members of the security policy community by providing them with policy-relevant assessments regarding whether NATO's SSR agenda in Afghanistan has been successful, and whether its weaknesses call for the reform of its approach and execution – or its abandonment.

To reiterate, this research study asks what worked and what did not work in terms of NATO's SSR approach in Afghanistan. This thesis does not test whether the NATO-led ISAF mission in Afghanistan was a success or not. In order to maintain objectivity in conducting this research study, it is important not to judge the entire NATO-led SSR mission in Afghanistan as a clear case of success or a failure given that

NATO's SSR mission lacked clear indicators of progress and deficiencies from 2003-2014. As such, the focal point of this research study is to investigate and reveal what worked and what did not work, not whether it was a complete success, abject failure or in between.

This research could concomitantly inform the research community with respect to the merits and deficiencies of NATO's SSR agenda in other out-of-area developing countries. And it may indicate how NATO's intervention in Afghanistan could have been improved, maintained or better aligned in accordance with local, national, regional and structural conditions.

Research Methodology and Data Collection

Participants in the study were primarily asked to reflect upon a set of issues, including but not limited to the following four themes:

Theme 1: the extent of bureaucratic and institutional reform at the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD), Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the National Directorate of Security (NDS);

Theme 2: the field operations aspect and capabilities of MoD, MoI, and NDS units;

Theme 3: the aspects of NATO's SSR approach that worked, did not work, and why?

Theme 4: how NATO's SSR agenda could have been done better in hindsight? And what could be done better now?

In short, participants were asked what they thought about how NATO's SSR agenda provided institutional assistance to the rebuilding of the security sector in Afghanistan. In order to better understand what is revealed by the research process itself – as well as the interviews of participants who engaged in SSR – the study makes

use of qualitative interviews. It needs to be emphasized that the interviews focused mainly on what interviewees – having participated in devising security policy in Afghanistan – thought about crafting and institutionalizing security policy. Interviewees for this research were mainly comprised of mid-to-high-level elites and policymakers in NATO and Afghanistan who were extensively involved in SSR. Approximately the same set of questions was asked of each person.

This methodological approach was selected from the beginning of the research study because it was assumed that the interviewer would encounter a varied group of interviewees, each with their own sets of occupation-and training-related language or jargon, understandings, and specializations. In short, many of the questions were designed to be universally relevant and the final questions at the end of the interview were designed to be specifically relevant, depending on the interviewee's position, past experiences and occupation.

This research made use of non-invasive observation techniques including elite interviewing (Lancaster, 2016, 7), as well as other techniques such as examining training and education manuals and relevant pieces of legislation including various and significant documents and articles related to SSR itself. In total, 30 people were interviewed by the author, Sakhi Naimpoor, at various institutions including NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium; Hamburg, Germany; Kabul, Afghanistan; and Ottawa, Canada between February 2017 and October 2018. The interviews were conducted at different institutions and locations listed in the chart, 'Interviews Conducted' included as an Appendix in this thesis.

The interviews were conducted in public spaces including boardrooms, cafeterias, hotel lobbies and offices. All interviews were conducted in the English language as each interviewee chose to speak English (rather than Farsi). Each face-to-face interview lasted approximately 30 minutes to one hour. The only identifiable information that was collected included the interviewee's full name, work address including work email address; and information about where the interview will be and was conducted. The interviewer's handwritten notes identified the research participant by a number, not their name, address or any personal information. All this information was not shared with others and this information was collected in order to contact the participant by email and to arrange the location and time of one study visit interview. This research study does not attribute any quotes or information in this thesis with any of the research participants interviewed. All research participants in this study declined to be directly quoted or have any identifiable information attributed to them directly. Instead, the research participants only consented to be referenced in the bibliography as an interviewee and not within the body of the dissertation which could potentially jeopardize their sensitive positions within their respective organizations.

A general outline of relevant questions had been developed and was approved as part of the September 2017 application to the University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board. Some of the approved questions were intentionally devised as open-ended to allow for a diversity of responses. Approximately the same set of questions was asked of each person. See Appendix 1 for further details regarding the research methodology.

CHAPTER 2

Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan and Literature Review

This chapter jointly analyzes the paradigmatic explanations of SSR, and the more detailed operational issues associated with it to demonstrate both merits and demerits of SSR. First, the academic literature regarding theoretical arguments which frame the SSR process in Afghanistan within the more extensive and often competing theories of international relations is discussed. Then, the relevant academic literature published by security-oriented researchers about the implementation of SSR in Afghanistan is discussed. Finally, this chapter concludes with a brief analysis of the competing perspectives on SSR and examines which approach is compatible with a further theoretical and operational inquiry.

This chapter now proceeds to discuss the overarching grand theoretical debates concerning the SSR's liberal democratic principles. The aim here is to build the theoretical basis on which SSR is founded and shed light on the critiques of liberal institutionalist theory.

Theoretical Debates

The evolving definition of security since the end of World War II (WWII) opened a multitude of analytical fronts for the academic development of security studies. Traditionally, security was a state-centric concept primarily attributed to the strengthening and enhancement of national security. Over time, security studies literature came to embody multifaceted definitions of security, such as human security, food and water security and environmental security, which transcended state-specific

responsibilities of providing security (Buzan and Hansen, 2009). These transmutations in the analytical concept and definition of security now commonly affect various stages of policy development in order to develop sound policy options.

Despite the conceptual maturation of the school of security studies, academic discourse in the field has been overwhelmingly focused on enhancing state security since the events of 9/11 (Hama, 2017, 2). State security includes power relations, determining intentions of state and non-state actors, and the development and advancement of intelligence, military, and police capabilities to counter existential threats to securitize the sanctity of the state (Hama, 2017, 2-5; William, 2010, 623-625).

Over the past decade, academics have published extensive policy recommendations that prescribe improving NATO's security outcomes to improve the legitimacy of the constitution in Afghanistan through the 'boots on the ground' approach. They have put forward policy propositions based on singular conceptions of the conflict and assertions about the roots of the conflict in Afghanistan regarding liberal institutionalist accounts. By aligning their propositions in favour of the legitimacy of widely recognized institutions such as the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), NATO and the World Bank (WB), they have argued that these international institutions possess both the material capabilities and technical expertise to foster an environment of progress and cooperation and facilitate the establishment of the constitutional rule of law in Afghanistan (Nuruzzaman, 2008, 195).

Upholders of such claims have been more concerned with the effectiveness of the fragile Afghan government. They have pointed to the absence of institutional infrastructures, non-existent or nascent democratic principles, weak electoral

contestation, absentee parliamentary arrangements, a nascent constitutional framework and weak incremental progress as measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) indices. They have belaboured the poor access of Afghans to education and decreases in quality of life as other indicators of how democracy has failed to take root (Mac Ginty, 2010, 584-586).

Within the scope of liberal institutionalism, security for states is understood as the ability to endure unprecedented shocks to the established institutions and form of authority and the measure of the relative ease with which a state can retain levels of normalcy. In the case of Afghanistan, the degrees to which the Afghan government can withstand and fail to withstand insurgencies while still being able or unable to uphold the legitimacy of the constitutional rule of law are also taken as measurements of state fragility or state stability.

Liberal institutionalism argues that for there to be stability and peace in international affairs, states must cooperate together in an environment of anarchy and in effect yield some of their sovereignty to create 'integrated communities' to promote economic growth and respond to regional and international security issues (Jupille and Caporaso, 1999, 430). In short, liberal institutionalists tend to assert that the Afghan administration should focus upon strengthening the legitimacy of international norms and values in state-building initiatives, accepting democratic principles and fostering NATO's security apparatuses in terms of establishing the constitutional rule of law (Rubin, 2006, 179-183).

Like academics in the liberal institutionalist school, security experts have built upon liberal institutionalist principles to craft policy options with a certain bent toward

Western beliefs. In the West, SSR has traditionally been articulated as a vital element of liberal state-building and peace-building processes in Afghanistan. Central to the operational mandate of SSR is the focus on liberal principles of the SSR model, accentuating responsibility and accountability in governance, an institutionally embedded respect for human rights, sustainability of fragile and emerging democratic states, and democratic civilian control of the political realm (Stàlvant, 2016, 33; Stapleton and Keating, 2015, 3-6). In short, they lobby for democratic reform to root out the inefficiencies within the government's bureaucratic apparatuses but at the same time, emphasize that the Afghan populace and government are incapable of continuing in the spirit of state-building without the strong help of powerful international actors (Barany and Rauchhaus, 2011, 289-292).

Analysts in the discipline of conflict management have asserted that Afghanistan's fragile democracy and ineffective institutions can still be considered a success because the current trend of patrimonialism in a state bureaucracy will smoothly shift into 'proto-bureaucracy' with increased oversight and will eventually arrive at a modern state bureaucracy which will be imitative of features that can be observed today in Western democracies (Berman, 2010, 5). Therefore, the core claims of academics and security experts seem to be entrenched in temporal considerations for progress and embedded in fundamental processes that assume democratic institution-building is necessary to buttress the successful formation of the Afghan state.

The focus on international organizations (NATO, UN, World Bank, etc.) and international regimes that are based on rules, norms and principles that help govern the interaction of state and non-state actors on issues such as human rights are what make

the argument in favour of liberal institutionalism so compelling. This is because it allows for non-state actors and those that would be marginalized by the modernist project such as civil society activists and grassroots movements to be brought back into world affairs.

The relevance of liberal institutionalist theory to the developmental and legal discourse in Afghanistan is quite evident with the presence and involvement of numerous international organizations. Some academics that have adopted a liberal institutionalist framework for understanding democratic transitions include R. Alcaro (2018), R. Duvall and M. Barnett (2018), Michael Schechter (2018), Erik Voeten (2019), and Rorden Wilkinson and Thomas Weiss (2018).

However, others have questioned and critiqued whether liberal institutionalism serves as a genuine alternative to the realist approach to international conflict. This thesis does not conduct research into whether the realist approach can adequately explains the course and character of international conflict and security, and in particular the issue of SSR in Afghanistan; rather, the focus instead is on understanding and evaluating the explanatory power of liberal institutionalism. However, the concluding chapter of this dissertation considers some aspects of the realist approach to international conflict in light of the research findings.

Like neo-realists, liberal institutionalists tend to assume that the international system is fundamentally anarchic, and they continue to emphasize national sovereignty as sacrosanct (Alcaro, 2018, 4-6; Keohane and Martin, 1995, 43-47; Navari, 2019, 53-57). Drawing upon historical evidence from previous conflicts, they tend to argue that international organizations such as NATO and the UN during the Cold War were paralyzed by US-Soviet vetoes, and the emphasis on the financial needs of leading

liberal states for dealing with security issues left only meagre resources for the development of weaker states (Keohane and Martin 1995; Moravscik 2001; Nuruzzaman 2008; Richmond 2009).

Since the end of the Cold War, liberal institutionalists have been criticized for failing to recognize the impact that domestic forces and ethics have in promoting more cooperative strategies to deal with moral and ethical issues (Bell and Evans, 2010, 377). Although SSR experts favour liberal institutionalist accounts, many post-structuralists or critical theory proponents have framed the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan in a distinct manner (Åhäll, 2018, 87-91; Larsson, 2015, 181-185). Post-structuralists (or what some point to as the Scandinavian post-modern, post-critical school) point to the poverty of absurd policy options emerging from liberal internationalist accounts. They posit that post-structuralism should be more concerned with the epistemological concerns of knowledge building and as such, post-structuralists are unable to offer helpful insight into the practical context of war and conflict resolution (Zalewski and Smith, 1996, 331-337). Nevertheless, there has been a significant push in recent years to reframe the conflict in Afghanistan through the lens of post-structuralism (Stritzel and Chang, 2015, 551-555).

Post-structuralist approaches tend to argue that liberal institutionalism in the name of democracy is colonizing the indigenous fabric of far distant lands, and in so doing, essentially commits a serious disservice to the agency of the constructed other. (Campbell, 2007, 211; Heath-Kelly, 2016, 78-81). Thus, they argue, the majority of available security-related literature about the conflict in Afghanistan is at best grounded in liberal institutionalist assumptions, while critical explanations have more recently

surfaced to proffer viable alternative interpretations (Crilley and Chatterje-Doody, 2018, 1-5; Hansen, 2012, 95; Hauer, 2017, 191-194; Roberts, 2012, 41-43; Sandu, 2011, 114-117; and Walshaw, 2014, 107-109).

The academic debate regarding SSR in Afghanistan has been continuously evolving between liberal institutionalists and post-structuralists (sometimes referred to as critical theorists or as critical security studies) since 2001. Post-structuralist critics of SSR tend to vehemently argue that the internationally supported security stabilization and state-building efforts in Afghanistan have not been a success (Coletta and Rynning, 2012, 28-31; Dodge, 2013, 1193). They do accept that the US-led military intervention that toppled the Taliban regime was largely welcomed by the Afghan public (Dennys and Hamilton-Baillie, 2012, 4-7). However, consistent failure to ensure security, stability, and rule of law across Afghanistan, despite billions of dollars in foreign aid, has undermined the Afghan public's trust in the Afghan government and more importantly, has cast doubt on the genuine intention of its international partners (Abrahamsen, 2016, 287; Ayub et al., 2009, 11; Perito, 2009, 63-67). These are the more potent criticisms made by critics in the critical security studies school of thought, which might be better understood as a lens, rather than a school of thought based on precise theoretical and empirical precepts.

Critics of SSR have some more detailed ideas, but these are difficult to glean from this rather general and at times ambiguous literature. For example, some of them further argue that the actual development of SSR, including reform of the Afghan National Police (ANP) including the Afghan Border Police (ABP); the Afghan National Army (ANA); and the National Directorate of Security (NDS) was compromised during

the 2001 Bonn Conference in Germany. The key claims are that the externally

generated reforms could not help but be superficial in application. In Ayub and Kuovo's

(2009) words,

> [...] the continuing security challenges and the lack of international- and national-led security rushed the pace of the re-establishment of a national police force in particular. As a consequence, the focus of the reforms were not as much on a comprehensive census and verification process or on building credible institutions, but more on ensuring a minimal security presence in provinces and districts. The pressure on establishing a security sector (not necessarily reforming it) also undermined rule of law considerations: checks and balances and internal accountability mechanisms have not received adequate attention (Ayub and Kuovo, 2009, 11).

Furthermore, context-specific criticisms of the SSR project in Afghanistan have

been brought to the fore by some thinkers using the post-structuralist lens in that they

detail the shortcomings and inherent flaws that have beset the core liberal mandate of

SSR as it has evolved over time. These criticisms are directed at the critical pillars of

SSR in Afghanistan, including the reformative approach employed by NATO to

rehabilitate the military, police, judiciary, counter-narcotics, and the demobilization,

disintegration and reintegration of peace-seeking insurgents (Stritzel and Chang, 2015,

551-557).

First-generation and second-generation SSR

In light of the continuously evolving academic debate between the liberal

institutionalist and post-structuralist schools of inquiry regarding the merits and demerits

of SSR, it is important to distinguish and explain the two main and often competing

conceptions of SSR. Paul Jackson, Research Fellow at the Center for African Studies,

differentiates between first and second-generation SSR, although conceding that the

discourse in security studies has been dominated by the former (Jackson, 2018, 2-3).

Jackson describes first-generation SSR as a set of principles emanating from liberal

democratic doctrines linking good governance to abstract definitions of the rule of law,

civilian control over security institutions, and the enshrinement and protection of human

rights (Jackson, 2018, 2).

Jackson underscores the decades-old dominance of academic discourse aligned

with first-generation SSR as a policy configuration aimed at comprehensive state-

building in conflict-affected states. However, Jackson maintains that first-generation

SSR can be better understood and scrutinized as a set of vacuous and hollow

undertakings by donor countries, international organizations, and non-state actors

aiming to implement a basic set of contrived principles to a complex set of

circumstances (Jackson, 2018, 3). Even more, Jackson contends that first-generation

SSR has been traditionally implemented for security institutions on an ad hoc basis and

mostly lacks both comprehensiveness and coordination (Jackson, 2018, 4).

Aphoristically, this means that SSR means different things to different intervening

states in conflict-affected states. To comparatively illustrate Jackson's point with an

example from Afghanistan's SSR journey, while the US focused on the rapid training

and build-up of security apparatuses, Germany concerned itself with gradually training

the Afghan National Police (ANP) based on community-based civilian policing, France

led a developmental approach to security, and Norway fixated on building a capable

and responsive counter-terrorism force.

Another area of concern for Jackson apropos the implementation of first-

generation SSR in conflict-affected states is the ownership of the process itself. Above

all, Jackson argues that SSR must be understood as a political process that undergirds the fabric of social relations between the state and locals in order to build reliable and accountable security institutions (Jackson, 2018, 4-5). Technocratic approaches to security stabilization schemes systematically repress and ostracize local expertise in favour of the esoteric institutional knowledge which external actors purport to possess in building both human and institutional capacity. As a direct consequence, the power relations between the state and society are relegated to the realm of 'internal and social affairs' removed from the political processes which concern SSR (Jackson, 2018, 4-6).

On the other hand, Jackson draws attention to the nascent doctrine emerging within security studies, increasingly known as 'second-generation SSR.' Jackson begins by acknowledging the ambivalence and the propensity towards path dependence in contemporary security studies. On the one hand, there is the temptation to relapse into first-generation SSR, and on the other hand, there is the post-liberal initiative to somehow incorporate concepts such as societal relations, inclusive ownership, development, and sustainability into a hybrid model (Jackson, 2018, 6).

Considering that there is a lack of concrete definition of second-generation SSR due to its contemporary roots, it is conceptually described as embodying a parallel arrangement that considers the weight of 'hidden politics' towards comprehensive state building endeavours (Jackson, 2018, 6). In other words, second-generation SSR attentively accentuates the importance of institutional politics, not just institutions; procedures and processes within organizations, not just structures; and the relationship between institutions and society, not just bureaucratic procedures (Jackson, 2018, 7).

In like manner, Stephen Baranyi, professor of international development and global studies at the University of Ottawa, explains that the concept of second-generation SSR emerged in the aftermath of the events of 9/11. Baranyi argues that vague policy suggestions crafted to facilitate democratization and the "technical reinforcement of state security agencies based on a Western model of the state" pursued by the first-generation model galvanized critical security academics to explore alternative approaches to improve security outcomes in conflict-affected states (Baranyi, 2019, 2).

Baranyi proclaims that the first-generation model has largely been atheoretical in the sense that context-specific alternatives were either unexplored or largely escaped academic scrutiny owing to the dominance of the unquestioned body of knowledge which placed the state at the centre of security preservation (Baranyi, 2019, 2). For Baranyi, second-generation SSR maintains flexible traits ranging from appropriateness of security policy to specific contexts governed by local conditions to long-term commitment to the rule of law in attempting to reform the culture of governance pertaining to security institutions in conflict-affected states (Baranyi, 2019, 2-3).

Liberal Institutional Proponents of Security Sector Reform further examined:

So far, this chapter has briefly outlined the positions of the main proponents and critics of the fundamental principles of SSR. Further analysis and examination of critical literature will establish that their criticisms are neither conclusive nor complete and do not necessarily indicate a total failure of the SSR project. The literature review, thus far, merely serves to provide readers with a synopsis of the largely theoretical literature by

academics who are keen to point out the merits and demerits of the SSR process. To encourage further research and fieldwork to alleviate some of these context-specific and nuanced problems, this research now endeavours to add to the existing paradigm of knowledge of SSR by providing a more detailed literature review of the evolving approach to SSR since 2001.

Liberal institutionalists have generally emphasized the process of state-building in Afghanistan through SSR in favour of building a capable security force through gradual institutional reforms with the support of NATO member countries. Liberal institutionalists tend to propose, for example, that a functioning security and justice sector is a crucial indicator of stability (Glickstein, 2014, 93-95; Maley, 2013, 262). Furthermore, SSR is seen to involve a more 'holistic' approach in that it focuses not only on integrating defense, police, intelligence, and judicial reform but also on a normative commitment to the consolidation of democracy and the promotion of human rights and of principles of good governance – including accountability and transparency in Afghanistan (Dursun-Ozkanca and Vandermoortele, 2012, 147-152; Gross, 2009, 18).

Key SSR activities, from the perspective of liberal institutionalists, thus include reforming security institutions, strengthening control mechanisms, and restructuring the security sector. Given the broad range of political and economic instruments at NATO's disposal, NATO was in an advantageous position to implement SSR activities through policy instruments in Afghanistan. Not only did NATO possess the political and economic instruments, it further multilaterally possessed the institutional and security sector expertise to help Afghanistan in its slow progress towards democracy, stability, and reconciliation (Koehler and Gosztonyi, 2014, 238-240).

Gross (2009) concisely sums up the challenges of SSR implementation in her

words:

> The specific context of Afghanistan, however, highlights the challenges in implementing SSR in a setting where state legitimacy is violently challenged, and organized crime and corruption thrive. Unlike other areas where NATO has engaged in SSR activities, Afghanistan presents a case where large-scale military operations take place alongside state and institution-building efforts on the part of the international community – and where the inherent contradiction between military operations in the context of the war against terror and institution-building efforts has tended to somewhat undermine the effectiveness of SSR (Gross, 2009, 11).

As Gross points out, there are challenges such as corruption, violent crime and a

prevailing culture of informalism in state institutions, however, these evident challenges

do not necessarily lend credence to the positions of critics in the critical security studies

school but rather serve to highlight the evolving nature of global conflicts and how

NATO's SSR efforts have evolved from short-term security stabilization to long-term

institutional commitment in conflict situations.

In order to chart Afghanistan's SSR process, from a liberal internationalist

perspective, therefore, it is imperative to begin with an appraisal of the published

literature on SSR as it has been pursued by advocates of NATO in Afghanistan along

with the alliance's other international partners.

Barnett Rubin draws attention to an essential aspect of the SSR process in

Afghanistan – the rivalry and incoherence associated with the attempt to adopt a

unilateral and uniform approach in post-conflict situations to institute democratic

accountability, transparency and responsibility. Rubin argued in 2006 that the pursuit of

sustainable development, peace, and security while also following democratic principles

in Afghanistan would progressively require the coordination and decentralization of

authority from unilateral actors to multilateral actors (Rubin, 2006, 177-181). In other words, Rubin suggested early on that the SSR process in Afghanistan pursued by NATO since 2003 should have been delegated to a multilateral entity such as the UN, which could effectively pursue the core mandate of liberal democratic objectives. By doing so, it would have prevented the fragmentation of the SSR mandate due to the propensity of unilateral actors to act upon their own set of values, opinions, and motivations (Rubin, 2006, 181-184). Thus, the focal point of Rubin's argument is that divergent operational doctrines and agendas would require a systemic overhaul to streamline the SSR approach in order to avert the prevalence of anarchy and the culture of informalism in Afghanistan.

In line with Rubin's position, Emma Sky argues that the SSR process in Afghanistan was vulnerable to the preferences and priorities of a donor-driven agenda pursued by NATO countries whereby the responsibilities of intelligence, military and police sector reform were divided multilaterally. In her report written for the Royal United Services Institute, she postulates that the 'lead nation' – the nation charged with overseeing reforms in a specific sector of the SSR process – dictates the direction of the specific security sector's policy and reform in Afghanistan (Sky, 2006, 23-24). Therefore, she attributes the flaws in the SSR process in Afghanistan to a lack of coordination, both between NATO countries and Afghan authorities, and the omission of domestic factors in constructing policy directives to allow for local ownership of reform in the security sector (Sky, 2006, 22). Lastly, Sky argues that disallowing domestic ownership of reform in the security sector would effectively inhibit the critical task of local capacity building to strengthen the role of institutions in Afghanistan (Sky, 2006,

22-26). Therefore, Sky harbours a distrustful position about NATO's SSR strategy in

Afghanistan and proceeds to foretell that security-related efforts will fail due to a lack of

strong security institutions with Afghans as significant stakeholders (Sky, 2006, 26).

In the same vein, Professor Mark Sedra's research at the Center for Security

Governance in Waterloo on SSR echoes Jackson and Donais' apprehensions regarding

the feasibility of donor-driven SSR agendas as a cornerstone for development and

stability. In 2006, 2007 and 2013, Sedra's systematic review of quantitative data from

NATO initiatives in Afghanistan led him to draw several crucial inferences. First, Sedra

deduces that measures of accountability, responsibility, and transparency, in harmony

with the SSR principles of 'good governance', were grossly overlooked and ignored in

favour of the internal political expediency of donor states (Sedra, 2013, 375-387).

Sedra explains that the liberal peace project in Afghanistan, from which SSR

emanates, has been practically disconnected from principles of liberalism due to

domestic political pressure and regional geopolitics (Sedra, 2013, 384-386). Rising

casualties among NATO combat troops, the resiliency of the Taliban from the brink of

military defeat, and the growing frustration of donor states with the inadequate

capabilities of Afghan security apparatuses contributed to the figurative changes in the

implementation of SSR (Sedra, 2006; 2007; 2013) See Figure 2.0 for more analysis by

of the number of US and coalition troops fatalities in Afghanistan in 2001-2013

(Brookings Institute 2014).

Figure 2.0: Number of US and Coalition Troop Fatalities in Afghanistan, 2001 – 2013
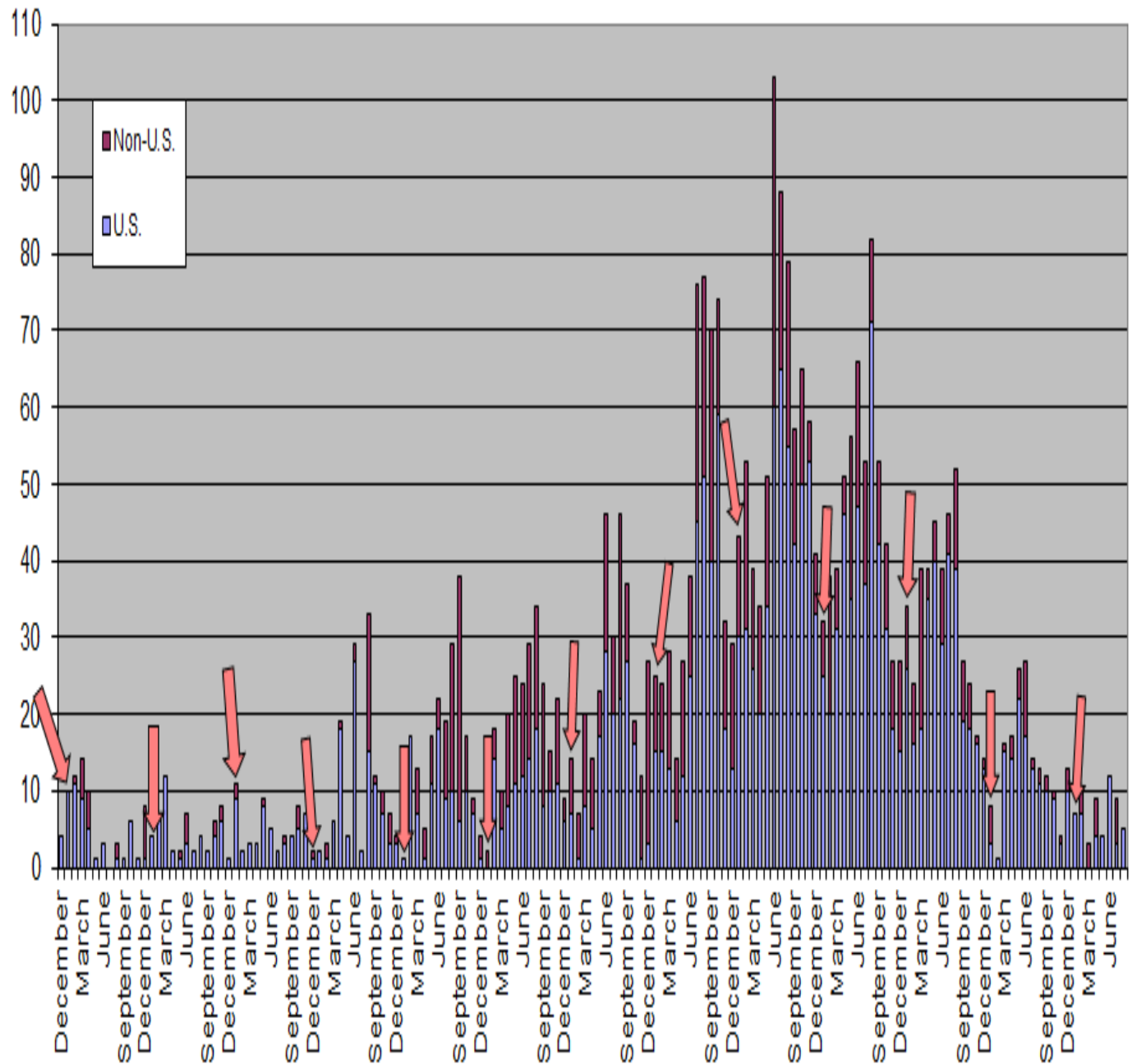
Open access source: Brookings Institution, 2014

Secondly, NATO's SSR priorities in Afghanistan came to be dispensable and replaceable by donor-states' priorities and directives. As time passed, the human security aspect of SSR in Afghanistan was intentionally suppressed by NATO and delegated to weak and incapable Afghan security forces (Sedra, 2006, 97-104). At the same time, the focus of NATO's SSR agenda transitioned from building strong security institutions embodying legal and bureaucratic procedures to counterinsurgency and rapid recruitment and integration of Afghan personnel in security apparatuses of the state. Consequently, the shift from state building to counterterrorism in tandem with the multilateral disengagement of NATO from Afghanistan leading up to 2014 brought to the fore the intricacies of pursuing the first-generation model of SSR (Sedra, 2013, 378-381).

Finally, Sedra challenges SSR's rigid prescription of statebuilding in terms of building Western-style security institutions in conflict-affected states, such as Afghanistan, and the omission of regional politics as a factor in the development of security policy. As a vocal proponent of second-generation SSR, Sedra postulates that donor-driven security governance in Afghanistan has not benefitted from regional cooperation to offset the geopolitical effects of insecurity (Sedra, 2018, 53-54). He includes a critique of NATO's parochial view of achieving security cooperation from the state itself rather than from the involvement of regional stakeholders and power brokers in improving security outcomes in Afghanistan (Sedra, 2018, 54). Sedra proposes a parallel form of security engagement with neighbouring states to attain regional cooperation, and more political support to coordinate SSR activities in conflict-affected states (Sedra, 2018, 54).

Having considered all the crucial factors above, Sedra suggests that the systemic conceptualization and reimagination of the contemporary SSR model are long overdue. For Sedra, systemic change to the current mainstream model of SSR is multi-faceted and complex in character. For one thing, SSR must transition from a first-generation concept arrested by the apprehensions of liberal democratic objectives to a holistic and flexible approach (Sedra, 2018, 60-61). This would involve the methodical alignment of SSR initiatives to local conditions by taking into consideration the informal governance structures that may exist in fragile states, political and economic aspects of the conflict and enabling local ownership of processes (Sedra, 2018, 61).

Another segment of SSR reconfiguration involves coming to terms with the limitations of the mainstream model and the normative principles of democratic reform guiding institutional change in the security sector (Sedra, 2018, 60-61). To envision SSR as a platform for progressive change toward development and security requires an evolution in implementation, whereby security policy transmutes from one that is donor-driven to a joint effort comprising both internal and external stakeholders and a decentralized model of leadership (Sedra, 2018, 61).

Nicole Ball, a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy in Washington, finds fault with such assertions. Ball asserts that effective SSR policy is a nexus of democratic governance, sustainable security sector coordination, and development (Ball, 2005, 27). She puts forth the normative argument that the state's legitimacy should only be guaranteed and sustained once the democratic governance of the security sector decentralizes to a civilian model of control (Ball, 2005, 27).

Specifically, Ball references Miller and Pereito (2004), and Sedra (2003), to discuss the case of Afghanistan where the main emphasis is placed upon the establishment of security institutions, and command structures, with little or no civilian control over the development of the intelligence, military, and police apparatuses (Ball, 2005, 27-28; Miller and Pereito 2004; Sedra, 2003). Ball further explores the democratic governance of the security sector in post-conflict settings and questions whether institutional development in the security sector is synchronous with human capacity in terms of pace and scope (Ball, 2005, 27-28). Is it possible to build strong institutions and human capacity concurrently? What explains the weaknesses of security institutions in fragile states? Does an adequate level of human capacity in weak states improve political and security governance?

After carefully considering the merits of democratic governance in the security sector, Ball proceeds to outline three fundamental elements to strengthen democratic oversight in fragile states. First and foremost, there must be political will within the national leadership to reform the security sector. Secondly, reformative processes must be contextually specific and appropriate. This includes the incorporation of informal legal structures, cultural norms, traditions, and values to craft a holistic security policy. Finally, the determination to democratically reform the security sector involves the establishment of transparent intragovernmental channels of communication to coordinate activities, set in motion consultative processes between the civil-sector and government bodies, as well as security-sector and public engagement (Ball, 2006, 28).

To reiterate, Ball's suggestions towards democratic control of security governance via local ownership was in keeping with the prevalent conjectures

presented by the proponents of second-generation SSR. At the same time, Ball

assumes that political will in fragile states emerges from an ambiguous constellation of

political interests to democratically orient the security sector as per the principles of

good governance (Ball, 2006).

On the contrary, Colonel Duncan Barley of the UK's Land Warfare Department,

who spent a significant amount of time with the Ministry of Defense in Afghanistan,

accentuates the importance of a national security strategy alongside SSR processes.

Barley concedes that Afghanistan's SSR journey is unique and unparalleled in that it

has not had a functioning government with a set of institutions since the fall of Dr.

Najibullah's Communist regime in 1992. Hence, SSR in Afghanistan is not merely an

undertaking to reform weak security institutions, but it also encompasses the state-

building enterprise from the bottoms-up (Barley, 2008, 52).

By its very nature, the monumental task of reforming and instituting the Afghan

security sector is fraught with challenges, tensions, and complications requiring political

will and an integrated approach to devise a capable national security strategy (Barley,

2008, 52-53). Barley proposes that SSR's progress in Afghanistan is dependent on the

integration of SSR into the national security strategy, which takes into consideration the

root causes of internal conflict, implementation of confidence-building measures, and

the gradual transition of command to Afghan security forces (Barley, 2008, 52).

The prevalent theme in SSR's shortcomings in Afghanistan has been the dearth

of expertise in coordinating reformative processes in areas of responsibility between

international actors and Afghans. Barley explains that the incorporation of SSR in the

national security strategy is fundamentally capable of synchronizing the focus of both

donor countries and the host nation (Barley, 2008, 53).

For Barley, this would include the establishment of a joint command, inclusive of

international and local security policymakers, capable of prioritizing SSR activities. In

Afghanistan, Barley notes that SSR's activities were focused on the development of a

counter-terrorism strategy as a problem-solving approach (Barley, 2008, 54). In order to

establish a joint operational command, there must be acknowledgement among

interlocutors that SSR, as a practical and prescriptive policy mandate, is a long-term

approach requiring continued support for and from the host nation. Second, in Barley's

view, academics and security experts must acknowledge that 'owning the process' is

not borne out by evidence, in the face of a resilient counter-insurgency campaign,

against a state equipped with incapable weak security institutions (Barley, 2008, 53-55).

In summation, Barley concluded early on that as part of a comprehensive SSR

strategy, peacebuilding in Afghanistan by way of a SSR framework would need to be

dependent upon higher levels of coordination between the host nation's national

security strategy and the incorporation of reform measures in collaboration with

international actors (Barley, 2008, 55-57). Thus, Barley's assertions are prescient in that

they are primarily aimed at strengthening the 'unity of effort' between the host and donor

countries to revise the fragmented and individualistic way SSR was traditionally taking

place.

Timothy Donais, a professor of Global Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in

Canada addressed early on the importance of integrating the positive features of local

ownership in state-building efforts. Donais stresses that traditional SSR structures have

been primarily driven by the objectives of donor states to reform the security institutions in emerging and fragile states (Donais, 2009, 119). Even though SSR traditionally was meant to foster the empowerment of local security institutions in conformity with the doctrine of good governance, there are considerable gaps in both policy and practice concerning the ownership of the process (Donais, 2009, 118). Donais explains that the objective to transfer reformative efforts to locals is often overshadowed by the reservations of donor states regarding the capabilities of locals in weak states (Donais, 2009, 120-121). Much of this contention rightfully rests with the inability of the locals due to the lack of professional expertise and capacity to understand and uphold the democratic values of good governance in building robust security institutions (Donais, 2009, 121).

Consequently, according to Donais writing in 2009, SSR as a policy tool for responsible and systematic state-building in conflict-ridden countries such as Afghanistan, is faced with fundamental questions: Should SSR's democratic and normative commitments to build strong institutions be rigidly upheld in weak states? Should the major commitment to local ownership supersede the mandate of donor-driven SSR policy agenda? (Donais, 2009, 121).

Donais refers to this dilemma as a *debate* in contemporary SSR faced by international donors in weak states, especially in contexts such as Afghanistan. He notes that often, these debates are more pronounced and amplified in weak states with notable differences in the subjective understandings of the normative assumptions of SSR between the donor states and locals (Donais, 2009, 121).

While Donais concedes that a full-fledged implementation of SSR in weak states fraught with endemic corruption, favouritism, and informalism is difficult to conceptualize, he proposes an alternative framework for security governance coordinated by common democratic objectives. Donais suggests that the empowerment of civil society through consultations and involvement in policy decisions, as a method of deliberative democracy, can assist in the transition of the SSR agenda from the international to local actors (Donais, 2009, 127). Donais explains that capacity-building should not be a private enterprise to build security institutions, but it must more broadly build the capacity of civil society groups to expand the discourse surrounding security-related issues (Donais, 2009, 127). By doing so, the SSR process in weak states can transition from a state-centric initiative to a people-centric endeavour that considers the power, capabilities, and in-depth knowledge of locals regarding security matters at the community level (Donais, 2009, 127-128).

Tonita Murray, former Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Interior in Afghanistan, reveals some of the intertwined web of intricacies related to SSR implementation in Afghanistan. Murray predominantly focuses on the evolution of SSR in Afghanistan after the rapid collapse of the Taliban regime. She divides the evolution of SSR in Afghanistan into three phases, following the Taliban's defeat and immediate disbandment. She describes the period between 2002-2007 as the first phase of SSR in Afghanistan, which saw the emergence of the ANP and the ANA under the direct advisory and training command of the US and Germany (Murray, 2011,48).

She argues that during and towards the end of the first phase of the SSR process in Afghanistan, the US hailed its success in being able to establish the

institutional pillars and the rapid recruitment and deployment of the ANA troops across the country (Murray, 2011,48). By the same token, the German-led training program stressed the development of 'high-ranking members of the professional police force with a clear and distinguishable command structure' (Murray, 2011, 48). Murray argues that the exclusive training program crafted for the ANP by German police trainers undermined the professionalization of the larger batch of patrol-level officers tasked with law enforcement in major cities and districts (Murray, 2011,48).

According to Murray, the second phase of the SSR in Afghanistan was a period of policy assessment, reflection, and realization in order to systematically disengage from the previously flawed security policy devised to professionalize the military and police apparatuses (Murray, 2011, 49). She explains that although the US and ISAF trainers acknowledged the shortcomings of the training programs in the first phase, they did not introduce any sort of comprehensive reform which would ameliorate the problems faced in the first phase. Instead, the US sidelined the German training program for the ANP and took on the additional responsibility to train them alongside the ANA (Murray, 2011, 49).

By 2007, the European Union Police Training Mission (EUPOL) was established as a parallel police sector training program primarily led by Germany and other European partners to professionalize the force. The two distinct training programs for the ANP – one led by the US and the other by the EUPOL – set in motion varying performance issues within the police apparatus (Murray, 2011, 49). While the US trainers streamlined the police training program with an emphasis on military and counter-insurgency tactics, the EUPOL training focused exclusively on the importance

of civilian community policing techniques in relation to the constitutional rule of law (Murray, 2011, 49-50). As a result, the police reform project in Afghanistan during the second phase came to be divided along ideological lines between the US and EUPOL with two divergent training models.

Finally, Murray argues that the third phase of the SSR is characterized by the intensification of training and counter-insurgency efforts as ordered by the Obama Administration in 2008. During the third phase, the new US-led directive signalled a period of substantial increase in the number of US troops to defeat the Taliban insurgency using overwhelming military force (Murray, 2011, 50). More importantly, the third phase of the SSR in Afghanistan leading up to 2014 was explicitly based on a withdrawal timetable to facilitate the gradual disengagement of NATO troops from primary combat duties and to allow for the eventual handing over of those responsibilities to Afghan security forces (Murray, 2011, 50-51). To conclude, Murray argues that the three-phased SSR process in Afghanistan was marred by procedural inconsistencies, a lack of operational coordination between international and Afghan partners, and an inclination towards the attainment of short-term results at the cost of neglecting the long-term sustenance of Afghan security forces (Murray, 2011, 59-61).

Peter Thruelsen's thought-provoking conjectures relevant to SSR discuss its fundamental basis with a reflective emphasis on the subtle concept which he terms as 'Security Sector Stabilization" (SSS). First, Thruelsen explains that SSR is a mainstream concept that has elusively escaped the lens of academic scrutiny in the past two decades by security experts. He argues that SSR is inherently tied to idealism and liberal democratic objectives in the face of the infinite challenges present in

Afghanistan (Thruelsen, 2011, 624). Thruelsen does not discount the concept of SSR but instead proposes a precondition that must be fulfilled in order to achieve credible and sustainable reforms in the security sector in Afghanistan.

Thruelsen proclaims that in a counter-insurgency setting, such as Afghanistan, the focus of NATO must be directed towards stabilizing the security sector rather than comprehensively embarking on the perilous and self-defeating journey to reform it (Thruelsen, 2011, 624-625). Thus, Thruelsen emphasizes two critical contexts within which SSR and SSS should take place; permissive and non-permissive environments. He explains that countries plagued by a protracted campaign of counterinsurgency, such as Afghanistan, must be classified as non-permissive environments. The lack of institutional strength of security apparatuses, inconsistency in the delivery of security services, and regression from the liberal democratic mandate of effective governance including accountability and transparency in day-to-day operations of security apparatuses are all crucial indicators of a non-permissive environment in Afghanistan (Thruelsen, 2011, 623).

In the case of Afghanistan, Thruelsen proposes an SSS approach that aims to stabilize not only the security apparatuses but the geographical boundaries within which they operate to ease the gradual transition into mainstream SSR. Essentially, SSS lays the groundwork to achieve the full potential of SSR once the campaign of counterinsurgency subsides and strong security institutions begin to emerge characterized by local ownership of the process and domestic legitimacy. (Thruelsen, 2011, 624). In terms of security policy, Thruelsen posits that SSS should not be attached to a strict criterion of good governance and accountability – on which SSR is

premised – but rather that SSS efforts should be directed towards the rapid building up of the capability of the security forces with a mandate to defeat the insurgency contesting the central government's legitimacy (Thruelsen, 2011, 625-166). To demonstrate his point, Thruelsen uses a model based on NATO's Land Operations Division along with his insight to chart the trajectory of both SSS and SSR in conflict-affected states (See Figure 2.1: The Spectrum of Security Sector Engagement).

On the other hand, Thruelsen argues that SSR is a responsible and comprehensive approach in conflict-ridden parts of the world such as Afghanistan. In the same spirit, he argues that the actual implementation of the SSR agenda can be achieved only once the legitimacy of the central government is strengthened and strong security institutions emerge with the defeat of insurgency (Thruelsen, 2011, 622-623). Thruelsen further argues that SSR has potential key indicators that maintain semblance to the core objectives of the liberal democratic model of reform in security institutions. First, there is a political aspect embedded within the core doctrine of SSR that can be gauged by the strength and authority of civilian oversight over security institutions, which categorically promote the virtues of good governance. Hence, the appraisal of the political aspects is useful in determining the level of transparency and accountability in any given security institution (Thruelsen, 2011, 623-625). Next, Thruelsen considers the institutional importance of SSR roles and responsibilities in Afghanistan to improve and sustain security outcomes. He theorizes that the institutional aspect of SSR is relevant to the implementation of the rule of law and transparent hierarchical structures of authority, and is characterized by the clear division of responsibilities and duties of various security apparatuses (Thruelsen, 2011, 624-625).

Figure 2.1: The Spectrum of Security Sector Engagement

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM ⇐ SECURITY SECTOR STABILIZATION

MAJOR COMBAT

COUNTER-INSURGENCY

PEACE EFFORTS

POST-PEACE ACCORD MILITARY ENGAGEMENT

PERMISSIVE ENVIRONMENT ⇒ NON-PERMISSIVE ENVIRONMENT
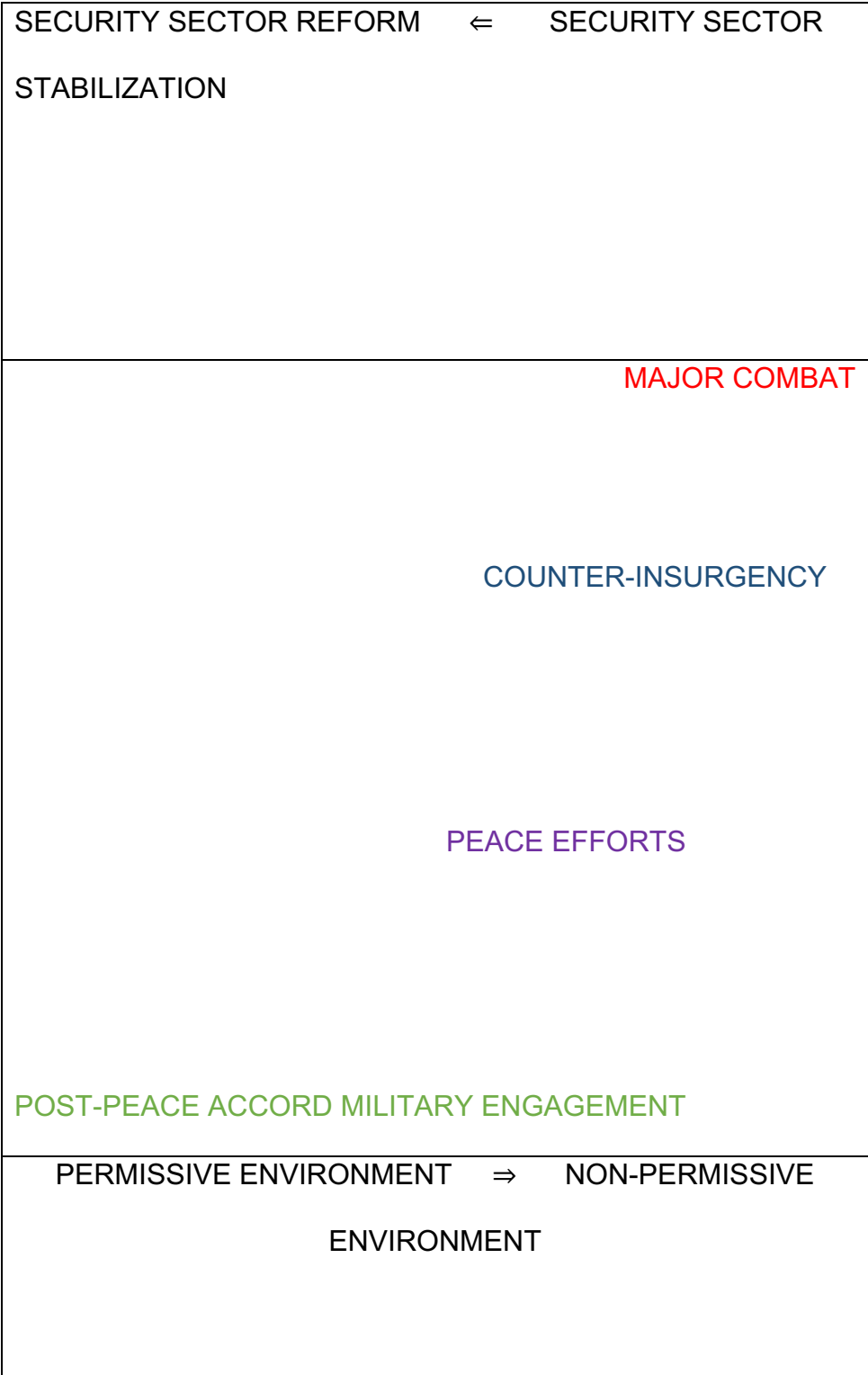
Source: Thruelsen, 2011, 623.

Thirdly, Thruelsen proceeds to explore the economic aspect of SSR concerning the duties and responsibilities assigned to various security apparatuses. This includes the responsible allocation and spending of resources with embedded mechanisms that ensure accountability and transparency of processes. Beyond international aid, the economic strength of emerging democracies, such as Afghanistan, should be used to construct security and defense budgets to guarantee the sustainability of the security apparatuses in the context of post-intervention (Thruelsen, 2011, 625).

Finally, Thruelsen identifies the social dimension of SSR as a foundational pillar of stability and security in Afghanistan. The social dimension is effectively defined by the relationship between the central government and the populace it governs. The level of security provided by the government to the populace is correlated to the social legitimacy and the nationwide acceptance of the central government's authority (Thruelsen, 2011, 625-627). The social dimension also encompasses a vital factor – the public accessibility of established security institutions. Fundamentally, security institutions dictated by the doctrine of good governance are in a perpetual psychological and social relationship with the populace they aim to serve. Put simply, security institutions are strengthened by the public legitimacy afforded to them by providing access to security institutions, which, in return, reinforces the central government's legitimacy and authority (Thruelsen, 2011, 635-640).

Thruelsen's edifying research into the establishment of a useful criterion to distinguish between SSR and SSS questions the foundational basis of SSR literature. By challenging the conventional wisdom of the SSR mandate, Thruelsen manages to extract a set of values and notions from within. The important distinction between both

SSR and SSS is proposed to be the context in which they are pursued – individually or in tandem. Thus, the focal point of Thruelsen's article is centered around the establishment of a security model beginning with a strategy of insurgency containment to reduce violent challenges to the central government's authority and eventually ending in full-fledged SSR implementation dictated by the liberal democratic notion of good governance.

Writing later in 2012, Willem Oostervald and Renaud Galand jointly put forth a normative argument regarding the merits, purpose and suitability of SSR in post-conflict situations. Oostervald and Galand argue that SSR, as an operational policy framework and theoretical extension of liberal democratic theory, requires a systemic overhaul to improve its compatibility with statebuilding endeavours and the implementation of legal procedures in security institutions (Oosterveld and Galand, 2012, 194). In addition to their reservations regarding the implementation of SSR, Oostervald and Galand proclaim that local ownership of the SSR process is apt for assessment, monitoring and evaluation of reform in security apparatuses in fragile and emerging states (Oosterveld and Galand, 2012, 195-196).

Foundationally, SSR is meant to reform the intelligence, military and police in weak states in accordance with the liberal objective of good governance to improve 'local security conditions' and to enable development in other public sectors to progressively take place. Considering that SSR is geared towards the systematic empowerment of security institutions in weak states, Oostervald and Galand contend that local ownership must be a core component of the SSR process to ensure it becomes both sustainable and capable in order to support active participation from

locals (Oosterveld and Galand, 2012, 196-197). In short, Oostervald and Galand underscore the vital importance of a people-centred approach to strengthen the domestic security apparatuses in international SSR undertakings aimed at statebuilding in weak states (Oosterveld and Galand, 2012, 198). And due to the vast differences in social values, norms and culture between societies, the significance of local input, involvement, and ownership in devising security policy cannot be overstated. Oostervald and Galand emphasize that a rigid definition of the rule of law, which they describe as 'thick conception', can be contentious and at odds with local norms and values (Oosterveld and Galand, 2012, 198). As such, not all liberal democratic objectives, such as human rights, gender equality and religious rights, are compatible with the norms and values of host nations which are driven primarily by customary laws (Oostervald and Galand, 2012, 198-199).

In order to assuage some of these concerns, which may lead to friction between the host nation and international partners, Oostervald and Galand encourage the development of a 'thin conception' of SSR (Oosterveld and Galand, 2012, 198-199). That is, a basic skeleton of SSR objectives and goals must be developed in partnership with the host nations, which empowers and promotes local ownership to account for their culturally specific norms, and values as they deem fit within the broader concept of democratic goals. Altogether, they deem the level of cooperation and partnership between local interlocutors and international advisors to formulate SSR policy as the critical determinant of success in achieving sustainable democratic reform in weak states (Oosterveld and Galand, 2012, 199).

Karsten Friis, a senior advisor at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs,

offers an analysis of societal-level factors that underpin international military intervention

and state-building prerogatives in Afghanistan that stands in alignment with Oostervald

and Galand's arguments. Friis begins by acknowledging the countless security issues

plaguing Afghanistan's developmental and the larger statebuilding enterprise jointly led

by the international forces and Afghan government. Friis advocates for an analytical

framework based on key assumptions to diagnose the primary reasons for military

shortcomings in Afghanistan through discourse analysis (Friis, 2012, 269).

Friis attributes the inadequacy of state-building efforts in Afghanistan – weak

security institutions, a lack of development, and contested legitimacy of the central

government – to certain fundamental theoretical axioms of the liberal democratic order

(Friis, 2012, 269). First, Friis argues that the intrinsic power dynamics at play during

interventions in weak states work to prioritize the national interests of intervening

parties, which are rooted in identity (Friis, 2012, 169).

 In the broader context of identity construction, Friis explains that the

development of 'superior military identity' for the intervening parties depends upon

military power and authority over the Afghan populace (Friis, 2012, 275). Friis concedes

that the ostracization of the local populace might not always be the intention of the

intervening parties, but the intersubjective power of mainstream discourse is such that it

supersedes and passively subjugates the importance of local development, ideas,

values and norms (Friis, 2012, 275-276).

More importantly, Friis expounds that political discourse is an instrument of

naturalization inherently tied to constructing epistemic objectivity in shaping ideas,

values and norms (Friis, 2012, 275). Simply put, conventional discourse in politics is an essential factor in agenda setting, policy construction and implementation of security frameworks in fragile states, as it embodies the unquestioned body of knowledge (Friis, 2012, 274). As a result, NATO's SSR and military efforts to reinvent Afghanistan in accordance with the principles of a democratic society omit two vital elements of state-building. First, the attempts to impose a Western democratic order in Afghanistan based on the virtues of SSR does not consider the weight of power dominance over Afghans as a crucial underlying feature of the political order. As Friis quotes in the words of Iver B. Neumann:

> Discourse analysis is eminently useful for such analysis because it says something about why state Y was considered an enemy in state X, how war emerged as a political option, and how other options were shunted aside. Because a discourse maintains a degree of regularity in social relations, it produces preconditions for action. It constrains how the stuff that the world consists of is ordered, and so how people categorize and think about the world. It constrains what is thought of at all, what is thought of as possible, and what is thought of as the 'natural thing' to do in a given situation. But discourse cannot determine action completely. There will always be more than one possible outcome. Discourse analysis aims at specifying the bandwidth of possible outcomes (Neumann, 2008, 62).

That is, the SSR narrative willfully turns a blind eye to the viability of an unconventional order aside from the liberal democratic prerogative to improve security outcomes based on Afghan customs, norms, traditions and values (Friis, 2012, 291). Secondly, NATO's SSR mission in Afghanistan functioned under the guise of humanitarianism to reinvent Afghan society by the principles of Western democracy (Friis, 2012, 292-293). Friis propounds that those disingenuous representations of NATO's SSR mission in common parlance based on the narrative to improve overall human security for Afghans only protracted the conflict in Afghanistan. Because the

narrative of the SSR mission in Afghanistan has commonly been portrayed as a prerequisite for human security, it serves to legitimize the NATO military intervention as an ethical method of promoting humanitarianism (Friis, 2012, 293-294).

In like manner, Eleanor Gordon, a professor of international security and conflict studies at Monash University in Australia, points out the often-overlooked nuances of SSR in state-building efforts. Gordon begins by acknowledging the merits of SSR in peacebuilding and state-building efforts in conflict zones as a prerequisite for sustainable development (Gordon, 2014,127). She concedes that building security institutions in conflict zones, especially in countries with the prolonged absence of a central government, is a colossal undertaking requiring the harmonization of international efforts with local conditions (Gordon, 2014, 127-128). However, Gordon proceeds to enunciate that SSR efforts in conflict zones, such as Afghanistan, must be reconsidered to attain the highest level of cooperation from the local populace, the central government, and civil society activists (Gordon, 2014, 129-131).

Gordon proposes an inclusive and bottom-up approach to SSR characterized by the following traits: inclusion of the state in developing policy frameworks, consultations with the locals regarding their security needs and concerns, and the inclusion of civil society groups in implementing SSR for sustainable development (Gordon, 2014, 131-133). In particular, the inclusive approach is described as a parallel mandate to the state-centric dominated structure of SSR. Gordon suggests that SSR, as a multi-pronged security policy directive, must be understood and implemented beyond the context of temporality and field operations efficiency (Gordon, 2014, 132-133).

Given the context-specific challenges of implementing a singular conception of

SSR in different operational theatres, the common factor that can improve security

outcomes is the inclusion of the populace – both at the community and state levels

(Gordon, 2014, 133). She adamantly maintains that if community-level engagements

are aligned and well-coordinated with the state's security policy during SSR

implementation, it can help in the following three ways: 1) strengthen security

institutions, 2) provide much-needed impetus to own the state-building efforts, and 3)

afford the central government public legitimacy to pursue the elusive goal of self-

reliance aside from the allocation of international aid (Gordon, 2014, 142-143).

Professor Philip Darby, a senior fellow at the School of Social and Political

Science in Melbourne, Australia, reiterates Gordon's conjectures in *Rolling Back the*

Frontiers of Empire: Practising the Postcolonial:

> The need now is to challenge conceptualizations of both violence and
> under-development as a problem embedded in the difference of the non-
> European world. Or to put it another way, to carry out a spatial reorientation,
> focusing for a bit on here and not there and showing how 'we' are heavily
> implicated in 'their' predicament. The question then becomes: what can be
> done at home about fixing the processes of international exchange to
> provide the conditions for self-reliance to flourish? (Darby, 2009, 713).

Additionally, Rita Abrahamsen, Director for the Centre of International Policy

Studies at the University of Ottawa, has contributed to the SSR debate by exploring the

tensions surrounding the network of actors tasked with implementing the SSR agenda

in fragile states. Abrahamsen describes the attempts to revamp the security sector in

fragile states as a joint venture between a multitude of actors comprising both the state

and non-state entities (Abrahamsen, 2016, 282). Although she admits that there has

been a gradual transition from state-centric perspectives to a hybrid model involving

both the state and non-state actors in the field of security governance, she argues that

the focal point of SSR initiatives in fragile states remain predominantly state-centric

(Abrahamsen, 2016, 285-286).

Abrahamsen advances the argument that despite the involvement of the non-

state organizations in SSR policy development and implementation, albeit as a result of

the formidable critique of the orthodox model, the second-generation approach to SSR

only cements and strengthens the position of the state as the sole provider of security

(Abrahamsen, 2016, 288). By involving a vast network of non-state actors to

supplement and expand the scope of SSR policy, including but not limited to civil

society activists, community leaders, and international organizations, the state comes to

be the sole beneficiary of the second-generation model bearing in mind that the entire

initiative is aimed at strengthening the public sector (Abrahamsen, 2016, 288).

More importantly, Abrahamsen highlights that second-generation SSR and the

proposed initiative to decentralize security governance in fragile states are faced with

issues of incapability, insecurity, and legitimacy (Abrahamsen, 2016, 291). She clarifies

that the issues of global terrorism, international terrorism, and SSS draws the multi-

layered approach back to reliance merely on the state's sphere of influence to deliver

security. Though it may seem that second-generation SSR is aimed at comprehensively

reforming security governance in fragile states, it is never practically meant to be a

novel structure for a decentralized multi-level governance model (Abrahamsen, 2016,

291). So long as the state remains fragile, weak, and embroiled in a campaign of

counterinsurgency, the second-generation model for security governance will be

subjugated and demoralized to restrain and deter more significant measures for

accountability, responsibility, and transparency in security institutions (Abrahamen, 2016, 291).

Contrarily, Donais addresses the contemporary challenges to the implementation of SSR initiatives in conflict-ridden countries and why local perspectives matter in improving security outcomes. Donais discusses the importance of vertical integration – "which speaks to the need for greater coherence and coordination up and down the chain of relationships that link international, national, and local actors in the context of postwar interventions" – which has been either overlooked or understated in SSR policy considerations (Donais, 2018, 41). The prevalent theme in the discussion surrounding vertical integration is that there is a veritable lack of understanding in the SSR policy community about the vital role that political figures, civil society, locals, and community-level social networks can fulfill to improve the security sector.

Donais further expounds that instead of merely discussing the merits and potential of SSR, it is beneficial to envision the evolution that takes place in terms of security in fragile states. This evolution involves a series of steps the state takes to safeguard stability and order in direct response to the feedback it receives from the society itself (Donais, 2018, 41). Despite the overwhelming clout of international actors in devising policy platforms that control the trajectory of SSR processes, the need for a dynamic relationship between the citizens and the state largely remains outside the purview of mainstream approaches to security reform. Often, in post-conflict settings, the implementation of SSR is plagued by a lack of insight into the strength of the social contract between the state and society, and how it can be strengthened and brought into policy considerations (Donais, 2018, 40-41).

Donais claims that normative assumptions, driven mainly by liberal democratic objectives of good governance undergirding the SSR agenda in fragile states neglect the power of state-society cooperation and relations (Donais, 2018, 42). Donais advocates for a renewed emphasis on the merits of atypical security arrangements, which can consider the driving forces that build consensus and set in motion the political will to progress towards inclusive ownership of SSR processes. Given the profound focus on the importance of state-society relations in reforming the security sector, Donais argues that international actors must diligently work to identify their roles and responsibilities in their capacity as advisors and enablers – not primary agents of change in reforming the security sector (Donais, 2018, 43).

For Donais, the prospect and likelihood for peace, stability, and order in fragile states emerging from the carnage of war and instability are dependent upon the 'vertical integration' of endogenous actors as agents of change in the security sector (Donais, 2018, 43-44). Rethinking the fundamental purpose of SSR as a hybrid enterprise between the state and society reinforces the legitimacy of the state, ensures that the SSR project is locally owned, and decentralizes and transitions the decision-making at the institutional level in the security sector – from one that is donor-driven to a joint endeavour between the state and society (Donais, 2018, 44). Therefore, the requisite shift from donor-driven SSR agenda to a locally crafted one is understood to be a paradigmatic change – which Donais concedes to be challenging, sophisticated, and unconventional for international actors inured to administering and supervising the reformative facets of security institutions themselves (Donais, 2018, 44).

In the same light, Jackson (2018) examines the perils of appropriating resources and policy solutions to the security-specific needs of fragile states. Jackson argues that although the central premise and purpose of SSR is internationally recognized and accepted in building robust security institutions in conflict-prone regions of the world, it is a formidable narrative lacking factual substance (Jackson, 2018, 2). To clarify, the first-generation SSR emphasized by Jackson is fundamentally and descriptively the same as 'mainstream SSR' discussed earlier in this chapter.

Jackson quotes Mark Sedra, professor of political science at the University of Waterloo, in classifying the SSR approach in Afghanistan as an abysmal failure where societal affairs between the state and those being governed were suppressed in favour of a somewhat integrated approach pursued by NATO (Jackson, 2018, 8; Sedra, 2018, 57-59). Although gauging the level of integration and coordination of core SSR principles in Afghanistan is a subject of academic scrutiny, Jackson concurs with Sedra that first-generation SSR is bound to fail in future theatres of operations without a systemic overhaul of the SSR concept itself (Jackson, 2018 8; Sedra, 2018, 60). Hence, the literature concerning second generation SSR has an intrinsic proclivity towards adopting and implementing a deliberative, balanced, and inclusive approach to state-building that accords equal weight to the opinions and concerns of both urban elites and rural citizens (Jackson, 2018, 9).

Despite SSR's decades-old reformative principles, the body of literature concerning Afghanistan's SSR journey is circumscribed predominantly to the realm of critical security studies. As discussed above, there is an ongoing debate among academics regarding the feasibility of mainstream SSR and the adoption of second

generation SSR keen on localizing the scope of the process in keeping with domestic affairs and politics. While both the first generation and second generation SSR are normative by their very nature, the academic debate regarding the feasibility of either approach in conflict-affected countries remains robust and persistent.

Although critical security theorists such as Ball, Jackson, and Sedra make a strong case to demonstrate the failures of the first-generation SSR in Afghanistan, they also fail to acknowledge the unique case Afghanistan presented to policymakers where the merger of the state-building enterprise with SSR activities hindered full-fledged democratic reform. For instance, Sedra's two-track formalism in reforming the mainstream SSR is novel and thought-provoking, yet it is nonetheless hindered by the dearth of policy-relevant mechanisms through which these proposed changes can be implemented and tested.

More specifically, what is not clear from Sedra's analysis is how parallel engagement of both local and regional actors would play out given the divergent and conflicting interests of regional states as part of the more massive zero-sum game and balance of power configurations in contemporary international affairs. Put differently, the conceptualization of two-track formalism is an appealing policy alternative to the readership of critical security studies, but it is correspondingly deficient in being able to impart any empirical evidence to substantiate the merits of his larger assertions.

Critical theorists including Ball and Jackson present the argument that local ownership of the SSR process is a crucial determinant for the sustainability of the process, though it is unclear from their analyses how normative assumptions to

integrate public opinion and concerns in policy considerations will overcome the resistance of local elites at the institutional and political level.

Correspondingly, devising precise and contextually specific SSR policy may be a factitious endeavour in societies where rampant informalism trumps institutional procedures; where the pervasiveness of cultural sensitivities in local affairs constrain and hinder the essence of democratic reform; and where delivering security in the absence of a central government has tended to be an independent undertaking of warlords divided along ethnic fault lines.

Competing perspectives: Which approach is most well suited for further testing and exploration?

Having analyzed the theoretical propositions of competing theories pertaining to the varying aspects of conflict and security in contemporary international relations, this research study examines the weaknesses and strengths of SSR as an extension of liberal institutionalism in Afghanistan. Why? The evolving nature of SSR in tandem with the prescriptive framework of liberal institutionalism allows for an examination of NATO's SSR approach using Afghanistan as a case study between 2003-2014. In turn, the research findings will aim to provide readers with an accurate and in-depth appraisal of NATO's SSR approach in Afghanistan, thus contributing to a contemporary assessment of whether liberal institutionalism's theoretical postulations have evolved into a sufficiently policy-relevant and theoretically useful lens.

This chapter provides an overview of the competing theoretical frameworks in IR and the merits and demerits of the current liberal institutionalist approach to SSR. The

intertwined web of various factors that continued to protract the armed conflict in

Afghanistan between 2003 and 2014 will be brought to the fore in the following chapters

by continuing to explore further the crucial security-centered dimensions of SSR with

knowledge gained from in-depth interviews with NATO and Afghan policymakers.

While this introductory chapter aims to provide readers with a brief understanding

of the complicated security situation in Afghanistan, for a detailed, year-by-year

overview that may be useful for the introductory reader, see Figure 2.2: Chronology of

Significant Events and NATO's Involvement in Afghanistan. For a list of NATO's ISAF

commanders, see Figure 2.3 List of ISAF Commanders in Afghanistan from 2001 –

2014. And see Figure 2.4 for information on the Number of American Troops Deployed

to Afghanistan and the Rise and Decline of US Troop Deployment.

History and Background of the Afghan SSR Case (1993-2014).

The Northern Alliance formed the Islamic State of Afghanistan in 1993 after

reaching the gates of Kabul following the surrender of Dr. Najibullah's forces to the

militias loyal to Burhanuddin Rabbani. After seizing power in Kabul, Rabbani declared

himself president and was endorsed by the United Nations which formally recognized

him as the legitimate representative of the people of Afghanistan (Bearden, 2001, 25).

Rabbani's Northern Alliance militia attempted to consolidate power in Afghanistan and

embarked on a series of informal negotiations with powerful Islamist warlord Gulbuddin

Hekmatyar (Rais, 1993, 917).

Although Hekmatyar accepted the post of Prime Minister to cease hostilities

against the Northern Alliance, the agreement with the Rabbani government was short-

lived and fell apart less than three months later over disagreements regarding the disproportionate allocation of important ministries to factions loyal to the Northern Alliance (Bearden, 2001, 27).

Hekmatyar's willingness to negotiate with the Northern Alliance was interpreted by his key backers in Saudi Arabia and within Pakistan's military institutions as a threat to their Islamist ambitions in Afghanistan (Bruno, 2008). In 1994, the Saudis and Pakistanis decided to retract their support from Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami group and subsequently funded the creation of a new hardline Islamist faction called the Taliban (Bruno, 2008; Ahady, 1998, 121-124). The Taliban followed the strict and literal interpretations of the Deobandi school of thought widely practiced in Saudi Arabia and northwestern Pakistan, while Hekmatyar was closely aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood Islamist movement in Tunisia, Qatar, and Egypt (Ahady, 1998, 122-124).

The Taliban attracted poor immigrants living in Pakistan and Afghanistan's border areas who faced systematic discrimination from the Northern Alliance's newly formed government in Kabul (Ghuffran, 2001, 473). The steady flow of funds from Saudis combined with the efforts of hard-line religious scholars in Pakistan duplicated the magnitude of resistance seen previously against the Soviets (Bruno, 2008). The Taliban began a gradual takeover of southern provinces propagating their agenda to establish an Islamic emirate based on Islamic law throughout Afghanistan and to eliminate the corruption of the Northern Alliance government (Gannon, 2004, 38-41). The Taliban successively took one province after another emboldened by both local and foreign support (Ghuffran, 2001, 471).

By mid-1996, the Taliban had taken over Kabul and had pushed the Northern

Alliance along with militias allied to them to their mountain hideouts in northern

Afghanistan. Much of the period between 1996-2001 came to be defined by the brutality

of the Taliban regime against the Afghan population and the destruction of all formal

institutions which effectively spelled the end of the Afghan state. On September 11,

2001, a series of coordinated terrorist attacks took place in the US subsequently

claimed by Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. The targets included the World Trade

Center, the Pentagon, and presumably the Capitol Hill, claiming the lives of almost

3,000 civilians and injuring another 6,000 in the attacks. In order to accurately portray

the sequence of events, the chart below provides a snapshot of the critical events

leading up to the beginning and the subsequent end of NATO's SSR mission in

Afghanistan. Below, figure 2.2 lists the name of rotating ISAF commanders in charge of

NATO's SSR agenda in Afghanistan while figure 2.3 charts the course of the US troop

deployment in Afghanistan and displays how it rose and gradually decreased as Afghan

security institutions effectively took over security responsibilities leading up to 2014.

September -12-2001	NATO allies invoked Article 5 in support of the United States, pending the outcome of investigations. NATO Secretary-General General George Robertson informed UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the alliance's decision.
October -7-2001	The US launched Operation Enduring Freedom. As part of this operation, the US, Britain, and Northern Alliance militias jointly launched military strikes against Taliban targets in Kabul, Kandahar, and Heart.

November -12-2001	Taliban fighters abandoned Kabul and headed towards northern Afghanistan. Northern Alliance militias entered Kabul with air support from the US and claimed strategic victory.
December -5-2001	The Bonn Agreement is passed under the auspices of the UN to recreate the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The agreement called for the creation of a judicial and constitutional committee in consultation with the Loya Jirga (Grand Council) to draft the provisions for an Islamic and democratic constitution.
December -6-2001	The last remaining Taliban stronghold of Kandahar fell to the US forces heralding the Battle of Tora Bora against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda figures.
December -2-2001	UN Security Council Resolution 1386 adopted and mandated the creation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to protect Kabul and surrounding areas.
December -21-2001	The transitional government of Afghanistan was sworn in, and Hamed Karzai agreed upon as the interim President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
February -11-2002	The first contingent of foreign troops from 20 countries arrived in Kabul as part of ISAF to provide security to the Interim Afghan Government. The ISAF leadership was based on a six-month rotational model between participating countries.
August -11-2003	NATO officially took over the responsibility of the ISAF command. NATO's multinational headquarters established in Kabul's

	diplomatic zone with an on-ground commander to coordinate the mandate, policy and planning of ISAF.
October -13-2003	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1510 expanded the role of ISAF to all of Afghanistan to provide security in support of the Interim Afghan Government.
December 2003	NATO-led ISAF command undertook Stage 1 expansion to northern Afghanistan to establish control over the critical provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Faryab, Kunduz, and Mazar-e-Sharif.
October -1-2004	Stage 1 expansion to northern Afghanistan completed under NATO's command. All nine northern provinces in Afghanistan are under the direct security influence of ISAF.
October to November 2004	As a test for democracy, Presidential elections took place in Afghanistan, and Interim President Hamed Karzai is declared the winner.
February -10-2005	NATO announced Stage 2 of ISAF command expansion towards western Afghanistan to take control of Badghis, Ghor, and Heart. With the completion of Stage 2, ISAF effectively controlled 50% of Afghan territory.
December -8-2005	Stage 3 expansion of ISAF command agreed upon in Brussels, Belgium, by Allied Foreign Ministers to expand the ISAF mission to southern Afghanistan.
April 2006	The Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) formed in coordination with NATO and the government of Afghanistan. The primary imperative of CSTC-A was to train and

	equip the Afghan military and police with professional training provided by NATO forces
July -31-2006	Stage 3 expansion of ISAF's command to southern Afghanistan completed. ISAF took over the security responsibility of southern Afghanistan from the US. Six additional provinces are now under ISAF's leadership: Daykundi, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz, and Zabul. ISAF now controls over 75% of Afghan territory.
October -5-2006	NATO directed ISAF to take command of eastern Afghanistan from the US and coalition forces. ISAF's expansion to the east marked the end of NATO's command expansion in Afghanistan as it now effectively covers all the Afghan territories. The Taliban launched a deadly campaign of suicide bombings and insurgent attacks against NATO and Afghan forces to counter ISAF's national expansion strategy.
November 28-29-2006	NATO allies at the Riga Summit in Latvia reinforced their commitment to the mission in Afghanistan. NATO allies committed another 2,500 troops in addition to the military resources, including aircraft, advanced communication equipment and helicopter gunships. Allied forces agreed in principle to operate outside their area of operations to provide support in insurgencies, particularly in southern Afghanistan.
June -12-2008	At the Paris Donor Conference, 68 countries and 15 international organizations pledged almost 20 billion dollars towards Afghanistan's reconstruction.

February -22-2009	At the NATO Ministerial meeting in Krakow, Poland, the US announced a surge of 17,000 additional troops to Afghanistan in addition to the 20,000 soldiers previously deployed. NATO allies agree in principle to increase their military commitments towards Afghanistan.
March 2009	President Barack Obama announced an additional 4,500 troops to help bolster the morale of the Afghan National Security Forces. The newly assigned soldiers were exclusively assigned to the military and police apparatuses to provide expertise in areas of law enforcement and military strategy.
April 2009	At the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit, NATO allies agreed to form NTM-A under the operational umbrella of CSTC-A to spearhead and administer the training program for the Afghan military and police. CSTC-A/NTM-A merged into a single training program comprised of almost 8,000 military mentors and advisors deployed in security ministries and training bases.
August – October 2009	Presidential elections held in Afghanistan for the second time and Hamed Karzai retains the presidency in a vote marred with allegations of electoral fraud and widespread violence perpetrated by the Taliban.
December 2009	President Obama announced another troop surge and commits an additional 30,000 soldiers to Afghanistan until 2011 to repel a resilient Taliban insurgency across the country.

November 2010	At the Lisbon Summit in Portugal, NATO allies agreed to gradually hand over security responsibility to Afghan National Security Forces by the end of 2014.
November 2011	The Loya Jirga (Grand Council) convened in Kabul, and tribal elders endorse President Karzai's plans to negotiate a 10-year Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States to allow US troops to remain on Afghan soil post-2014.
May -21-2012	At the NATO Summit in Chicago, allies endorsed the plan to withdraw all combat troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. At the same time, NATO allies emphasized their long-term support for the government of Afghanistan post-2014. The Train, Advise, Assist Mission was agreed upon post-2014 to build the capacity of Afghan National Security Forces.
July 2012	At the Tokyo Donor Conference for Afghanistan, international donors agreed to provide conditional aid for 16 billion dollars in the form of civilian assistance. The government of Afghanistan is encouraged to counter corruption, improve governance, and assume greater responsibility for security.
June 2013	At a handover ceremony in Kabul, the Afghan National Army took responsibility for overall security and military duties for Afghanistan from NATO.
December 2014	NATO formally ended its combat mission in Afghanistan with the handover of all security responsibilities completed. It marked the conclusion of the ISAF's 13-year mission in Afghanistan.

| January 2015 | NATO's revised non-combat Resolute Support Mission began to train, advise, and assist Afghan security forces. Approximately 12,000 NATO troops are involved. |

Open Source: NATO [unclassified], online, 2019.

Figure 2.2: List of ISAF Commanders in Afghanistan from 2001-2014

DATE	NAME	RANK	NATIONALITY
December 2001 – June 2002	John McColl	Major General	United Kingdom
June 2002 – February 2003	Hilmi Akin Zorlu	Major General	Turkey
February 2003 – August 2003	Van Heyst	Lieutenant General	Germany
August 2003 – February 2004	Goetz Gilemeroth	Lieutenant General	Germany
February 2004 – August 2004	Rick Hillier	Lieutenant General	Canada
August 2004 – February 2005	Jean-Louis Py	General	France
February 2005 – August 2005	Ethem Erdagi	General	Turkey
August 2005 – May 2006	Mauro del Vecchio	General	Italy
May 2006 – February 2007	David Richards	General	United Kingdom

February 2007 – June 2008	Dan McNeill	General	United States of America
June 2008 – June 2009	David McKiernan	General	United States of America
June 2009 – June 2010	Stanley McChrystal	General	United States of America
June 2010 – July 2010	Sir Nick Parker	Lieutenant General	United Kingdom
July 2010 – July 2011	David Petraeus	General	United States of America
July 2011 – February 2013	John Allen	General	United States of America
February 2013 – August 2014	Joseph Dunford	General	United States of America
August 2014 – January 2015	John Campbell	General	United States of America

Open Source: NATO [unclassified], online 2019)

Figure 2.3: Number of American Troops Deployed to Afghanistan and the Rise and

Decline of US Troop Deployment

Open Source: Brookings Institution, 2014

CHAPTER 3

The Institutional Breadth of Security Sector Reform in Afghanistan

Introduction

On a return trip from Kabul in November 2013, former US National Security

Advisor Susan Rice vociferously expressed her frustration with former President Hamed

Karzai's reluctance to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) that had come to

shape the current involvement of US forces in Afghanistan after the official withdrawal of

the NATO-led combat troops which was to be completed in 2014. Suddenly, the terms

of the revamped U.S. foreign policy extended toward Afghanistan no longer matched

the requirements for development and governance which had previously been proposed

and subsequently implemented in a "trial and error" framework between 2001 and 2013.

Although former President Hamed Karzai's reservations regarding the BSA were

widely thought to be a precautionary attempt against the fading interest of the US

government in Afghanistan post-2014, and the US attempt to transfer the responsibility

of future decision-making to the incoming president Ashraf Ghani in August 2014, it also

pointed to the poverty of foreign policy options which have been pursued in the past

nineteen years in Afghanistan (Shahrani, 2015, 277-279).

At its core, the BSA provides for a military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

It has a very limited scope and cannot then fully account for other key variables such as

ethnicity, culture and, more importantly, SSR. The BSA allows for a prolonged presence

for the US Army personnel numbering around 10,000 Special Forces troops which

would maintain a handful of strategic bases including among others Bagram, Spin

Boldak and Kandahar Airfield to plan and execute "counterterrorism" operations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2013). Adding to these troop numbers, the Trump administration has also authorized an additional 3,900 army personnel to turn the tide against the perpetual insurgency and to bolster the morale of the beleaguered Afghan security forces (US Department of State, 2017). Furthermore, the security protocol allows for continued support for the development of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) under the supervision of US forces until 2022 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2013). Overall, Bilateral Security Assistance can only provide temporary relief to an Afghan populace by ensuring status-quo conditions for a few short years while largely ignoring the importance of indigenous-led efforts in reaching a lasting solution to the conflict in the heart of Asia.

In addition, the BSA includes no provision for promoting inter-relations among ethnic groups; it does not support any systematic reconciliation among tribes and denies any legitimacy to a peace process which might lead to a transformation of relations between the Taliban and the Afghan government. That is not to say that efforts have not been made in the past (2008-2011) to bridge the differences between insurgents and the Afghan government, but rather that previous attempts at reconciliation had lacked genuine commitment in US foreign policy such that the fragile peace initiative was often rapidly led down a steep decline (Berdal et al., 2009, 56). To add to the urgency of an indigenous-led peace process, Karzai clearly iterated in a January 2014 press conference that the BSA could only be signed if the US "honestly" began a peace process inclusive of the Afghan government, and he went further to

assert that "If the U.S. is not willing to accept our conditions, then they can leave us any time they want and Afghans will continue their lives without foreigners" (Cutler, 2017, 63).

According to Mats Berdal (2009), Professor of Security and Development at King's College and former Director of Studies at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, during the early years of the intervention and since 2004, Afghan President Hamed Karzai had secretly been advocating engagement with the Taliban group through dialogue in an attempt to include them in the country's political bureaucracy but these efforts fell on deaf ears among policymakers in Washington (Berdal et al., 2009, 58). The hawkish policymakers under the Bush Administration (2001-2008) rejected the extension of an olive branch to the Taliban and rather repeated the rhetoric that the "US government does not negotiate with terrorists" (Felbab-Brown, 2010, 2-4). Therefore, as it became clear that the military approach toward Afghanistan was failing to uproot the Taliban and that only limited advances on the ground could be made, the US government secretly, if fruitlessly, held talks with the group's representatives without the Afghan government's representatives at the table (Felbab-Brown, 2010, 5).

Nonetheless, since 2003 the NATO coalition in Afghanistan has cleared major swathes of territory from radical fighters and brought about major changes to the economy, employment, as well as the social and cultural atmosphere leading to the further development of human rights provisions which had been mostly suppressed or absent during the period of Taliban control. According to Professor Claire Sjolander at the University of Ottawa, the global push for gender empowerment found its way into Afghanistan's modern-day constitution, which explicitly outlined basic human rights for

both genders. The introduction of formal and institutionalized education systems and

registration of twelve million Afghan students raised hope that coming generations could

reverse extremism, disenfranchisement, and hopelessness. See Figure 3.0 "Education

Metrics for Boys and Girls and Annual Enrollment of Boys and Girls in Elementary and

Secondary Education in Afghanistan." This chart shows the rise in school enrollment for

both boys and girls in Afghanistan as the NATO intervention expanded in both scope

and size in all 34 provinces.

Figure 3.0: Education Metrics for Boys and Girls and Annual Enrollment of Boys and

Girls in Elementary and Secondary Education in Afghanistan, 2002-2013
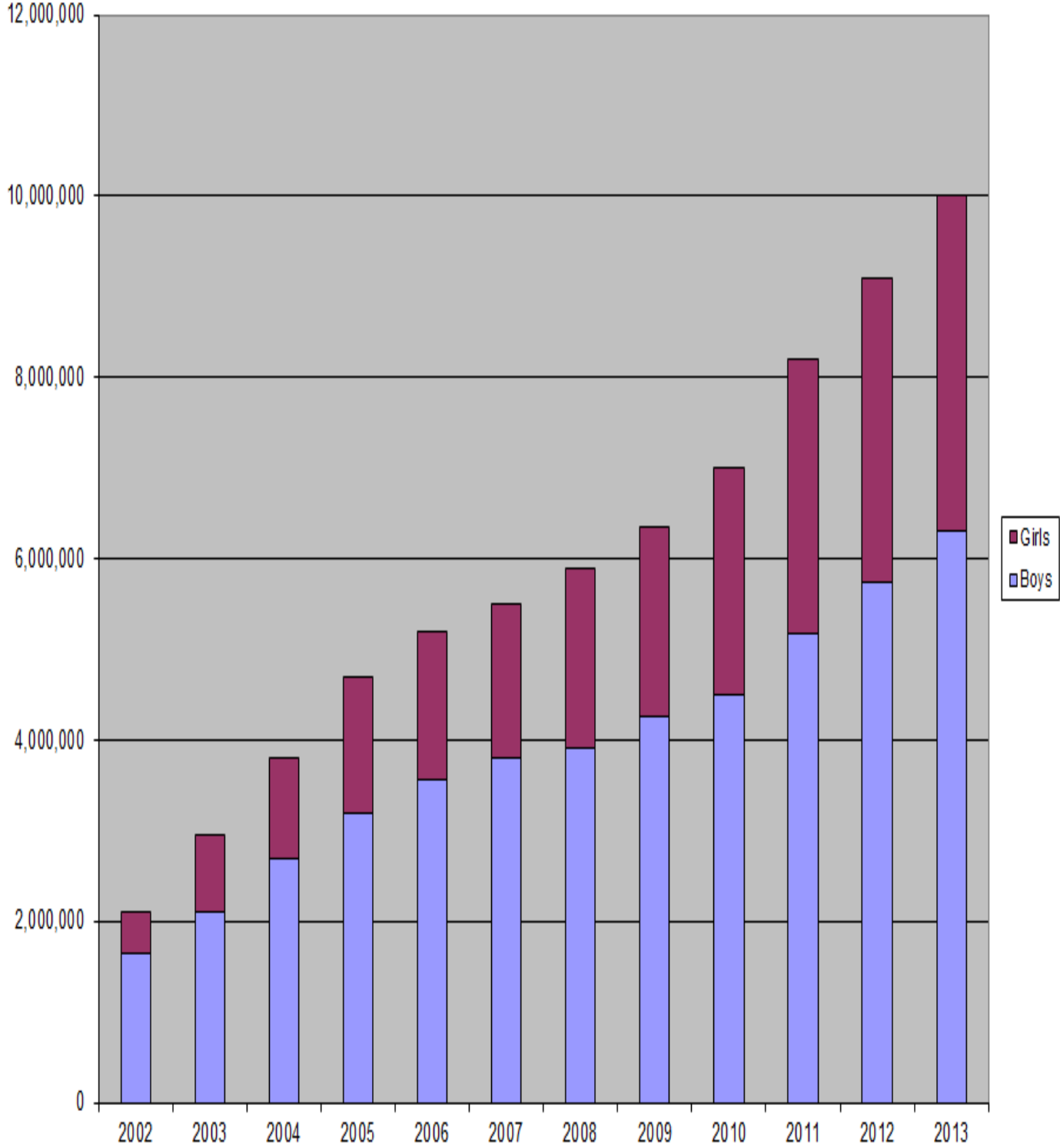
Open Source: Brookings Institution, 2014

Figure 3.1 Real GDP Growth in Afghanistan, 2002-2015
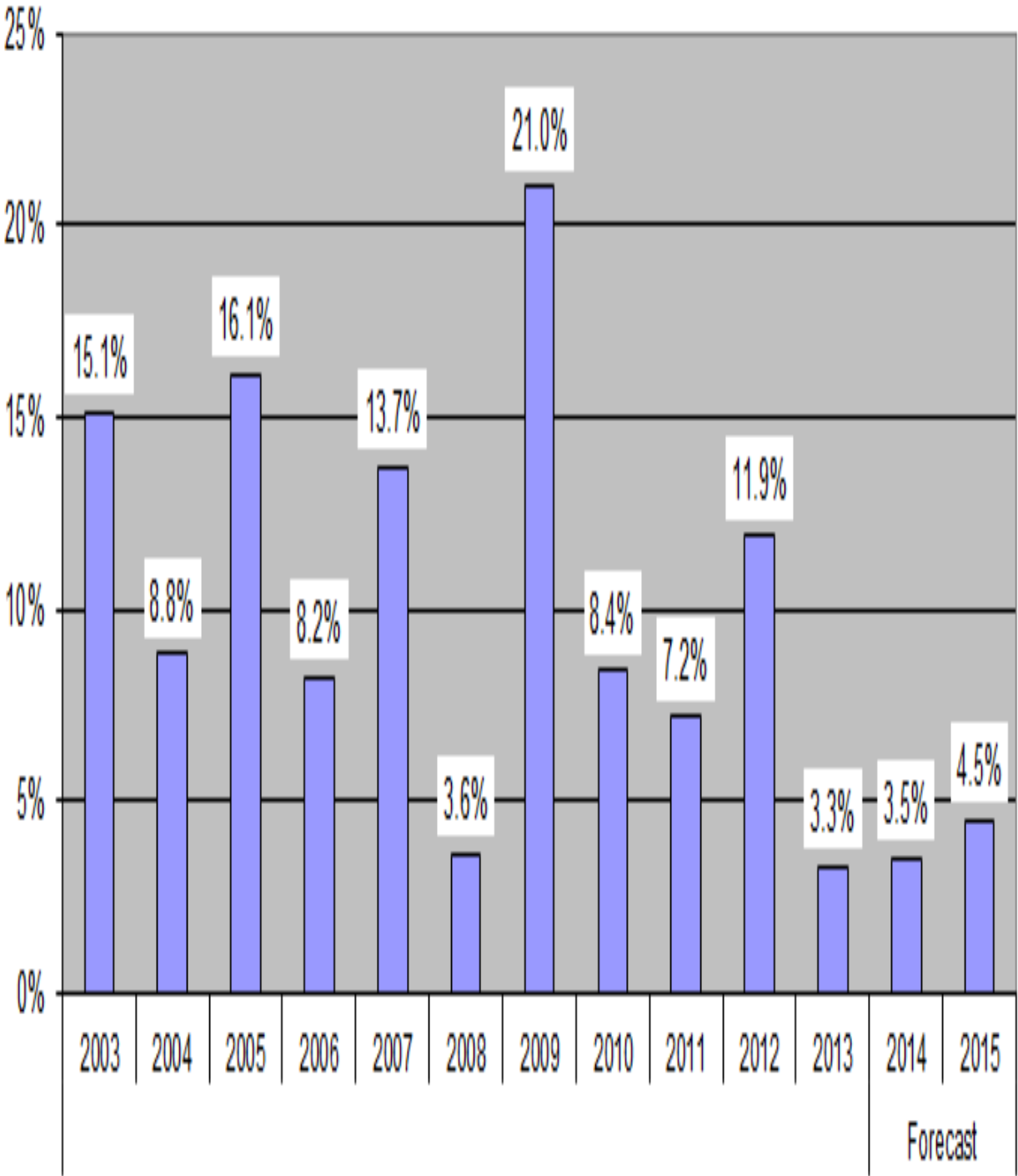
Open Source: Brookings Institution, 2014

Professor Sjolander further points out that the enormous positive changes

observed in Afghanistan – ranging from economic development to relative security to

governance to institutional accessibility – have made it a daunting task to mount any

sort of criticism against the NATO intervention (Sjolander, 2010, 44-45). See also Figure

3.1 "Real GDP Growth in Afghanistan, 2002-2015." This graph lends credence to

Professor Sjolander's claim regarding the mass economic development measured by

annual GDP growth that took place across Afghanistan facilitated by the influx of

significant aid money contributed by both the US-led NATO coalition and international

partners.

The institutional aspect of the SSR process in Afghanistan was the focal point of

the NATO-led coalition's attempt at reinvigorating key security institutions to establish

the rule of law. In a personal interview with NATO Official 1 who served as a special

envoy for the security sector in Afghanistan, he noted that the institutional dimensions of

SSR were closely linked to the functioning and coordination among the Ministry of

Defense, the Ministry of Interior, and the National Directorate of Security. He further

elaborated that the institutional aspect encompasses capacity building initiatives, the

establishment of independent bureaucratic structures, and creating and implementing

safeguards within key security institutions against corruption, clientelism, and nepotism.

Afghan Official 1, based on his extensive advisory experience at the MoI from

2011-2015 corroborated this account. He asserted that the institutional facets of SSR

continued to be concerned with the rationalization of a proto-bureaucratic identity to

ensure an independent and responsible bureaucracy across all key security institutions

and the following core fundamental initiatives: providing basic security to all citizens and

access to legal institutions, maintenance of an independent and impartial judiciary, building capacity and expertise within the framework of international standards and procedures in security and judicial institutions, ensuring due process, legal representation, and equal treatment under the law for all individuals. The overarching theme of the NATO-led SSR project linking all crucial security institutions noted above rests with security coordination between the law enforcement organs of Afghanistan. With crucial insight from interviewees, this chapter explores and explains the key achievements and shortcomings of the institutional dimensions of SSR over 11 years at the MoD, MoI, and the NDS.

After the Taliban regime was toppled in 2001 by the US-led coalition, the main and perhaps the most challenging task for the international community was to bring about security, stability and order in a country where it was virtually non-existent in the decade leading up to 2001. During the reign of the Mujahideen and Taliban from the early 1990s to 2001, the populace in Afghanistan had become accustomed to informal security and legal channels such as tribal councils, cultural norms, and judgements by village elders in accessing some form of acceptable justice. Of course, these practices were often arbitrary, corrupt, and had many vested traits which are common in ethnic nepotism.

To break this cycle of informalism and to establish an accountable, responsible, and transparent security apparatus along with an impartial judiciary, the NATO-led coalition in Afghanistan endeavoured to build key security institutions to grant legitimacy to the Afghan government led by Hamed Karzai. The Bonn conference in 2001 and the Geneva conference of international donors in 2002 was the pivotal period for SSR in

Afghanistan given that key NATO allies operating under the UN-mandated International

Security Assistance Force (ISAF) took on crucial responsibilities in the security sector in

2003. In sum, the security-related responsibilities and policies were formulated in

tandem with institution-building initiatives to provide an aggregate solution to the

problem of capacity building.

Prior to discussing the institutional aspects of SSR, it is crucial to accentuate that

this research primarily deals with the issues surrounding three key security institutions

and their respective forces in Afghanistan: the ANA under the MoD command; the ANP

under the MoI command, and the NDS Forces under the NDS command. Although all

NATO coalition members agreed to the urgent need for effective and efficient security

apparatuses for Afghanistan at both the Bonn and Geneva Conferences, the primary

issue remained with the execution of the project. This chapter is divided into three parts.

First, it explains and describes the findings of this research in relation to the institutional

aspect of the Afghan MoD. Secondly, it examines the institutional capacity and issues

pertinent to administrative aspects of the Afghan MoI. Finally, it concludes with an

analysis of the institutional proficiencies and deficiencies of the NDS.

Institutional Dimensions of the Ministry of Defense

NATO Official 2, a high-ranking official at NATO who was heavily involved with

the post-Bonn Conference initiative in Afghanistan, explained the significant

disagreements which persisted despite the unequivocal and overwhelming support from

coalition members for building a sustainable army, police force, and an intelligence

apparatus. The first disagreement among NATO members emerged in early 2003. It

predominantly concerned the apprehensiveness of coalition members regarding the heavy-handed approach of the US military in building up the army institution in Afghanistan. Given that the Afghan MoD was in its early stages of development at the time of the NATO intervention, most coalition members, including Canada, sought to be consulted regarding the institutional capacity-building process in the MoD led by the US.

Despite the reluctance of NATO coalition members, the US embarked on constructing the main edifice and several other branches of the MoD in Afghanistan. In an interview with a former high-ranking Afghan policy advisor to the MoD in Afghanistan, Afghan Official 2 expounded on institutional issues at length. He emphatically asserted that the institutional building in Afghanistan was never an 'Afghan-led process'. First, the $60 million contract to rebuild the MoD buildings beside the presidential palace in Kabul was awarded to US military contractors including the former Blackwater military organization, DynCorp, and several other small-scale contractors. In his opinion, the money originated from the US in the form of financial aid and ended up back in the US in the form of official salaries in spite of the abysmal state of the Afghan economy and high levels of unemployment across Afghanistan. He presented me with an audit report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), which assessed the productivity of foreign contractors tasked with constructing the Afghan MoD along with the Security and Support Brigades Division.

The report revealed that the timeline to build the crucial Defense infrastructure was pushed back by two years and significantly exceeded the allocated $60 million budget. In comparison, the classified report by SIGAR reported that the same quality of

work could have been performed by Afghan contractors at a fraction of the price with minimal logistical issues and within the two-year timeframe as originally intended. The infrastructure project alone would have employed approximately 600 local Afghans and another 400 general staff across the country accounting for logistics, transportation, and supply chain command (SIGAR, 2004).

Another high-ranking NATO official with extensive capacity-building experience tasked with the general oversight of the Afghanistan mission explained some of the other prevalent institutional issues within the Afghan Ministry of Defense between 2003 and 2014. NATO Official 3 explained that the recruitment process concerning the support staff by civilians was inconsistent with the "Accountability, Oversight, and Transparency" mandate of both the US military and the NATO alliance which had jointly agreed to implement the Western-styled bureaucratic procedures within Afghan security ministries. The headquarters of the MoD in Kabul was inaugurated in July 2003 which set in motion the institutional capacity-building process and the larger subdivision of human capacity-building initiative under its authority.

To clarify, this recruitment process was entirely distinctive in comparison to the armed personnel recruitment which will be explored and examined in later chapters. The institutional capacity-building led by the US military began by recruiting influential warlords, their relatives, and other groups which had helped the NATO-led coalition overthrow the Taliban regime in 2001. NATO Official 3 emphatically asserted that this was seen by many NATO members in 2003 as a methodical reward system for those groups which rejected the fanaticism of the Taliban regime yet remained complicit in major war crimes in defeating the Taliban insurgency.

In essence, the building up of the human resources section of the MoD exhibited an endemic culture of nepotism, poor institutional planning, and a lack of respect for Western-style bureaucratic procedures. NATO Official 3 further acknowledged the willingness of the US military advisors to turn a blind eye to the palpable deficiencies and shortcomings within the Afghan MoD in order to accelerate the pace of recruitment for military personnel. Senior civil-service positions within the Defense ministry were occupied by incompetent, corrupt, and illiterate personnel lacking an in-depth understanding of a professional bureaucracy.

NATO Official 4, a military General tasked with advising all three key security ministries in Afghanistan, affirmed that the formation of the Civil Service Commission in early 2004 was a rudimentary attempt to overcome some of the abovementioned deficiencies in the Defense department. The commission composed of NATO administrative policy officials with broad range of experiences endeavoured to close the gap between the joint initiative of introducing a professional bureaucracy and the practical incompetence of Afghan civil employees in the defense sector. NATO Official 4 further explained that the Civil Service Commission was disorganized and missed a well-defined agenda for institutional reform beyond an advisory role.

For instance, members of the Security and Support Brigades Division civilian staff were better trained in bureaucratic practices by the Civil Service Commission including the implementation of an accountability and transparency framework in administrative practices. NATO Official 4 largely attributed these positive strides in this division to the low-level positions staffed by ordinary Afghans without any special relationship to the high-ranking officials. On the other hand, the Office of the Chief of

Staff and the higher administrative branch were dominated by warlords including

members of the Northern Alliance, National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, and other

NATO-allied militia groups. Consequently, the Civil Service Commission had significant

difficulties altering corrupt and unprofessional behaviour in the highest administrative

level of defense bureaucracy. NATO Official 4 further iterated that advisors were

regularly prevented from accessing crucial documents such as pay schedules, the

procedural documents for hiring and promoting personnel, and files which explicitly

specified how the defense budget was being allocated to key administrative divisions.

Not only was there a lack of coordination between administrative divisions of the

MoD, but the performance of members of the Civil Service Commission varied

considerably depending on the administrative division to which they were assigned.

Although the Joint Agreement on Defense Sector Reconstruction signed between

NATO and the Afghan government in 2005 specifically aimed to introduce transparency

and oversight, it remained nothing more than a normative policy advisory document with

a minimal enforcement mechanism.

In an exclusive interview with a special advisor to the Parliament of Afghanistan

with extensive experience in the inner workings of the Afghan MoD, Afghan Official 3

revealed that the salaries for the civil staff at the ministry remained unknown with some

high-ranking officials earning as much as $10,000 US dollars a month while others

earned as little as $US 120 per month. As such, the Civil Service Commission remained

a diminutive and a largely ineffective advisory force and it was formally replaced by

Strategic Advisory Teams (SATs) in 2006. In sum, Afghan Official 3 stressed that the

NATO mandate in reconstructing the administrative dimensions of the MoD sacrificed the professionalization of the civil sector in favour of training armed personnel.

Also, Afghan Official 3 maintained that the prevalence of nepotism in the Defense sector allowed for other corrupt activities such as embezzlement of aid funds, personal use of government resources, and informalism in bureaucratic procedures to flourish with minimal transparency and oversight. The mass funding was provided by the coalition, yet the pay schedule was dictated by established structures of nepotism by Afghans themselves. Thus, the installation and support for an unprofessional bureaucratic structure by NATO beginning in 2003 in tandem with the operational attitude emanating from a culture of warlordism by high ranking officials at the MoD was a crucial institutional deficiency for NATO's SSR activities.

Another prominent institutional issue with the MoD was the manner in which procurement of military needs was fulfilled including but not limited to logistical supplies, heavy weaponry, fuel, combat uniforms, and assault rifles. In every conflict-ridden country in the world, the defense procurement sector seems to be a classic example of widespread corruption largely due to the decentralization of authority from the central government to the defense sector and due to the sophisticated and in-depth knowledge required for the procurement of military supplies (David et al., 2013, 121-124). Similarly, in underdeveloped and war-torn Afghanistan, the procurement process is a critical part of the government budget where 50 percent of the national budget is allocated for procurement of supplies for various government ministries. According to NATO Official 5, who served as the chief of the Afghan Task Force for one of the leading NATO coalition countries, the funding for military supplies was provided to the MoD with very

few checks and balances. NATO Official 5 further emphasized that the corrupt bureaucracy along with administrative officials took advantage of this lack of oversight to engage in 'big seed' corruption in the MoD.

NATO Official 5, having served as a top official for a NATO troop-contributing member country, elucidated the magnitude of corruption in the MoD by illustrating an example which concerned the procurement of fuel for the ANA. In 2013, the US government earmarked $1 billion for fuel supplies for the ANA to be delivered by the MoD by holding an independent and transparent competition for the contract to be fulfilled. During the course of the competition for the contract, four local Afghan companies were awarded close to a billion dollars for the annual fuel and diesel supplies for the ANA. A subsequent investigation found that executives from all four companies had colluded ten days prior to bidding to set an exact price for both diesel and fuel to split the contract in four equal parts. The contract was later cancelled by the Administrative Office of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan after SIGAR presented the government with ample evidence of deliberate collusion, yet no criminal charges or disciplinary actions were taken against any individuals or entities.

NATO Official 5 authored a report to the Administrative Office of the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan calling for the creation of a non-partisan, independent, and transparent body to overcome the complex challenges in the procurement process. In response, the Afghan government embarked upon a number of reforms to provide better public services, establish an effective and transparent procurement system, effectively control public expenditure, and decrease corruption in government institutions.

In late-2014, the National Procurement Authority (NPA) was established by the orders of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani whereby the Special Procurement Commission (SPC) came to be under the authority of the newly created National Procurement Commission (NPC) (NPA, 2014). Furthermore, this reconfiguration of the procurement policy in Afghanistan led to several significant changes to make the procurement process accountable, responsible, and transparent. First, the abolishment of the Contract Management Office (CMO) streamlined the procurement sector's bureaucratic procedures in order to eliminate 'big seed corruption' at the CMO. Subsequently, the Afghanistan Reconstruction & Development Services (ARDS) and the Procurement Policy Unit (PPU) were amalgamated with the NPA to increase efficiency and oversight of the procurement projects (NPA, 2014).

In general, the empowerment Afghan ministries has been an institutional goal of the NATO coalition so as to present them internationally as independent, effective, efficient, and legitimate institutions. With careful consideration of the crucial insights gained from relevant high-ranking interviewees, it becomes clear that the institutional capacity within the Afghan MoD was extremely deficient and ineffective. The pervasive nature of nepotism and visible patterns of corruption embodied by high-ranking Afghan Defense officials inhibited the growth and professionalization of the human capacity-building initiative at the MoD. By this logic, the institutional functions of the defense sector were rooted in traditional informalism and clientelism whereby high-ranking officials (including former warlords) viewed the advent of a professional Western bureaucracy as a threat to their traditional spheres of influence.

NATO Official 6, a coalition military General with extensive capacity-building experience in Afghanistan, highlighted that human capacity can only be built successfully when the foundations of the MoD institution itself are rooted in accountability and transparency. He further proclaimed that building human capacity in the MoD was only marginally successful in the low-ranking divisions such as the Security and Support Brigades Division, Supplies Maintenance Division, and Communications Division due fundamentally to a clear chain of command, limited access to direct foreign aid, and technocratic recruitment supported by the Civil Service Commission. The creation of the NPA in 2014 was another institutional victory for the MoD which forbade high-ranking corrupt officials from directly awarding government contracts to bidders. While the NPA was a step in the right direction to bring about a measure of visible transparency and accountability, a visible lack of a professional and technocratic bureaucracy impeded the institutional progress of the MoD in Afghanistan.

NATO Official 7, a high-ranking policy officer responsible for the Afghanistan operations division and with extensive knowledge of the hierarchical bureaucratic structure in the military administration articulated the perils of the rewards system propagated by the US and subsequently accepted by NATO in 2003. He pointed to the missteps taken by the NATO coalition when it awarded allied Afghan fighters with key security ministries, including Defense, which came to be the single leading cause of unprofessionalism, corruption, embodiment of proto-bureaucracy, and the prevalence of informalism in security institutions. Hence, the institutional development of the MoD in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2014 came to be dictated by a post-war reward mechanism

which was largely incompatible with the spirit of the original mandate agreed by the NATO members at both the Bonn and Geneva conferences.

Despite the shortcomings, this research finds several areas of progress in the Defense institutional capacity-building: reduction in corruption and nepotism through the creation of the NPA; the emergence of a technocratic support division for the ANA within the MoD; greater engagement for international partners including the SIGAR and the UN in monitoring progress and setbacks; and improvements in institutional infrastructure funded by the NATO-led coalition from 2003 to 2014.

Institutional Structures of the Ministry of Interior

The Geneva Conference in 2002 paved the way for the emergence of the ANP and, more importantly, the formation of the MoI of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. With direct assistance and supervision from the German federal police force and military police in 2002 and later by EUPOL in 2007, several key enforcement divisions for the ministry were created. The MoI is comprised of the Afghan Border Police (ABP), Afghan National Police (ANP), Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF), Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF), Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), and the General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Centers (GDPC). While the establishment of these divisions paved the way for the commencement of institutional capacity-building in the MoI from the capital Kabul to all other 33 provinces, there were monumental challenges between 2003 and 2014.

Afghan Official 4, who served as a senior civilian advisor to the MoI in Afghanistan from 2002 to 2012, expounded upon the precise issues in the institution-

building process which he believed were largely extant. According to Afghan Official 4 prior to the establishment of the MoI, it had already become a part of the larger reward system for Northern Alliance commanders for their direct assistance to the NATO coalition in dislodging the Taliban regime.

The NATO coalition took a preventive approach and decided in 2003 to integrate Northern Alliance fighters into the administrative ranks of the MoI bureaucracy and the larger ANP force to avoid a security vacuum and another struggle for power from armed groups. This decision cemented the grasp of Northern Alliance commanders on one of the most important security institutions in Afghanistan.

Afghan Official 4 further expounded on key institutional issues which began in early 2002. Given that the MoI was institutionally non-existent prior to early 2002, the directive to rapidly build the institutional foundation of the ministry came from the German government in agreement with the US. The building that housed the MoI was built in 8 months in Kabul with the combined labour force of both locals and foreign contractors. The longer goal was to construct the administrative offices of the MoI and the ANP headquarters in the rest of the 33 provinces by the end of 2003 to establish the enforcement mechanism of Afghanistan's Criminal Code across the country and to further buttress the legitimacy of Hamed Karzai's nascent central government. Significant institutional financial aid for the development of the MoI bureaucracy was contributed by the Germans which initiated the intended professionalization and bureaucratization process of the MoI in 2002. Afghan Official 4 further revealed that the German advisory force was far more interested in the structural organization of the MoI

than recruiting the type of expertise needed to perform the day-to-day operations of the institution itself.

As such, they constructed a complex web of bureaucratic divisions within the MoI comparable to a well-developed Western institution (See Figure 3.0). Former Northern Alliance commander Yunus Qanuni was declared the first minister of the MoI and was subsequently tasked with overseeing the institutional capacity-building process with assistance from technical expertise of German advisors. Afghan Official 4 explains that when presented with the organizational administrative chart drawn by the Germans for the institutional development of the MoI, Qanuni was baffled and doubtful that the proposed plan of action would materialize without requisite expertise and technocratic personnel. While Qanuni unsuccessfully attempted to seek the backing of the Administrative Office of the Afghan President in seeking a solution to the proposed German plan in 2002, although he believed it was at odds with the administrative capabilities of Afghans in the post-Taliban era, the German training mission remained unchanged.

In spite of initial reservations from Qanuni, the focal point of the German advisory force from 2003-2006 continued to be the maintenance of the organizational structure within the MoI. See Figure 3.2 Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Interior Affairs. This chart demonstrates the complex organizational structure adopted by the German advisors to shape the institutional bureaucracy of the MoI in 2003. The organizational structure designed by the German advisors was based on a Western model emphasizing a clear chain of command, institutional accountability, clear separation of duties and responsibilities and the deputization of key roles and functions within the

MoI. As the chart demonstrates, the organizational structure of the MoI was extensively

complex and overtly ambitious given the lack of human capital and requisite technical

expertise to administer the bureaucratic functions of the MoI as revealed by research

participants in this study.

Figure 3.2 Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Interior Affairs
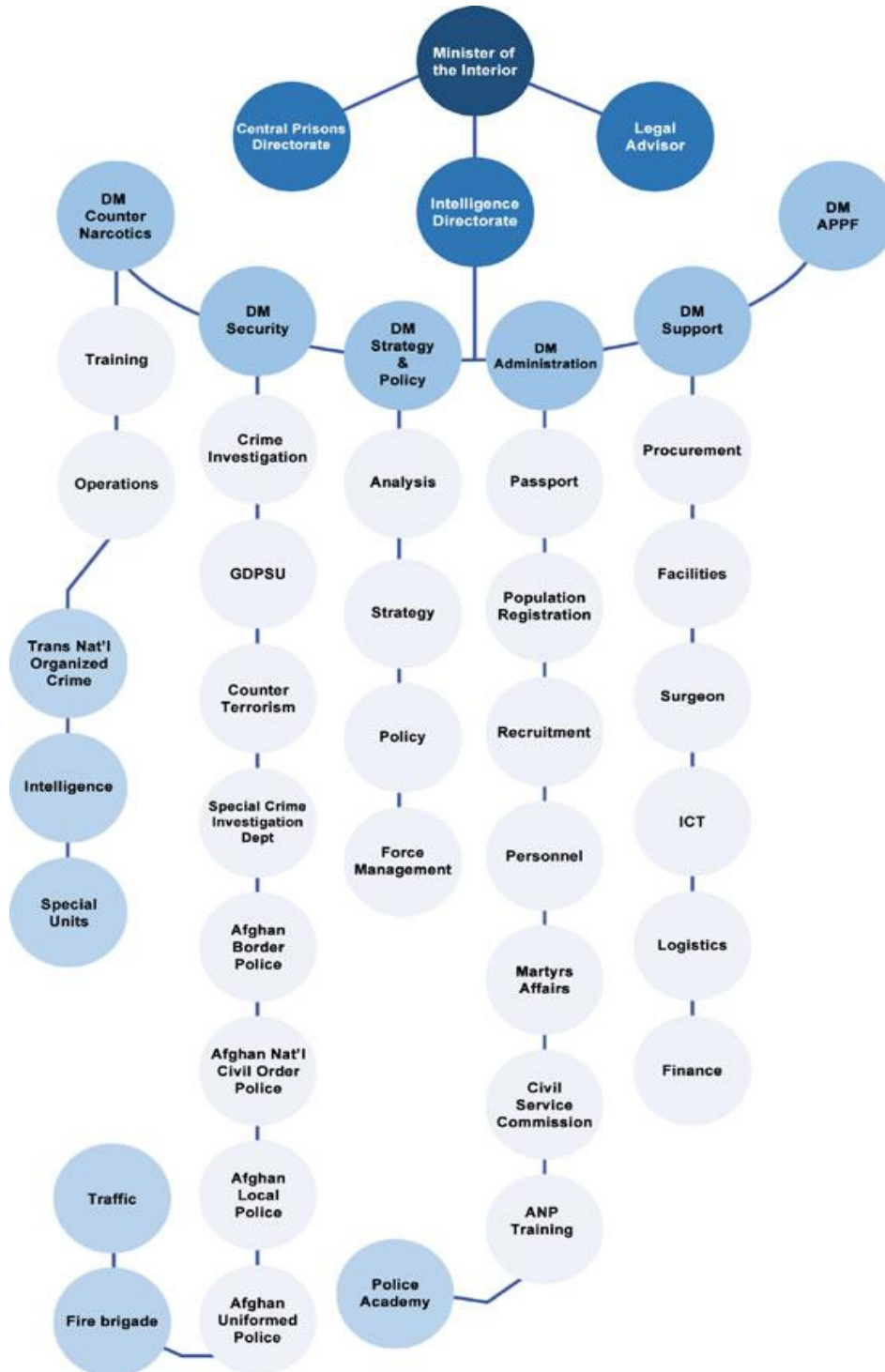
Source: Ministry of Interior [unclassified], Kabul, Afghanistan, 2014.

Afghan Official 5, who collaboratively spearheaded the German reformative project with Afghan personnel at the MoI, drew attention to the constant disputes between foreign advisors and Afghan staff. These disagreements generally originated from a lack of understanding of complex policy directives devised by Germans, language barriers, cultural sensitivities, opposition to a German-staffed accountability, transparency, and oversight watchdog at the MoI, and the system of recruitment for bureaucratic personnel pursued by Afghans.

Furthermore, Afghan Official 5 points to an imperative factor which aggravated the inefficiency of the reformative process at the Ministry of Interior, namely the constant change of command at the ministerial level. From 2002 to 2014, eight separate ministers were appointed by Hamed Karzai to lead the MoI. The longest serving minister was Ahmad Moqbel Zarar, who served 3 years from 2005-2008, while other appointees opted for civilian ministerial portfolios within months or after a year. The constant change of command at the ministerial level also exerted an impact on the permanent staff at the MoI. The continuous change in leadership made bureaucratic staff adjust to new forms of authority and expectations arising from different leadership models.

By the same token, given that the MoI was largely commanded by various former Northern Alliance commanders, the unexpected result was the factionalism that followed in the bureaucracy every time there was a change in leadership at the ministerial level. Afghan Official 5 explains that factional loyalty by bureaucratic staff to various commanders further fractured the fragile collective fabric of the MoI leading to varying performance records in individual divisions. Afghan Official 5 further elucidated the immanent difficulties in finding local expertise to staff the bureaucratic branches of

the MoI. In light of Afghanistan's excessive illiteracy rate which had inflated to 88

percent during the Taliban era coupled with a healthy number of previous Afghan

bureaucrats living in diaspora, locating local talent and expertise became a colossal

human capacity-building task for the German advisory force from 2002-2006.

Such monumental shortcomings resulted in bureaucratic administrative positions

being staffed by former armed fighters and Northern Alliance loyalists which set in

motion various types of unprofessional behaviour including corruption, financial fraud,

inattention to administrative duties, while overall there remained poor working

relationships among different branches and divisions of the MoI.

As such, the inability of the German advisory force to standardize and

professionalize institutional behaviour and performance led to significant fragmentation

of the MoI. Afghan Official 5 postulates that the enormous size of the MoI bureaucratic

apparatus became dysfunctional, leading to severe limitations in the flow of information

and interdivisional coordination. The Strategy and Policy branch at the MoI under the

guidance of the German advisors unsuccessfully attempted to craft a comprehensive

plan of action to implement suggested reforms.

Afghan Official 5 put forward several arguments to account for this level of

dysfunction. First, the organizational structure of the MoI had six deputy ministers for

diverse administrative portfolios which often overlapped with one another. Second,

edicts emanating from the deputy minister of Strategy and Policy branch were

construed as having an improper hierarchical authority by other deputies within the MoI.

Finally, the intense competition for limited financial resources by all bureaucratic

divisions led to an imbalanced allocation of funds. While some divisions such as

Security, Strategy and Policy, and Administration received almost 75 percent of the funding, the remaining three branches were only given 25 percent of the total budget. As a by-product of the ongoing unfair distribution of financial resources, cycles of mistrust, ineffectiveness, inefficiency, bureaucratic corruption, and poor performance continued until the NATO coalition decided to hand over policing responsibilities to the US security forces in 2006.

NATO Official 6, a decorated military official who was responsible for the transition of command from the German advisory force to the US security advisory team in 2005-06, alluded to the continuation of organizational difficulties at the Ministry of Interior. An auditory assessment by a multidisciplinary NATO team prior to the Summit in 2005 had concluded that institutional capacity-building along with human capacity-building initiatives had utterly failed to materialize in professionalizing the administrative bureaucracy at the Ministry of Interior. At the annual NATO Summit in 2006, the decision was made by the US to assume responsibility for the MoI, effectively sidelining and relegating the German advisory force to other civilian ministries. Operating under the NATO mandate, the US mission in Afghanistan introduced the Combined Security Assistance Command (CSAC) at the MoI in Kabul.

NATO Official 6 labels this new approach as radically different from the German training program and strikingly analogous to the military sector reform at the Ministry of Defense. In particular, the CSAC preserved the complex organizational structure of the MoI introduced by the Germans and instead concentrated on bringing a form of discipline within the civil sector of the institution similar in characteristics to the uniformed police service.

Accordingly, the reinvigorated and spirited approach to the professionalization of the bureaucracy at the MoI brought to the fore the diverse challenges for the CSAC that the German advisory force had previously faced. To cope with the lack of human capacity and to gradually build institutional capacity at the MoI, NATO Official 6 asserts that the CSAC, under the US advisory command, decided to offer year-long rotations to senior Afghan bureaucrats at the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) training academy in Quantico, Virginia to professionalize the overall administrative division of the MoI.

Additionally, the CSAC committed to modernizing the MoI with advanced communication equipment, digital recordkeeping resources, and initiated a performance tracking system to monitor progress and deficiencies across all six branches using advanced computer software. The renewed policy of institutional reform and capacity-building programs driven by the US-led CSAC advisors achieved incremental progress in the MoI leading up to 2014.

NATO Official 6 indicates that after completing the rigorous FBI training program, senior Afghan bureaucrats became acquainted with the importance and facets of institutional accountability, modern resource management, planning, and strategizing objectives while middle-and lower-level clerical staff still lacked the administrative knowledge to efficiently execute their responsibilities.

That is not to say that progress had not been made leading up to the summer of 2010 under the command of General David Petraeus, but rather that bureaucratic progress did not maintain uniformity in the MoI. The general preference to train senior officials further ostracized and marginalized lower ranking officials and subjected them

to increased administrative responsibilities without vital training to carry out the official

duties of crucial governmental security organs. In sum, the institutional and human

capacity-building initiative at the MoI in 2002 began with a complex organizational

structure lacking the requisite expertise to efficiently manage and to conduct the day-to-

day operations of a key security institution and gradually transitioned to a slightly more

effective bureaucracy leading up to 2014.

Institutional Features of the National Directorate of Security

Prevailing wisdom among experts on SSR dictates that a strong and capable

national intelligence agency is the centrepiece of a country's security, stability, and

order (Murray, 2009, 189-191; Wilson,2005, 89). In the Western hemisphere, developed

countries perceive intelligence as more than a mere compilation of organized classified

information, but rather view it as a mechanistic institution tasked with collecting,

analyzing, and sharing information to plan well-coordinated missions with other national

security agencies in utmost secrecy. In essence, the security of the state is

unmistakably tied to the quality and quantity of intelligence it can effectively gather from

various sources to safeguard its populace and national interests from looming threats.

In the 1980s, under the Soviet sphere of influence, Afghanistan's national

intelligence agency was called *Khadamate A'etlati-Dawlati* (KhAD) roughly translating to

State Intelligence Agency. With direct advice from the Soviet KGB forces, it became a

potent force of over 50,000 intelligence personnel against the Mujahideen fighters under

the authority of late president Dr. Najibullah Ahmadzai, who was later executed by the

Taliban (Halliday and Tanin, 1998, 1361-1362). KhAD maintained a strong presence

throughout Afghanistan with a complex organizational structure equipped with Soviet spy technology and training to deter the advance of the Mujahideen towards major urban centres.

Not only did it effectively ensure the survival of the Communist regime in Afghanistan through the 1980s, it also served as a powerful repressive tool for the government against political dissent (Halliday and Tanin, 1998, 1363-1367). Common activities of the KhAD through 1980s included arranging forced disappearances of dissidents, foreign espionage, and establishing political prisoner camps in collusion with the KGB (Cogan, 1993, 77). However, with the fall of Dr. Najibullah's regime in 1992 to Mujahideen factions, the state's intelligence apparatus also disintegrated, which effectively spelled the end for this institution until the arrival of the NATO coalition in Afghanistan in 2001.

In Afghanistan, the NDS was reinvented in early 2002 as the country's national intelligence agency with direct assistance from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Pentagon to ensure the survivability of the fragile Karzai government and a viable and capable intelligence apparatus. Despite its existence since 2002, there remains a paucity of academic literature, analytical reports, and performance assessments beyond general speculation in order to genuinely understand the inner institutional workings of the NDS. To gain insight into the administrative and operational aspects of this institution, and further, to close the gap between speculation and evidence, the author conducted interviews with numerous former and current senior NDS officials. These officials were interviewed both inside and outside Afghanistan to study and explore the institutional and organizational structure of the NDS.

Afghan Official 6, who served as an advisor in the executive office of the Director of Intelligence from early 2002 until 2013, points to some of the institutional weaknesses present in the NDS. In comparison to the MoD and MoI, the NDS embodies a modest organizational structure and chain of command. The NDS is an independent intelligence body whereby the director reports directly to the President of Afghanistan. Afghan Official 6 further established that the CIA training of vetted special NDS agents takes place outside Afghanistan in Bahrain, where the US military's 5th Fleet is based, and in various military intelligence bases across the US.

The strength of the extensive CIA training has ushered in the type of professionalism and expertise unseen in the MoD and MoI. According to Afghan Official 6, the NDS recruits undergo a rigorous 18-month training program, which involves learning methods of counter-terrorism strategies, enhanced interrogation techniques, intelligence gathering techniques, interagency coordination, international human rights law, interception and transcription of data, policy implementation, special operations planning, and surveillance tactics.

Furthermore, the inclusive training provided by the CIA has also had a positive impact on the flow of information within the institution with a clear and hierarchical chain of command. Afghan Official 6 professes that the creation of an internal auditory watchdog with assistance from the CIA is coupled with early training programmes that helped to minimize corruption at the NDS and placed immense emphasis on accountability and interagency transparency. As well, the recruitment process handled by the human resources department comprehensively conducted background checks in

coordination with the CIA, the FBI, Interpol and other regional intelligence agencies to safeguard against any form of insurgent infiltration.

Afghan Official 7, a senior member of the operations planning department who has been with the agency since 2002, pointed to the well-developed bureaucratic procedures within the NDS. Given that the NDS was not part of the ministerial reward system like the MoD and MoI in 2002, it was able to build capacity and nurture relationships with all other divisions in an impartial manner. For instance, NATO Official 2 proclaimed that every single NDS operation, no matter how trivial or vast, had to be approved by a specially trained judge to ensure that it was within the legal framework, and more importantly, in the national security interests of Afghanistan.

Mass implementation of bureaucratic procedures with rules and guidelines concerning grievances and promotions, planning, and structure for strategizing counter-terrorism initiatives helped jointly and progressively strengthen the institutional and human capacity building enterprise. In fact, the accountability and bureaucratic efficiency of the NDS was found to be pervasive across all its branches including major cities of Helmand, Heart, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kapisa, Logar, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Paktia. Afghan Officials 6 and 7 both agree that the CIA-funded training programs helped foster patterns of institutional behaviour at the NDS which were consistent with the conduct of a well-developed professional intelligence agency collaborating around principles of accountability, rules and procedures, and efficiency.

But even though the agency succeeded and made significant strides from 2002 to 2014 on many institutional and bureaucratic fronts, the NDS also faced severe challenges in other aspects. Afghan Official 8, a special field operations agent with more

than a decade of experience at the NDS, expanded on some of the ingrained inadequacies within the organization. While the institutional and bureaucratic structures of the intelligence apparatus were formulated by the CIA and the Pentagon to emulate those of a Western-style intelligence agency in 2002, the method in which the NDS conducted the day-to-day affairs of the intelligence bureaucracy was deficient. He primarily stressed the dependence on decades-old techniques of analyzing and collecting intelligence. The CIA and Pentagon-funded NDS was promised human capacity with hands-on training but overlooked in terms of institutional and logistical arrangements which can be better performed with modern intelligence equipment. The dearth of advanced analytical software, communication interceptors and systems, and surveillance systems led to the intelligence assessments of the NDS being anecdotal, incomplete, and inaccurate.

In light of this incapacitating shortcoming, Afghan Officials 7 and 8 argued that oftentimes intelligence assessments presented to policymakers within the organization have been severely deficient in including important content such as identifying new insurgent groups, planning counter-terrorism operations, and in analyzing the severity of terrorist threats. As such, incomplete assessments led to indecisiveness on the part of policymakers and endangered the lives of ordinary civilians including major security breaches. Afghan Official 8 further stated that historical performance assessments leading back to 2002 overwhelmingly indicated that intelligence analysis and policy formulation were major areas of concern at the NDS, while the collection of intelligence by field agents was deemed to be satisfactory.

Afghan Official 8 further acknowledged that the aforementioned limitations

cultivated a pervasive culture of authoritarianism within the senior ranks of the

organization. He emphasized during the interviews that the vast majority of the senior

NDS officials were inveterate impulsive decision-makers accustomed to informal

modalities of policy formulation dictated by anecdotes, impulses, and minimum

oversight. Furthermore, there was a visible pattern of path dependence within the NDS

since its advent which was largely based on human-centric models of policymaking –

far-detached from the widely-accepted modern gold standard of 'Evidence-Based Policy

Making' (EBPM).

Although EBPM was initially limited to the realm of medicine to promote a

rigorous scientific process in establishing evidence-based methods of medical research

and treatment, it soon expanded into other disciplines including public policy. In general,

EBPM is conceptually concerned with objectivity in the decision-making process by

scientifically collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information to further social or

institutional goals, which in turn leads to informed policy-making (Sanderson, 2002, 6-

9). Many of the principles concerning EBPM promote a vision of institutional policy-

making which inhibits selective and subjective aspects of conducting public policy in

favour of a organized and accountable decision-making process. For example, see

Figure 3.3 Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) Policy Cycle. The EBPM model

displayed below explains the circular process of modern policy-making aimed at

identifying problems and achieving desired policy results as a result of constant

monitoring and evaluation. In the case of Afghanistan, the EBPM model was endorsed

at certain lower administrative levels yet faced resistance from senior bureaucrats.

Figure 3.3 Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) Policy Cycle
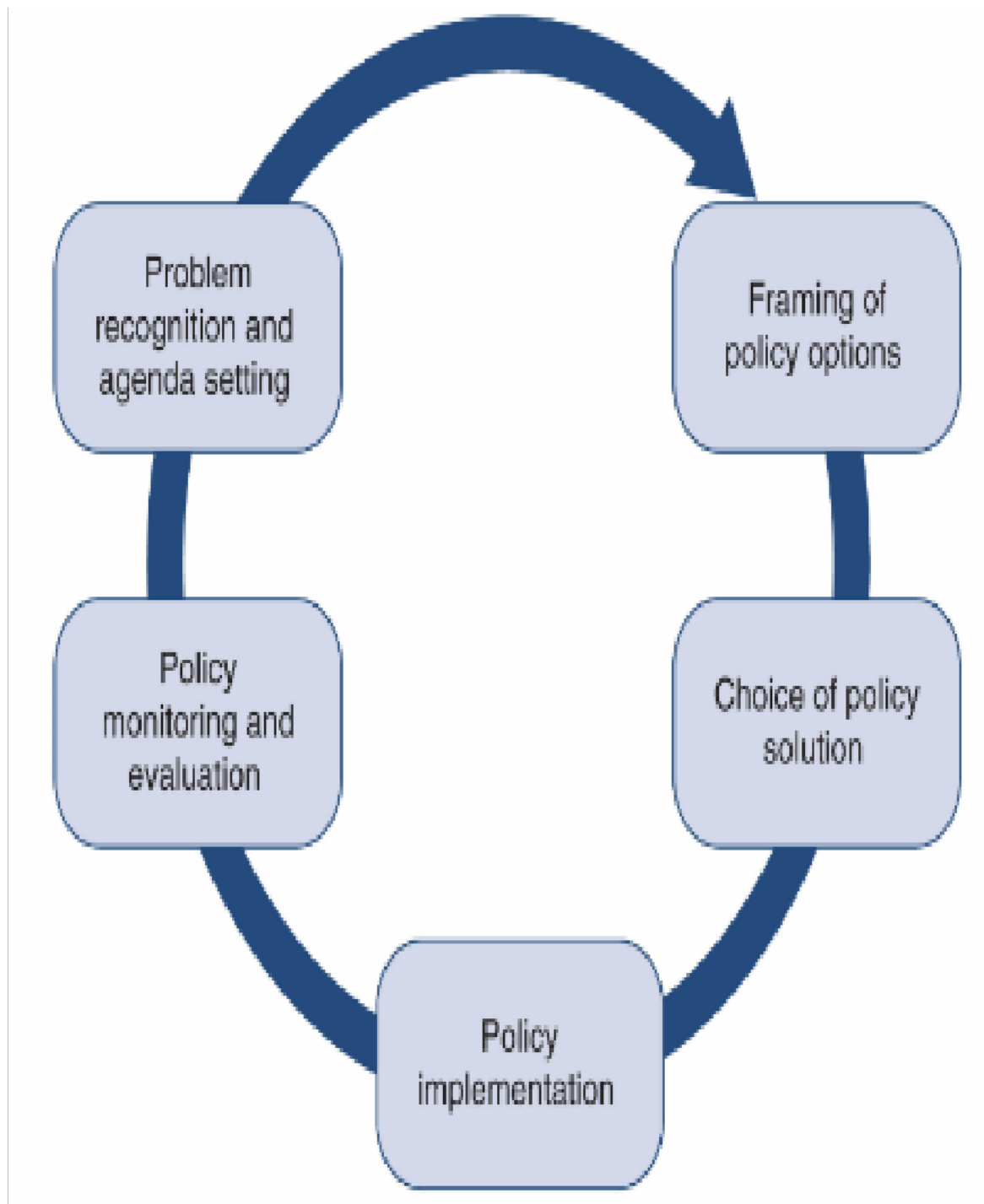
Source: Young and Quinn, 2002, 12.

In sum, there is an undeviating relationship between EBPM and path dependence in modern designs of policy decision-making. The wide recognition of EBPM as the gold standard for excellent scientific policy practice has resulted in mass dependence on the EBPM model of policymaking and its pervasiveness in the majority of governmental institutions across the developed and developing world (De Marchie et al., 2016, 21-24).

While the cycle of path dependence was susceptible to significant events known as 'critical junctures' which led to paradigmatic changes in policy direction in government institutions, Afghan Official 8 affirms that the policy-making process within the NDS from 2002 to 2014 lacked an operational reassessment and it was largely incongruous with the fragile security situation across Afghanistan. As such, the main source of authoritarian policy-making attributed to the NDS by Official 8 was rooted in a trial-and-error framework of policy making devoid of the information-based analytical sophistication required to guide the intelligence apparatus.

Conclusion

To recapitulate, this chapter provides an account of institutional strengths and weaknesses of key security institutions in Afghanistan – the MoD, MoI, and the NDS. In doing so, the aim is to bridge gaps in literature between the general understanding of issues associated with policy implementation in security institutions with definitive accounts from knowledgeable technocrats, policy officials, and senior executives at the MoD, MoI, and the NDS.

As briefly reviewed earlier, the dearth of literature pertaining to the institutional aspects of all three key security institutions from 2002 to 2014 categorically inhibits the necessary building of requisite academic discourse toward a reassessment of the institutional proficiencies and deficiencies within the security apparatus.

Having academically engaged the uncharted realm of NATO's SSR approach to institutional reform by interviewing relevant policy officials, several inferences regarding the above-mentioned institutions can be drawn. First, the emergence of the ANA as a national defense entity under the direct authority of the MoD from 2002 to 2014 brought to the fore the complex challenges in professionalizing the institutional backbone of the national army. The dominance of senior policy and executive positions by warlords with little formal experience in conducting the day-to-day operations of a command structure of a professional army hindered the bureaucratic progress of the MoD as a formidable institution. Additionally, the NATO undertaking which formed the Civil Service Commission as an administrative advisory body embedded within the MoD resulted in mixed outcomes.

Although the Security and Support Division staffed by rank-and-file bureaucrats at the Ministry of Defense benefited immensely from advice and training from the Civil Service Commission, senior policymakers largely operated based on informalism and a lack of oversight. As a result, instances of 'big seed' corruption in logistics and procurement subdivision of the MoD became evident from 2002 to 2014, which paved the way for the establishment of the NPA. Nevertheless, both human and institutional capacity at the MoD significantly improved over the years due to the special attention

granted by the NATO coalition forces to build up the main battle and defense groups of the country. The recruitment of both senior and mid-level bureaucrats gradually came to be governed by rules and procedures which were previously non-existent.

The procurement dimension of the MoD was not only overseen by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, but was largely monitored by the World Bank, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and independent contractors to prevent corrupt backdoor arrangements. Lastly, improvements in public accessibility and infrastructure allowed for the development and expansion of the MoD satellite branches across all 34 provinces as part of the larger goal of maintaining national presence to improve security outcomes in volatile regions in Afghanistan. Thus, the institutional aspects of the MoD from 2002 to 2014 were a mixed record of progress and setbacks in introducing core liberal doctrines of accountability, oversight, and transparency.

Secondly, this chapter accentuated the institutional dimensions of the MoI and the ANP to explore a multitude of factors which shaped its identity as a public protection force from 2002 to 2014. Analogous to certain divisions of the MoD, the creation of the MoI in 2002 was also based on an incentive system meant to reward warlords and militia groups for assisting the US-led coalition in 2001 and 2002 to oust the Taliban regime. Not surprisingly, the MoI found itself at the crossroads, facing international pressure for increased institutional capacity building on the one hand and catering to the preferences of warlords keen on maintaining the informal culture of nepotism and corruption on the other.

Moreover, the emergence of acrimonious internal disputes among distinct divisions of the MoI signalled an institutional flaw whereby the allocation of donor aid was unequally and arbitrarily misappropriated leading up to 2011. Also, the constant change in ministerial positions at the MoI led to an incoherent institutional reform agenda due in part to the colossal problems posed by powerful pressure groups led by former warlords intent on maintaining the informal culture of the status quo. This led to corruption, misdirection, and obfuscation for technocrats and rank-and-file officials in performing their duty to the best of their ability despite the lack of clear direction and prerogatives.

Further exacerbating the institutional flaws at the MoI from 2003 to 2014 was the change of command from an advisory perspective solely by Germany to a mixed American-German assistance initiative. The emergence of the CSAC proved to be much more effective in training the bureaucratic staff by ushering in to the MoI a more military mindset, but it also concomitantly neglected the past efforts and advisory direction of Germany in bringing about institutional accountability. Again, these inherent institutional problems continued to hamper the administrative progress of the MoI leading up to the conclusion of the NATO combat mission in 2014. Overall, the adoption of a complex administrative structure at the MoI in 2002 by German advisors, which idealistically emulated procedural features highlighting the importance of accountability and oversight evident in well-developed Western institutions but not manifested in Afghanistan brought about confusion, inefficiency, and a lack of direction between 2002 and 2014.

Finally, this chapter provided an appraisal of the institutional features of the intelligence sector in Afghanistan with vital insight from interviewees. In comparison to the MoD and MoI, this research found that the NDS was not plagued to a similar extent by institutional malignancies. The institution of a simple command structure in tandem with rigorous training provided by the CIA in 2002 and other NATO members' intelligence agencies in 2003 gave way to the professionalization of the institutional framework at the NDS. The prerogative to create an internal watchdog coupled with an educational program for the NDS technocrats focused on the procedural functions of the agency set in motion the type of institutional coherence seen in many more well-developed Western institutions.

Though the NDS fared better in terms of institutional performance and responsibility from 2002 to 2014, the agency found itself in a rancorous administrative battle between traditional bureaucrats and reformists. Between 2006 and 2010, traditionalists strongly advocated for the weight of their personal experiences, judgements, and nationalist motivations while reformists were steadfast on familiarizing themselves with modern forms of analytical and organizational methods in making informed policy decisions. As Afghan Official 7 explained, the agency's policy direction leading up to 2014 was derived from a combination of opinions and dated forms of analysis that would have had significant potential, should there be a gradual introduction of modern methods of analysis and planning.

Lastly, the institutional assessment of the administrative performance of the NDS is reflective of the larger divergent policy-making models apparent in developed and underdeveloped countries. The transition from human-centric models to EBPM is a

systematic process centred on the development of high levels of personnel expertise and organizational sophistication analogous to scientific methods. Despite these shortcomings, the NDS is widely considered to be the most administratively effective institution in comparison to the MoD and MoI. Given these points, the gradual presence of more well-developed chains of command staffed by professional bureaucrats that began to embody a progressive and partially scientific 1policy-making model afforded the NDS with considerable potential for further reform.

The link between institutional development in the MoD, MoI, and the NDS and liberal institutionalism cannot be overstated. Although far from being efficient and effective in every aspect, the journey from informal patrimonialism towards liberal democratization was evident. Institutional development at the MoD, MoI, and the NDS - as devised by NATO's SSR agenda - foresaw the long and arduous process of full-fledged bureaucratization which would need to encompass rules, procedures, and a structural hierarchy of command. This chapter discussed institutional level deficiencies and proficiencies at the MoD, MoI, and the NDS in depth in order to shed light on Afghanistan's gradual march towards accountability, responsibility, and transparency in implementing institutional reform.

The above discussion leads to the following overarching research question: **What worked and what did not work in terms of SSR's institutional reform efforts in key Afghan security organs between 2003-2014?** First, the establishment of the intelligence, police and military institutions in 2002 together with dedicated trainers and funding allowed for the gradual legitimization of sectors of the developing Afghan state. Secondly, the hierarchical command and structure which guided bureaucratic

procedures in Afghan security organs demonstrated gradual institutional progress in keeping with Western liberal democratic objectives. Thirdly, the introduction of legal procedures, rules, and various mechanisms for institutional oversight signalled the gradual professional development at the MoD, MoI, and particularly the NDS, leading up to 2014.

On the other hand, the liberal institutionalist principles were rarely implemented in a scientific manner between 2003 and 2014. Constant conflicts in terms of instituting reforms between traditionalists and modern reformists saw institutional progress digress from core liberal institutionalist objectives of accountability, responsibility, and transparency. Also, the recruitment of illiterate and underqualified individuals to serve in key roles within the MoD, MoI, and the NDS affected the mandate of SSR's institutional reform in Afghanistan. Finally, the endemic culture of tolerance for corruption, informalism, and nepotism in Afghan security institutions – that was endured and even tolerated by NATO-led advisors and trainers – monumentally affected institutional progress between 2003 and 2014.

In sum, the deficiencies noted in this chapter are not necessarily an indicator of problems and deficiencies in the SSR model for institutional reform itself but rather point to the shortcomings in the execution of the liberal institutionalist project both by Afghan and NATO officials. Hence, some measure of institutional progress in the MoD, MoI, and the NDS can be appreciated within the context of a 'trial-and-error framework' that was seriously affected by the inconsistent and incoherent modalities of policy formation and implementation.

CHAPTER 4

Operational Aspects of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police

Introduction

After considering key institutional aspects of SSR in the previous chapter, this

chapter discusses research findings pertaining to key operational dimensions of the

MoD and MoI and their respective security apparatuses mainly from 2003 to 2014. In

the previous chapter, several policy paradigms relevant to institutional policy making

were discussed – ranging from human-centric models to EBPM– which pointed to the

divergent methods through which governmental policy was crafted. For the purpose of

explaining the findings concerning the operational facets of SSR, these models will be

revisited to illustrate the links among effectiveness, field performance, and policy, in the

MoD and MoI in Afghanistan.

This chapter is structured into three sections. First, research findings related to

operational aspects of the MoD are reviewed and discussed. Secondly, an in-depth

description and analysis of the MoI sheds light on the mandate and performance of its

overall field operations. Finally, the chapter concludes with an analysis of both the MoD

and MoI field operations to systematically assess the multifaceted realm of performance

by security apparatuses in Afghanistan. Then this chapter summarily recapitulates the

fundamental findings relevant to operational aspects of the MoD and MoI in

Afghanistan.

The relationship between the authority of a central government, its overall ability

to govern effectively, and the legitimacy it garners cannot be detached from the

effectiveness of a country's key security institutions. Tasked with monopolizing the

means of violence and concurrently serving as an enforcer and guarantor of the state's

existence, the importance of a state-sanctioned security sector cannot be overstated. In

Afghanistan, it is evident that the central government has continuously struggled to

monopolize violence through its fragile and emerging security sector in the face of the

Taliban insurgency which had undermined the central government's legitimacy since

2001. As such, the research findings discussed below shed light on whether the modern

Afghan state continues to struggle for nationwide legitimacy from an operational aspect

involving the internationally backed mandate of the two key security institutions – the

MoD and MoI.

Ministry of Defense Field Operations – The Case of the Afghan Armed Forces

The largest security institution in Afghanistan is the Ministry of Defense which is

composed of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Air Force personnel

numbering cumulatively around 181,000 active soldiers (Glickstein and Spangler, 2014,

94-96). Aside from the administrative division of the MoD discussed in the previous

chapter, the land and aerial warfare branches together form the Afghan Armed Forces

(AAF). Prior to discussing the research findings involving the operational capacity of

Afghanistan's land and aerial forces of AAF, a brief organizational sketch presents a

complete picture of their key functions. The land warfare component of AAF is the ANA

which encompasses one division and six regional battle corps placed strategically

across Afghanistan and jointly accounts for more than 174,000 soldiers: 111th Capital

Division, 201st Silab Corps, 203rd Thunder Corps, 205th Atal Corps, 207th Zafar Corps,

209th Shaheen Corps and 215th Maiwand Corps. For more information outlining areas of

regional responsibility from 2001 to present see Figure 4.0 Regional Responsibility of

ANA Division and ANA Corps Areas.

In comparison to the land warfare command of the ANA, the Afghan Air Force is

a diminutive branch of the Armed Forces numbering nearly 8,500 active personnel

divided into three Air Detachments and four Air Wings since its inception in 2001:

Gardez Air Detachment, Heart Air Detachment, Jalalabad Air Detachment, Kabul Air

Wing, Kandahar Air Wing, Mazar-e-Sharif Air Detachment, Shindand Air Wing, and the

Special Missions Wing. The Support Brigades division of the MoD, headquartered in

Kabul, discussed extensively in the previous chapter, dually serves as the official

logistical, procurement, and technical assistance arm of the Air Force as well as the

ANA throughout Afghanistan. To further investigate the operational capacity of the AAF

under the MoD command, this research study also employed qualitative observational

interviewing techniques to understand the core intricacies of SSR.

To reiterate, the aim of this research study is both theoretical and empirical. That

is, this research attempts to investigate the fundamental principles of liberal

institutionalism – which has come to be the theoretical backbone of SSR – with

research findings from relevant documents, institutional planning arrangements and

interviews of key NATO and Afghan officials. This will help to determine whether

NATO's SSR approach in Afghanistan either uniformly or at least partially worked from

2003 to 2014 – and whether and to what extent it required further reform. As such, the

main objective of this research study is to bridge the gap between theory and practice

within the realm of SSR in Afghanistan.

Figure 4.0 Regional Responsibility of ANA Division and ANA Corps Areas
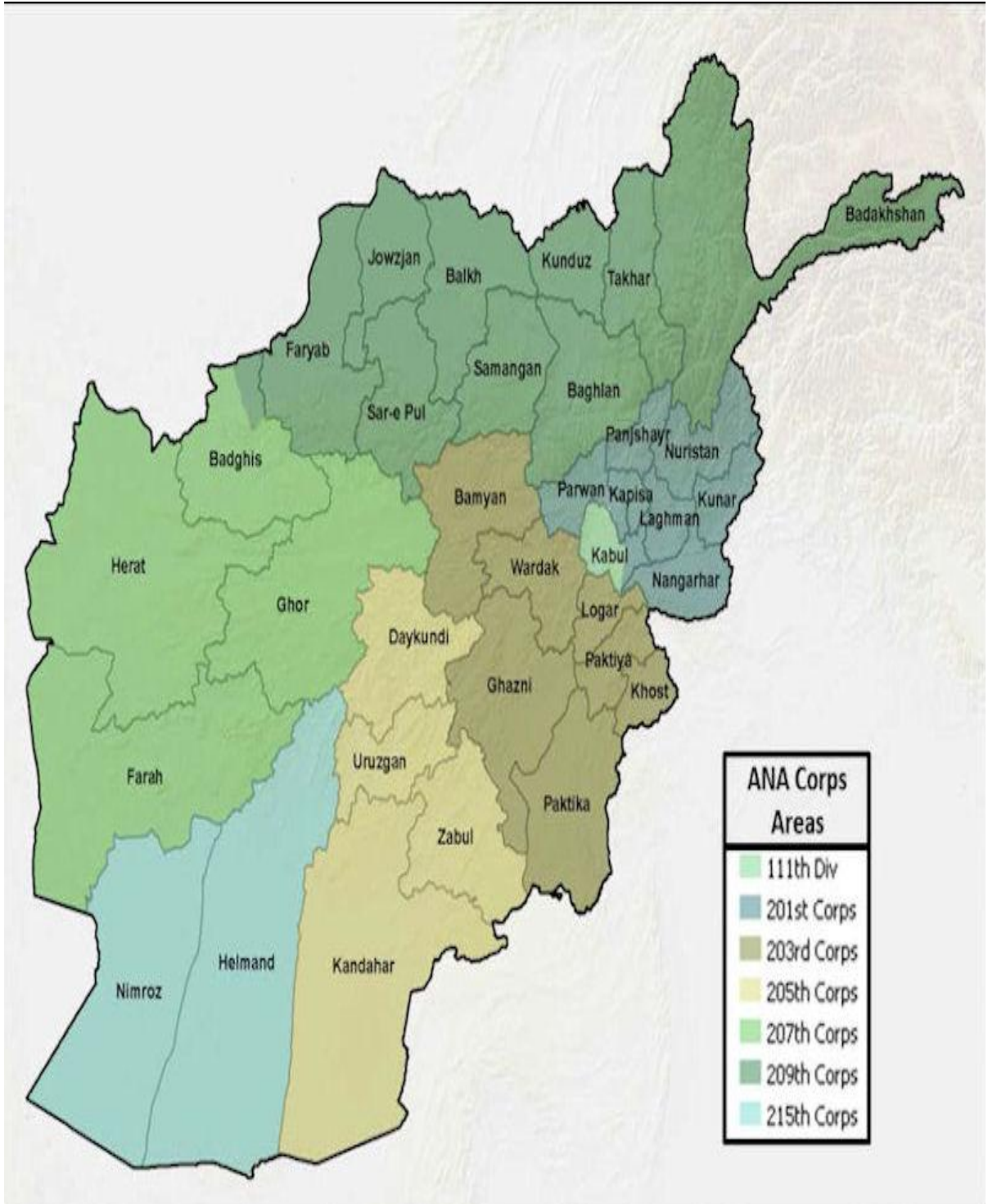
Source: Global Security, 2014

And, to substantiate this larger objective with substantive policy-relevant evidence and crucial insights from participants in this study that transcend speculative narrative accounts.

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001, the need for a traditional military apparatus with modern training became both apparent and necessary. All branches of the AAF, including the ANA and the Air Force, had been dismantled by the Mujahideen militias between 1993-1996, and the succeeding Taliban regime overlooked the need for a military institution in Afghanistan given the presence of its own armed factions with foreign backing from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The NATO coalition's involvement in Afghanistan in 2003 set in motion the process of statebuilding rooted in the liberal adoption of the SSR agenda. The main imperative of ISAF in 2003 was to responsibly rebuild the Afghan military to allow for civilian development and reconstruction to take place. However, the complex task of rebuilding the military's operational capacity from 2003 to 2014 proved too difficult – and summary assessment of Afghan military's operational capacity is examined below in more detail.

On December 20th, 2001, UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1386 authorized the deployment of multi-national ISAF troops to help stabilize the capital city of Kabul. Later in 2003, UNSC Resolution 1510 mandated the expansion of the ISAF mission to all other major urban centres including Heart, Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif (UN, 2001; UN, 2003). Another facet of this resolution called for the rapid creation and mobilization of Afghan-led National Security Forces, who would draw

their strength from multiple apparatuses (Intelligence, Military, and Police). UNSC

Resolution 1386 paved the way for the arrival of the first contingent of multi-national

ISAF forces in January 2002 deployed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter – *Action*

with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression

(UN, 2001).

NATO Official 8, an interviewee who served as a senior NATO operations officer

in the Afghanistan section from 2003-2012, alluded to the creation of the MoD and the

AAF in early 2002. He explained that from its inception, the MoD was under the direct

supervision and guidance of the US military in helping to rebuild the Afghan military

force, with small-scale advisory help from France and the UK. He further indicated that

the recruitment process after the establishment of the MoD, which began in early 2002,

was aimed at rapidly boosting the number of active Afghan military personnel who could

shoulder the bulk of responsibility for security stabilization missions across Afghanistan

(See Figure 4.1 Increase in the Size of Afghan National Army, 2003-2013 and Number

of ANA Soldiers on Duty). This chart demonstrates the rise in number of ANA personnel

as the SSR project in Afghanistan took shape with assistance from NATO's ISAF

mission. The chart further captures the rapid rise in the number of ANA recruits and the

robustness, and the swiftness of the training model adopted by ISAF to help accelerate

the deployment of ANA troops across Afghanistan.

Figure 4.1 Increase in the Size of Afghan National Army, 2003-2013 and Number of

ANA Soldiers on Duty

Month	Ministry of Defense Forces
End 2003	6,000
End 2004	24,000
End 2005	26,000
End 2006	36,000
End 2007	50,000
April 2008	57,800
October 2008	68,000
March 2009	82,780
July 2009	91,900
November 2009	95,000
December 2009	100,131
March 2010	113,000
April/May 2010	119,388
August 2010	134,000
September 2010	138,164
October 2010	144,638
December 2010	149,533
Jan/Feb 2011	152,000
April 2011	164,003
May 2011	168,037

August 2011	169,076
September 2011	170,781
October 2011	173,150
December 2011	179,610
January 2012	184,437
February 2012	187,874
March 2012	194,466
October 2012	178,501
January 2013	177,579
March 2013	177,725
September 2013	185,817

Source: Brookings Institution, 2014

To facilitate the swift build-up of the ANA, the US funded the establishment of the Afghan National Army Training Command (ANATC) to be supervised by the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) at the Kabul Military Training Academy. NATO Official 8 pointed to several flaws which affected the operational capacity of the ANA through this multi-tiered training program undertaken by the CSTC-A. He began by drawing attention to the structure of the basic military training program for new recruits organized hastily by the US Armed Forces in early 2002.

According to NATO Official 8, the CSTC-A adopted an assembly line model in attempting to produce combat ready soldiers with professional training. The vast differences in mindsets, literacy, and motivation between the NATO trainers and Afghan trainees in 2003 colossally impacted the readiness of the AAF in tackling the resurgent Taliban insurgency. The assembly line model undertaken by the CSTC-A, which began in early 2002, provided intensive Western-style military training to Afghan recruits, most of whom were illiterate, had political propensities linked to factional warlords, and had only joined the AAF to financially benefit from the military's pay structure and bolster their factional ranks. NATO Official 8 further elaborated that militia fighters from the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan and the Northern Alliance group, had joined the AAF numbering in thousands to cement their influence, as the Afghan military gradually morphed into a professional fighting force leading up to 2010.

Afghan Official 2, a long-serving senior policy and planning executive at the Ministry of Defense with extensive knowledge of the AAF, implied that the twelve-week-long basic military training conducted by the CSTC-A affected the operational dynamics of the AAF on the battlefield leading up to 2014. Given that the bulk of recruits were

assigned to the ANA from 2002 to 2014 and divided into six regional corps and one division, there were serious personnel misappropriations which emerged in early 2002. Afghan Official 2 explained that the majority of the top-performing ANA soldiers were assigned to the 111th Division comprised of 17,000 soldiers, which was based in Kabul and primarily meant to protect the capital and diplomatic missions from large-scale insurgent attacks. Though this was a deliberate decision undertaken by the MoD in tandem with the CSTC-A, it overwhelmingly led to notable operational deficiencies in the other six regional combat corps based in mostly violent and volatile parts of Afghanistan.

Afghan Official 2 delineated that over 95 percent of insurgent activities were concentrated in the eastern, western, and southern provinces of Afghanistan from 2002 to 2014, while the most capable and talented ANA soldiers were disproportionately stationed in 111th Kabul division. Moreover, he explained that all the ANA soldiers were trained with Soviet-era AK-47 assault rifles by the CSTC-A, yet upon graduation were armed with US-supplied M-16 assault rifles with which they had little operational and maintenance familiarity. Of the 425,000 M-16 assault rifles donated to the ANA by the Pentagon, almost 60 percent either had originated from the surplus repository of the US Army or were at the end of their service life.

NATO Official 8 corroborated Afghan Official 2's account and described the monumental issues linked to the choice of the M-16 assault rifle by the Pentagon as the primary service weapon of the ANA. He explained that there were severe shortages of available spare parts for the M-16 assault rifle from 2002 to 2014 in Afghanistan, which

forced many of the ANA soldiers to be assigned to administrative duties for several weeks until spare parts could be located. Another prevailing issue related to the M-16 assault rifle was that the barrel often overheated in the hot and arid climate of eastern and southern Afghanistan after prolonged combat usage in the area where the bulk of the Taliban insurgency was concentrated leading up to 2014. In such instances, NATO Official 8 stated that the M-16 assault rifle was virtually useless and raised the vulnerability of the ANA soldiers to insurgent attacks in combat situations.

In light of these challenges, NATO Official 8 expressed deep satisfaction and emphasized the growing optimism within the NATO coalition pertaining to the operational capabilities of the ANA. Having served as a high-ranking military intelligence officer with first-hand experience in Afghanistan, NATO Official 8 underscored the overall rapid establishment of the ANA with a professional command structure beginning in 2003 with NATO's involvement in Afghanistan. While the ANA was beset by the abovementioned deficiencies, the overall progress since 2002 was remarkable, due in part to unwavering military assistance from the US-led coalition, at first, and then later from NATO. NATO Official 8 stated that the heavy weaponry supplied by the US Army had been exemplary including thousands of DSH-K heavy machine guns, heavily armored personnel carriers, humvees, howitzers, 82 mm mortars, advanced rocket systems, surface-to-air missiles, and modern radar systems installed in all major urban centres and border areas.

In addition, NATO Official 7, a high-ranking policy officer responsible for the Afghanistan operations division from 2003 to 2014 with extensive knowledge of the hierarchical bureaucratic, and operational structure of the Afghan MoD also provided

crucial first-hand insight. He stressed that the ANA Corps 201, 203, 205, 209, and 215

maintained an offensive posture from 2003 to 2014 whereby the CSTC-A training along

with the US-supplied military-grade weapons faced the challenge of eradicating the

Taliban-allied insurgents in the most volatile provinces across Afghanistan. The 203rd,

205th, and 215th ANA Corps, which have been responsible for defending and

safeguarding provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Paktia, Wardak, and

Zabul from 2002 were among the most seasoned and professional soldiers in

Afghanistan, stated NATO Official 7. To see the widespread location of these provinces,

see Figure 4.0 Regional Responsibility of ANA Division and ANA Corps Area.

The mountainous and trying terrains of southern and eastern Afghanistan

combined with the evolving guerilla-style warfare waged by Taliban insurgents against

the ANA Corps 203, 205, and 215 since 2002 has proved to be an important litmus test

in determining their effectiveness in field operations. NATO Official 7 accentuated the

unrelenting resolve of the ANA soldiers and how the emerging spirit of loyalty over the

years strengthened the morale of the military apparatus under the command of the

MoD. He attributed these positive developments in the ANA over the years leading up to

2014 to several key factors. First, the voluntary nature of the ANA under the newly

established MoD institution coupled with years of brutal repression under the Taliban

regime leading up to 2001 gave impetus to a younger generation of Afghans to join the

main national Defense force. The negative sentiments held by ordinary Afghans against

the Taliban regime due to their strict adherence to the Deobandi sect of Islam in 2001

prompted many to actively participate in preventing the resurgence of extremist

elements in governance. Secondly, the emergence of a new national identity under the

leadership of former President Hamid Karzai, who brought together all ethnic factions in

Afghanistan to nationally unite the previously fragmented and opposing tribes, garnered

widespread legitimacy for the newly-formed central government. This in turn, prompted

leaders from Hazara, Pashtun, Tajik, and Uzbek tribes to take part in aspects of national

governance which dramatically boosted the number of ANA recruits. According to

NATO Official 7, not only was this social movement to allow for some basic

development to take place throughout Afghanistan but further cemented the role of the

ANA as a unitary national Defense force devoid of the widespread ethnic propensities

which had previously dominated much of Afghan military's history during the uprisings

from 1970s to 1990s. See Figure 4.2 Ethnic Composition of the Afghan National Army.

The chart below reveals the measure of solidarity and unity which emerged among

various Afghan ethnicities in the aftermath of the collapse of the Taliban regime to form

the modern composition of the ANA.

Figure 4.2 Ethnic Composition of the Afghan National Army

	Pashtun	Tajik	Hazara	Uzbek	Others
Officer	42.4%	39.1%	7.9%	4.5%	6.1%
Non-Commissioned Officer	51.8%	38.2%	9.6%	3.2%	1.5%
Soldier/Patrolman	43.0%	29.2%	11.0%	8.5%	8.2%

Source: Brookings Institution, 2014

Finally, NATO Official 7 cited the level of international support through military assistance for the ANA facilitated by the enormous presence of ISAF forces numbering over 144,000 at its peak as a contributing factor. The large-scale deployment of ISAF across Afghanistan beginning in 2003 paved the way for the MoD to actively seek the professionalization of the ANA with multilateral support from coalition members.

At the Prague Summit in November, 2002, international partners provided financial, moral, and political support to the rebuilding of the ANA, which underscored the resolute backing of the international community for Afghanistan's emerging democracy. Much of this multifaceted international support for Afghanistan translated into legitimacy for the central government and the military apparatus and further signalled NATO's intent to go beyond Kabul in far-flung provinces in order to operationally expand the scope of the combat mission. NATO Official 7 affirmed that the unprecedented level of NATO military support coupled with the magnitude of the combat mission helped bolster the morale and spirit of the ANA soldiers to safeguard the longevity of Afghanistan's fragile democracy.

Afghan Official 3, a long-serving special advisor to the Parliament of Afghanistan with extensive experience in the inner workings of the Afghan MoD, also corroborated many of NATO Official 7's claims regarding the gradual improvements in field performance of the ANA from 2002 to 2014. But, he expressed his ambivalence regarding the overall field performance of the ANA across Afghanistan. Many of Afghan Official 3's reservations were grounded in the varying capabilities of the ANA Corps largely dependent on its regional deployment in Afghanistan.

He proclaimed that the ANA Corps 201, 203, 205, 215 were disproportionately better armed from 2002 to 2014 with modern weapons and equipped with modern communication systems. The Corps had access to around-the-clock embedded advisory support from NATO Strategic Advisory Teams and benefited immensely from improved logistical arrangements which significantly assisted ANA Corps 201, 203, 205, 213 in day-to-day field operations. On the other hand, he delineated that during the same time frame the ANA Corps 207 and 209 were overlooked during strategic phases of military planning, resource allocation, and tactical coordination with ISAF personnel. This unintended miscalculation by the NATO coalition resulted in fractures within the ranks of the ANA further affecting the operational efficiency of 207 and 209 Corps.

Afghan Official 3 further pointed to the gradual increase in insurgent activities in operational areas of the ANA Corps 207 and 209 as a by-product of the misappropriation of military resources. Having suffered serious battlefield losses against the ANA and NATO forces in southern and eastern Afghanistan from 2003 to 2010, the Taliban and affiliated insurgent groups focused the bulk of their attention on the previously stable provinces such as Baghlan, Badghis, Farah, Heart, and Kunduz leading up to 2014.

As part of this revitalized major offensive strategy led by the Taliban in 2010 leading up to 2014, insurgents began targeting major town centres rather than smaller districts in order to militarily overwhelm the ANA Corps 207 and 209 with heavy firepower. Not only did this strategy result in loss of territory to the Taliban, including major urban centres such as Chaghcharan and Kunduz City, it managed to subvert the

stable image of the ANA Corps 207 and 209 which was attempting to facilitate civil and economic development in their area of operations.

According to Afghan Official 3, another reason for the dramatic change in Taliban strategy to target major urban centres rather than smaller districts across Afghanistan was to gain leverage in any future peace negotiations with the Afghan government. Targeting and occupying large population centres was meant to deal a psychological blow to the morale of the ANA and to demonstrate the vulnerability of the Afghan government's central authority to insurgent attacks. For instance, the week-long occupation of Kunduz City by Taliban insurgents in early 2014 led to the collapse of 209 Corps military installations, Afghan Official 3 said. Multiple battalions of the 209 Corps were driven out to Kunduz airfield, located on the outskirts of the bustling city, by Taliban fighters until NATO-led coalition forces were able to provided close combat air support to help the ANA soldiers recapture the city.

The fall of Kunduz City, as an example, highlighted the imminent difficulties in the ANA field operations structure. NATO Official 7, a senior and long-serving coalition officer with extensive experience in both the military and police sector in Afghanistan, alluded to certain factors which categorically affected the field operations of the MoD. First, the CSTC-A's training program focused predominantly on building up the ANA Corps with low-ranking incoming soldiers while neglecting the creation and incorporation of members of the Afghan Special Force into the ANA battalions until mid-2005. Many of the covert and special counter-terrorism operations were conducted by NATO troops while the ANA Corps continued to operate in a modified combat support capacity. NATO Official 7 adamantly argued that tactical combat responsibility should

have been under the command of the ANA Special Forces to facilitate their capabilities, growth, and professionalism – an initiative which had been delegated to NATO and coalition forces before 2005.

Furthermore, the MoD field operations were severely impacted by the prolonged and slow development of the Afghan Air Force, stated NATO Official 7. The Afghan Air Force was previously disbanded under the Mujahideen government in early 1990s with many fighter, support, transport and utility aircrafts either destroyed or sold for parts in the black market throughout Central Asia. The Afghan Air Force Modernization Plan that was initiated by the Pentagon in 2003 aimed to ameliorate some of the monumental operational deficiencies in providing support to ground troops. See Figure 4.3 on the Afghan Air Force Modernization Plan initiated in 2003. The chart below provides a description of the equipment supplied to the Afghan Air Force as part of the modernization plan endorsed by the US and NATO. It is important to note that the modernization plan for the Afghan Air Force focused predominantly on building up the close-combat support capabilities and not the air superiority aspect. Although helicopter gunships and transport planes were either refurbished or supplied, advanced fighter jet procurement initiative for the Afghan Air Force was overlooked by both the US and NATO coalition.

Figure 4.3 Afghan Air Force Modernization Plan

Afghan Air Force Modernization Plan

Mazare-e-Sharif Air Wing

Air Mobility
9 Sikorsky UH-60s
4 Cessna C-208s

ISR
10 Orbital ATK AC-208s

Strike
18 MD Helicopters MD-530s
12 Sikorsky UH-60FFFs
10 Embraer/Sierra Nevada A-29s

Shindand Air Wing

Air Mobility
6 Sikorsky UH-60s
4 Cessna C-208s

Kabul Air Wing

Air Mobility
20 Sikorsky UH-60s
8 Cessna C-208s
4 Lockheed Martin C-130s

ISR
12 Orbital ATK AC-208s

Strike
26 Sikorsky UH-60FFFs
11 MD Helicopters MD-530s
5 Embraer/Sierra Nevada A-29s

Kandahar Air Wing

Air Mobility
26 Sikorsky UH-60s
8 Cessna C-208s

ISR
10 Orbital ATK AC-208s

Strike
26 MD Helicopters MD-530s
20 Sikorsky UH-60FFFs
10 Embraer/Sierra Nevada A-29s

209th Corps
207th Corps
201st Corps
203rd Corps
215th Corps
205th Corps

Source: Global Security, 2014.

NATO Official 7 asserted that the Afghan Air Force Modernization Plan was directed at systematically equipping the emerging Afghan Air Force with capable aircraft to reduce the burden on the NATO forces and to serve as an air defense branch of the MoD. Pentagon officials began the procurement process of equipping the Afghan Air Force by purchasing used Soviet-era Mig-17 and Mig-19 attack helicopters and donating used American C-130 Hercules transport aircraft in 2003. The long-term Modernization Plan proposed by the Pentagon under the supervision of Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan included the diversification of the Afghan Air Force. The newer modernization plan introduced in 2011 included the procurement of rotary wing aircraft and light-attack helicopters including Embraer, Sikorsky, and MD Helicopters that were then meant to be contracted out by the Pentagon to various defense firms.

NATO Official 7 applauded the gradual development of the Afghan Air Force as one of the most promising, professional, and capable branches of the MoD. He pointed to the logistical and limited air support provided to the ANA since 2003 throughout Afghanistan's mountainous terrain despite the paucity of jet fighter aircrafts in the Afghan Air Force. He further explained that the Afghan Air Force's professionalism in field operations in comparison to other branches of the MoD was attributable to the comprehensive and ongoing training programs afforded to them by the US Air Force and coalition partners.

In congruence with NATO Official 7's assertions, the SIGAR report in 2013 commended the ability of the Afghan Air Force to operate and provide support in all 34 provinces across the country despite the evident operational limitations (SIGAR, 2013).

The main shortcoming singled out by both NATO Official 7 and the 2013 SIGAR Report

was the reliance of the AAF on NATO forces for close combat air support and high-

altitude precision strikes against insurgents.

The Modernization Plan funded by the Pentagon in 2011 and supported by

NATO until 2014 proceeded to overlook the inclusion of tactical fighter aircraft in

equipping the Afghan Air Force. This led to continued reliance of the AAF on NATO's air

superiority in conducting air strikes and defending hard-earned territory leading to

problems on multiple scales including gaps in communication, poor coordination, and

casualties. As Afghan Official 2 discussed, the role of the CSTC-A cannot be

understated in facilitating the development of many divisions and branches of the AAF

and cementing the central government's authority. He vehemently criticized the lack of

an independent Afghan Air Force with a tactical fighter squadron under the command of

Special Missions Wing in Afghanistan leading up to 2014.

In his view, the field operations led by the MoD command were severely affected

without a capable fighter aircraft squadron which inevitably protracted the habitual policy

of reliance on NATO forces for air support. Although initially it was necessary for the

AAF to rely on NATO for air support leading up to 2005, Afghan Official 2 stressed the

paradoxical undertaking of the Pentagon to only equip the Afghan Air Force with light

attack, transport, and utility aircrafts as part of the reinvigorated Modernization Plan.

As a consequence, Afghan Official 2 considered the national Air Force as only

partially capable of performing the daily tasks of traditional air squadrons, and heavily

dependent on the NATO coalition air support for most important aspects of its purported

operations leading up to 2014. The key aspects of operational independence, fleet

modernization and diversification, and allocation of resources to a capable and promising branch of the MoD were said to have been omitted leading up to the withdrawal of the NATO combat forces in 2014. Thus, the central theme prevalent in discussion with NATO and Afghan officials regarding the Afghan Air Force was that at best, it had been a sub-feature rather than a main characteristic of the SSR efforts in Afghanistan.

In brief, this section of the chapter discussed intricacies associated with the MoD field operations in Afghanistan. To recapitulate, the MoD was and continues to be the largest apparatus of the Afghan National Security Forces numbering around 174,000 personnel, and comprised of the Afghan Air Force and the ANA as part of its organizational and operational structure. The training of the ANA and the Afghan Air Force led by CSTC-A has proven to form the backbone of Afghanistan's SSR efforts leading up to 2014.

This section also highlighted the disproportionate allocation of military resources among the ANA Corps and the varied operational results based on the geographical location. The CSTC-A training rapidly built the ANA into a formidable and functioning military force but faced certain setbacks due to policy miscalculations. The integration of newly-formed and trained Afghan Special Forces as part of the ANA in 2005 alleviated some pressing security challenges in the southern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan despite their late arrival to the battlefront. As delineated by interviewees, the ANA faced tremendous challenges, including the persistence of low morale and a high desertion rate among soldiers. High-profile attacks by Taliban insurgents on urban centres such as Farah and Kunduz City in tandem with the periodic collapse of the ANA Corps

battalions amplified the lack of operational support and coordination among different branches of the MoD between 2003 and 2014.

Finally, the rebirth of the Afghan Air Force in 2002 along with the Modernization Plan adopted by the Pentagon in 2011 was undeniably a positive development for the MoD. The procurement of essential aircraft to build up the overall strength of the Afghan Air Force from 2002 to 2014 proved to be decisive in supporting ground troops and special operations across Afghanistan. Without doubt, the Afghan Air Force lacked a tactical fighter squadron to sustain and improve the posture of forces under the MoD command. Hence, the insights gathered from interviewees in this section highlighted the NATO-led SSR efforts in developing the MoD command and support structure from its incipient stages to the final withdrawal of coalition troops in 2014.

Ministry of Interior Field Operations – The Case of the Afghan National Police

The foundational basis of SSR is to allow for a liberal democratic society to emerge with the establishment of order and stability premised on the accountable, responsible and dedicated delivery of security (Gordon, 2014, 131-133). SSR has evolved from a theoretical concept into a requisite for post-war nations, such as Afghanistan, in establishing the legitimacy of a liberal democratic order. To elaborate, SSR is not a prescription to prevent recidivism into a state of war but rather an applicable liberal democratic strategy to minimize that specific risk (Wilén, 2018, 69-71). The liberal institutionalist and reformist agenda on which SSR is predicated is not meant to directly rectify political issues of armed opposition and internal strife. Rather, it is a

practical and pragmatic approach to advance the development of a professional security sector with ample legal and procedural checks and balances.

In early 2000, the *UN Report on Peace Operations* set out to distinguish between the supporting role of coalition forces in reforming military and police sectors and the responsibility of local forces in post-war situations (UN, 2000). The aim of this report was to serve as a methodological handbook which would elucidate the standard operating procedures which both international and local forces would work to implement collaboratively. As such, police sector reform evolved into a key component of SSR emphasizing the development of accountability, community civilian policing, effective delivery of service to the public, and oversight.

Since 2002, the police sector in Afghanistan has been at the forefront of reformative approaches – first supported by the US and later by NATO in 2003 –to build public trust and to professionalize the force as a capable law enforcement agency. In the previous chapter, the institutional aspect of the ANP under the MoI command was discussed along with its organizational structure which governed and supported policing initiatives in Afghanistan. With important data collected from interviewees, this section explicates the findings pertaining to the field operations mandate of the ANP under the MoI's institutional authority.

In early 2002, the fall of the Taliban regime to the US-led forces precipitated the internationally backed transitional government in Afghanistan led by former President Hamed Karzai. To strengthen and cement the democratic objectives of the international community, the proponents of SSR immediately embarked upon the path towards the establishment of the ANP, which set in motion the momentous and monumental task of

police reform. See Figure 4.4 Number of ANP Officers on Duty and Increase in the Size

of Afghan National Police, 2003-2013. This chart demonstrates the rise in number of

ANP personnel as the SSR project in Afghanistan took shape with assistance from

NATO's ISAF mission. The chart further captures the rapid rise in the number of ANP

recruits and the robustness and swiftness of the training model adopted by ISAF to help

accelerate the deployment of ANP officers across Afghanistan.

Figure 4.4 Number of ANP Officers on Duty and Increase in the Size of Afghan National

Police, 2003-2013

Month	Ministry of Interior Forces
End 2003	0
End 2004	3,000
End 2005	40,000
End 2006	49,700
End 2007	75,000
April 2008	79,910
October 2008	79,910
March 2009	79,910
July 2009	81,020
November 2009	95,000
December 2009	94,958
March 2010	102,000
April/May 2010	104,459
August 2010	109,000
September 2010	120,504
October 2010	116,367
December 2010	116,856
Jan/Feb 2011	118,800
April 2011	122,000
May 2011	128,622

August 2011	134,865
September 2011	136,122
October 2011	139,070
December 2011	143,800
January 2012	145,577
February 2012	148,932
March 2012	149,642
October 2012	148,536
January 2013	149,775
March 2013	151,766
September 2013	152,336

Source: Brookings Institution, 2014

As discussed in the previous chapter, police reform responsibilities were assumed by the German police trainers operating under the banner of the EUPOL Mission up until 2005. The Pentagon officially amalgamated the training program for the ANP along with the ANA under the CSTC-A due to mounting frustration resulting from a lack of progress and an increase in anti-government attacks (Asia Foundation, 2009).

In interviewing Afghan Official 1, former special advisor to the MoI and a senior police official with substantial experience at the Ministry, several dimensions of the MoI field operations were brought to the fore as part of the NATO-led SSR. He pointed to the period between 2005 and 2014 in explaining the reforms to the Afghan National Police, first under the tutelage of CSTC-A in 2005 and later with the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) in 2009 – staffed jointly by Afghan instructors and NATO troops. He revealed that during this period internationally staffed Police Mentor Teams (PMT) and Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (POMLT) were introduced to implement reforms to procedures in policing.

The PMT and the POMLT were drawn from military personnel rather than civilian police ranks, which inculcated a pro-military operational culture among the Afghan National Police that was devoid of civilian community policing. Afghan Official 1 posited that the separation of duties between the military and police apparatuses, which was a key part of SSR, was rather ambiguous and overlapping. First under the leadership of the CSTC-A and later under the NTM-A, military and police training often took place together, which confused the recruits for the Afghan National Police in their day-to-day interactions with the public and their civil responsibilities.

Afghan Official 4, a decorated General who held important civilian advisory posts in the MoI between 2001 and 2014, echoed similar concerns during his interview. During weapons training, the ANP was equipped with internationally sourced AK-47 assault rifles, rocket launchers, and light machine guns which would eventually become their service weapons. Afghan Official 4 castigated the NTM-A's system of training police officers, arguing that the ANP was armed similarly to a conventional army with intimidating weapons, armoured vehicles, and militaristic appearance.

Subsequently, posited Afghan Official 4, over the years 134,000 personnel in the Afghan National Police adopted a 'militaristic posture' and gradually regressed from procedures, standards, and training modalities of civilian policing. Instead of primarily fighting crime and building up positive rapport with the populace, the ANP maintained the semblance of a Special Force unit and was sent to war alongside the ANA and coalition troops. In concordance with Afghan Official 4's description, NATO Official 4, a coalition military general who directed SATs at the MoI from 2003 to 2014, was similarly apprehensive about the overall training and development of the ANP.

In the NATO General's view, the ANP operated as a full-fledged paramilitary force throughout Afghanistan with little understanding of the civilian policing model, proper criminal investigation procedures, human rights, and policing ethics. Thus, he reported the culture of paramilitarization within the ANP was in stark contrast to the core principles of SSR and ignored the fundamental principles relevant to civilian policing by adopting a militaristic heavy-handed approach. To capture the NATO General's reflections, see Figure 4.5: Security Sector Reform (SSR) Policing Principles and Paramilitary Objectives. In line with the reflections of the NATO General, figure 4.5

elucidates the core principles of SSR as understood by senior military officials at NATO. The key point in the graph below is that the NATO General's understanding of SSR is heavily influenced by the first-generation conception of SSR described in the second chapter. In Jackson's (2018) words, first-generation SSR is a set of principles emanating from liberal democratic doctrines linking good governance to abstract definitions of the rule of law, civilian control over security institutions, and the enshrinement and protection of human rights (Jackson, 2018, 2). Although there is some emphasis on civilian modes of oversight as a method to ensure accountability in the police sector in the graph, the majority of reformative characteristics in policing and law enforcement divulged by the NATO General are heavily focused on abstract and non-figurative principles of 'good governance'.

Figure 4.5: Security Sector Reform (SSR) Policing Principles and Paramilitary

Objectives

Security Sector Reform (SSR)	*Paramilitary*
● Separation of duties and responsibilities for both military and police	● No clear job description and significant overlap in duties with security agencies
● Mass emphasis on doctrines of civilian policing in maintaining law and order based on the state's constitution	● Severely interferes with state policing due to inconsistency in behaviour and objectives when dealing with public
● Legal and transparent oversight of police operations and conduct in day-to-day operations	● A lack of oversight due to their rapid deployment in cases of state emergency
● Accentuates the liberal	● Deployment intended to demonstrate strength to

democratic objective of upholding human rights and the due process of law in enforcing the criminal code ● In post-conflict situations, the focus is to transition demobilized factional paramilitaries to civilian police with adequate training	contain emergencies without being restricted by legal processes ● Paramilitaries seldom lose their offensive posture and continue to operate as heavily-armed agents of the state

Source: This is the General's basic delineation, according to the interviewer Sakhi Naimpoor who took handwritten notes, based on an interview with NATO Official 4, December, 2017. The interviewer's handwritten notes are typewritten, herein, in different font as Naimpoor's handwritten notes are illegible in thesis format.

The General also raised concerns regarding the duties and responsibilities of the

ANP in major urban centers across Afghanistan including but not limited to Heart,

Jalalabad, Kabul, and Mazar-e-Sharif. In these urban centers, the ANP staffed major

checkpoints to search for heavy weapons, insurgents, and potential suicide bombers to

prevent major security breaches. These security related duties should have been

typically reserved for conventional armies which not only possess the expertise to carry

out these tasks but also have access to resources and advanced equipment that

supersede those of traditional police forces such as the ANP.

By dedicating staff and resources to checkpoints in major urban centers

throughout Afghanistan, the ANP was ill-equipped to deal with local incidences of

criminal activity nor was it able to truly grasp the central element of community-based

civilian policing, asserted NATO Official 4. In sum, the general maintained, the dearth of

Directives which separated duties and responsibilities for both the ANP and the ANA

from 2003 to 2014 placed an unnecessary burden on meager policing resources which

profoundly affected the implementation of a responsible policing model based on the

liberal democratic objectives of SSR.

NATO Official 9, a senior member of international staff at the NATO

headquarters and former advisor in the MoI working on ANP reform since 2003, also

provided invaluable insight into reformative procedures and field operations at the MoI.

He delineated that the reform policy of the MoI was to decentralize the ANP in rural

districts by establishing a semi-autonomous entity called the Afghan Local Police (ALP)

in 2010. The ISAF command led by NTM-A proposed that by decentralizing policing

duties and conducting three weeks of training for the ALP in rural districts, the

mainstream ANP force would be allowed to focus on offensives against armed groups.

For more related information, see Figure 4.6 Recruitment Campaign for Afghan Local

Police and Local Police Growth, 2011-2014. The chart below portrays the culture of

informalism and paramiltarization endorsed by ISAF in order to achieve some level of

stability and security in rural districts where the traditional ANP force either partially

progressed or were significantly deficient in law enforcement. The gradual rise in the

number of ALP personnel indicates that SSR objectives of good governance and

accountability were shunned in favour of short-term security stabilization schemes.

What further compounded the problems concerning the prospect for an accountable

and responsible approach to SSR in rural districts was another significant issue that

research participants discussed regarding the factional loyalties of members of the ALP

and how they often selectively chose to apply the law for personal gain. Not only did the

over-hasty decentralization of the ANP to ALP in rural districts hinder transitions

towards civilian-based community policing, it also cast doubt on the legitimacy of the

Afghan state as the sole guarantor of security and stability.

Figure 4.6 Recruitment Campaign for Afghan Local Police and Local Police Growth,

2011-2014

Month	Officers Enrolled in Program
February 2011	4,343
April 2011	5,360
June 2011	6,696
September 2011	8,137
December 2011	10,551
April 2012	13,139
August 2012	16,380
December 2012	18,496
March 2013	21,958
October 2013	24,000
July 2014	30,000

NATO Official 9 insisted that the ALP initiative leading up to 2014 caused significant damage in attempting to reinvent the operational image of the ANP. Numbering close to 45,000, the newly-formed ALP between 2010 and 2014 was accused of abusing its power to silence personal opponents; ceding significant territorial districts to Taliban and other armed groups; and not comprehensively understanding the SSR mandate of civilian policing. That is, the inherent culture of paramilitarization in the ANP, discussed above, permeated every aspect of the operational purpose and mandate of the ALP resulting in increases in human rights violations and arbitrary arrests and detention.

On the other hand, NATO Official 9 attributed certain benefits to the ANP's overall collective form of training as overseen by the NTM-A. The CSTC-A training provided to the ANP and the ANA enabled certain efficiencies to emerge in field operations including distinctions between ranks, better organization, and marginal improvement in cross-sector coordination. Given that both the ANP and the ANA were trained with similar defensive and offensive tactics and strategy by the CSTC-A, security coordination gradually improved between the two distinct security apparatuses to support one another during field operations. Also considering the exposure of the ANP to high-risk conflict situations from 2002 to 2014, it became better prepared to fill a supporting role during national emergencies. Nonetheless, NATO Official 9 insisted that the instilled culture of paramilitarization within the ANP operational structure had far-reaching negative consequences which were in stark opposition to the NATO's SSR mandate in Afghanistan.

NATO Official 10, a veteran of the diverse SSR international team at the NATO headquarters who had previously been posted in the MoI in Kabul from 2003-2013, detailed certain aspects of the field operations of the ANP. While echoing similar concerns as NATO Official 9, he proceeded to posit that the MoI's field operations led by the ANP were inherently prone to paramilitarization prior to the NATO's SSR efforts. The same militias commanded by the Northern Alliance and the National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan to help oust the Taliban in 2001 were integrated into a law enforcement body – the ANP.

These militias operating as the ANP selectively enforced the law in their areas of interest and opposition, while granting safe havens to criminal associates, warlords, and other allied groups leading up to the NTM-A and CSTC-A's merger in 2009. The culture of paramilitarization was already present prior to NATO's intervention in Afghanistan; it only began to methodically compound and evolve with the SSR efforts from 2003 to 2014, according to NATO Official 10. And, the rapid buildup of the ANP presented unforeseen challenges despite NATO's SSR efforts, considering that it could not account for the preceding decades of civil war which catalyzed a culture of impunity, informalism and warlordism. Parallel mandates driven by the NTM-A on the ground and NATO's SSR policy on the international stage could not bridge the practical schism in differentiating between community-based civilian policing on one hand and military training on the other.

Afghan Official 10, a high-ranking police commander in the MoI responsible for protection of foreign missions in Kabul since 2002, distinguished between the operational goals of the NATO and the MoI from 2003 to 2014. He emphasized that the

SSR efforts to train the ANP were multi-faceted and based on the premise of creating a capable security apparatus rather than a responsible one. For instance, he maintained that during the course of CSTC-A training, the vast majority of time was dedicated to learning military tactics and handling heavy weaponry. Civilian policing, criminal code and constitutional rights, and human rights were allocated a week as part of the ANP curricula during the last week of formal training.

Afghan Official 10 confirmed that the majority of policemen under his command were heavily armed, with the intention to go to war and as such, lacked the basic policing skills to contribute to a civilian model of policing in accordance with the liberal principles of SSR. Whereas NATO training models focused on building up the MoI and the ANP security apparatuses with a military mindset, Afghan police recruits were vigorously committed to preventing the return of Taliban's ideological regime. This resulted in a lack of interest in basic policing techniques during training and led to the growing enthusiasm from 2002 to 2014 in defeating the Taliban insurgency by any means necessary. NATO military and police trainers capitalized on this enthusiasm by actively promoting the advanced military training which led the ANP to be operationally deployed to some of the most contested and dangerous regions in Afghanistan such as Ghazni, Helmand, and Kandahar.

Afghan Official 13, a MoI General who served as deputy minister and police chief in major cities throughout his career, pointed to the resolve and resilience of the ANP in leading field operations within the framework of the MoI structure throughout Afghanistan. His points were directed at the potency of the ANP as a strong security force and the public legitimacy the MoI has garnered as a security institution over the

years into 2014. Although he agreed that the ANP operates to some degree as a paramilitary force with a similar command and structure seen among the ANA soldiers, he also extolled the gradual development of the ANP as a formidable counter-insurgency force which better positioned it to defend against infiltration into its ranks.

Afghan Official 13 further explicated that NATO's SSR approach in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2014 must not be analytically assessed according to liberal democratic objectives. The volatile context in which the ANP operated in Afghanistan from 2002-2014 required an aggressive, powerful, and well-armed police force to be able to adapt to a variety of conditions until the insurgency was neutralized. After all, he said, armed groups threatening the security and stability of the central government were better armed, employed undetectable guerrilla tactics, and relied on an asymmetrical form of insurgency which included the utilization of suicide attacks and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).

He further explained that between 2009 and 2014, the ANP suffered a fatality rate of at least 8 officers every day in carrying out ANP duties across Afghanistan due to the multifaceted forms of insurgency it was faced with. According to him, community-based civilian policing should have only been employed in post-war situations where the insurgency was completely eliminated, where war had not persisted for more than a decade, and where human capacity and literacy rates allowed for the formation of such apparatuses.

On the other hand, NATO Official 12 – special advisor to the deputy chief of Afghanistan and Iraq division at NATO from 2003-2014 – touched upon the Capability Milestones Rating (CMR) used by NATO in assessing the operational effectiveness of

the ANP commanded by the MoI. The CMR system was a complex web of performance

and operational aggregate data collected and used by the NTM-A and the CSTC-A to

inform formation of policy and to provide direction in allocating resources to both the

ANP and the ANA. See Figure 4.7 Capability Milestone Assessment Procedures. The

chart below exhibits the lack of understanding among NATO officials in their attempts to

gauge the effectiveness and progress of both the ANA and the ANP. It indicates that

NATO, as a multilateral institution, did not have a clear set of indicators which would

delineate areas of progress and deficiency. Also, the graph demonstrates that NATO-

led ISAF members did not know what a progressive form of SSR in Afghanistan would

look like and how it could be comprehensively assessed because it was largely driven

by a loose set of liberal-democratic conceptions of good governance and accountability.

Figure 4.7 Capability Milestone Assessment Procedures
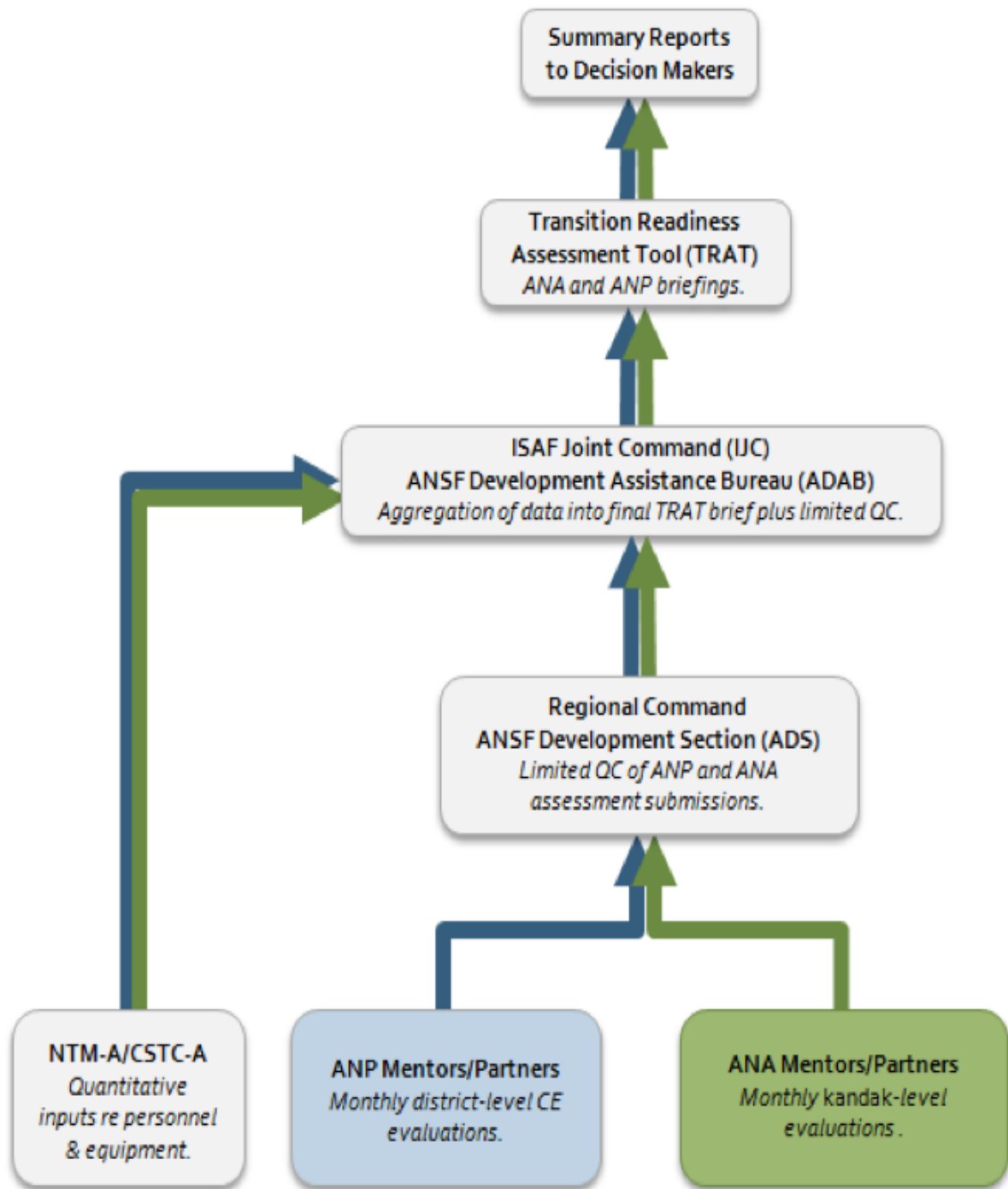
Source: Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction's analysis of North Atlantic Training Mission-Afghanistan and the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) in 2014, [Unclassified, NATO].

Citing the CMR report by SIGAR that led up to the first quarter of 2014, NATO Official 12 disputed Afghan Official 13's claim that a paramilitarized security apparatus was somehow more efficient or effective at enforcing the law and protecting police personnel. He emphasized that the majority of the ANP units across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan were only effective with constant advisory, mentorship, and training provided by the NATO personnel. There were no evident links between paramilitarization of the ANP with advanced heavy weaponry and military training and an increase in its overall effectiveness in policing or a reduction in the number of violent incidents from 2002 to 2014 (SIGAR, 2014). NATO Official 12 also divulged that there were fissures between NATO members in how to train the ANP to be analogous with the SSR mandate. While the EUPOL trainers accentuated the importance of self-defense and rules of engagement, the US military trainers focused on the importance of neutralizing threats offensively. Even more, war-fighting skills became a predominant feature of the ANP training during the merger of the CSTC-A with the NTM-A in 2009 which resulted in neglecting SSR's doctrines of crime prevention and the importance of following legal procedures in conducting criminal investigations.

Simultaneously pursuing comprehensive police sector reform and aspects of technical capacity building is a responsible approach. But militarizing the training model for the ANP only contributed to the buildup of human capacity to counter insurgency and gravely detracted from the SSR directive of attaining comprehensive police sector reform, said NATO Official 12. He drew attention to a litany of overlooked and untapped resources which would have had the capability and expertise to galvanize reforms in SSR from 2003 to 2014 but were underutilized.

This included the incorporation of academics, international oversight organizations, local community members, and NGOs which could have informed policy decisions during the formative phases of SSR in Afghanistan. The establishment of a feedback and input mechanism which channeled policy-relevant recommendations to the NTM-A by incorporating the insights of the civil sector into policy decisions was grossly understated by NATO. Public sector engagement was overlooked as a key determinant of accountable and responsible policing – a core feature of liberal democratic objectives of SSR in achieving reformative milestones.

In brief, the assertions of NATO Official 12 indicated unsettling circumstances in which the ANP training took place from 2003 to 2014, and while the alliance agreed on the composition of the principles of SSR, he differed on the methodological aspects of carrying out the comprehensive police sector reform in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

To summarize, this chapter explored aspects of the field operations of the ANA and the ANP with the former operating as the defense apparatus of the MoD and the latter functioning as the main law enforcement arm of the MoI. Since 2003, the NATO-led SSR mission in Afghanistan oversaw and spearheaded the largest training mission for security forces in the alliance's entire history. This mission not only involved the training and equipping of multiple security organs of Afghanistan from its inception, but also encompassed capacity-building for the institutions as discussed in the previous chapter. The research findings discussed in this chapter, supplemented with interviews

conducted with elite and senior NATO and Afghan officials, reveal the trajectory of the process of SSR from 2003 to 2014.

Despite the tempestuous relationship between the NATO trainers and Afghan recruits, the establishment of the ANA has come to be known as a model of progress in building up the professional capacity of national defense forces. The land warfare Corps of the ANA has consistently demonstrated its ability to professionalize in spite of limited resources, yet the aerial warfare branch's progress, as conveyed by participants, has faced significant obstacles. The Afghan Air Force only benefited in improving its transport and utility tasks from 2002 to 2014 and continued to rely on the NATO coalition for strategic and precision air strikes due to a lack of a tactical fighter squadron. While NATO diplomats seemed satisfied with the professional progress of Afghan pilots in being able to operate and support the ANA, despite limited numbers of aircraft, the alliance's policy until the end of the NATO combat mission in 2014 was strategically engineered to limit funding and personnel in favour of building capacity at the ANA. As discussed, progress in all divisions of the AAF has not been symmetrical and has varied across many divisions and branches. Thus, the prime indicator of progress for NATO's SSR contribution to the MoD has been the gradual development of the institution between 2003, when it first began, and 2014, when the combat mission ended.

Finally, the field operations aspect of the ANP as the main law enforcement agency of Afghanistan is dominated by the narrative of paramilitarization and parallel distinct training programs. The explanations for the disparate performance of the field operations of the ANP from 2003 to 2014 are manifold. For the most part, the discourse

surrounding NATO's SSR process in Afghanistan has been dominated by the gradual development, performance, and assessment of the ANP. First, the training programs prescribed to institute police sector reform by the CSTC-A and later by the NTM-A were fraught with militaristic features. The program was a hybrid product of military and police training which emphasized counter-insurgency yet also marginally stressed the duties of the ANP as the primary law enforcement institution.

Secondly, the establishment of the ALP as an extension of the MoI's field operations in rural districts proved to be counter-productive. The defective three-week long training program proved to be futile in improving comprehensive police sector reform. Registered criticisms of this militia force included gross abuses of power, arbitrary arrests and detention, high desertion rates, and drug use which only worked to weaken and problematize NATO's SSR efforts in reforming the police sector.

Thirdly, the impatience of the Pentagon officials in 2009 resulted in a major shake-up for the ANP training with the merger of the CSTC-A and the NTM-A commands until 2014. The ANP personnel were encouraged by US-based military and police trainers to adopt an aggressive military posture in facing the resilient counter-insurgency led by the Taliban. The Police Mentor Teams and the POMLT were primarily military and Special Forces trainers with a core focus on threat neutralization by use of force. On the other hand, the understaffed EUPOL mission stressed policing tactics and a somewhat softer approach to understanding the fundamental principles and underpinnings of SSR in order to improve law enforcement, albeit with very limited results.

Lastly, the **CMR system** adopted by the CSTC-A and the NTM-A found marginal

progress in different operational aspects of the MoI and the ANP. A series of annual

reports detailing the complex web of policy appraisal pertaining to the ANP performance

leading up to 2014 by NATO Official 12 revealed interesting facts. The ANP was mostly

effective when constantly advised, mentored, and trained by coalition forces. But

providing military training to the ANP recruits did not improve policing, result in a

reduction of crime and violent incidents, nor did it improve their public image as a

legitimate law enforcement authority. Thus, the incompetence, mistrust, and violent

incidents which undergirded the operational ability of the ANP has been attributed to the

reliance on measuring police effectiveness with firepower and the omission of public

sector input.

The research findings conveyed in this chapter raise an important question

pertaining to the original research question guiding this dissertation. **what worked and**

what did not work in the MoD and MoI from a liberal institutionalist perspective?

First, the organizational command for field operations both within the MoD and MoI was

a direct attempt at professionalizing the ANSF by NATO-led ISAF. Secondly, the

separation in military and police mandates, despite similar training provided to the MoD

and MoI recruits, set in motion the gradual build-up of both security organs consistent

with modern law enforcement and defence apparatuses. Thirdly, the NATO initiative to

mentor various combat branches of the ANA and ANP in field operations laid the

groundwork for an eventual Afghan-led battle against armed insurgents across

Afghanistan. Finally, the extensive training programs provided to the MoD and MoI

recruits inculcated a somewhat refined understanding of the rules of law and rules of

engagement in conducting field operations – all in accordance with core assumptions of liberal institutionalism.

However, the constant change of ministerial command at the MoI along with the introduction of a mainstream training program for the ANP and the ANA contradicted the SSR principles of separation in duties and responsibilities for the military and the police. Secondly, the introduction of the NTM-A curriculum in 2009 had adverse effects on the previously German-led community policing model which aimed to introduce a civilian mindset in policing the Afghan populace. Thirdly, the disproportionate allocation of NATO-funded military and logistical resources to specific ANA Corps, especially the Kabul Command, deprived the remaining ANA Corps from accessing similar resources which affected their field operations capabilities in southern and eastern Afghanistan. While the Kabul Buffer Zone became increasingly secure between 2002-2014, eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan increasingly became the subject of violent and asymmetrical guerrilla warfare.

Finally, the paramilitarization of the ANA and ANP under the tutelage of PMT and POMLT advisory command had a perverse effect on field operations between 2003 and 2014. The adoption of militaristic features by the ANP affected its image and mandate given that it was engaging in aggressive policing methods and simultaneously conducting anti-terrorism operations in its sphere of field operations. Not only did the paramilitarization of the ANP deviate from core liberal democratic objectives of SSR, it also cast doubt on whether the NTM-A was genuinely concerned with training and capacity building initiatives for the ANA and the ANP. Thus, the execution of the training programs for the ANA and the ANP between 2003 and 2014 significantly digressed from

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the liberal institutionalist model of SSR which led to an overlap in conducting field operations between the military and the police. And, it further confounded ANP recruits in field operations due to their continuously shifting mandate which varied from community policing to anti-terrorism operations.

The following chapter explores and imparts the research findings concerning the field operations aspect of the NDS as Afghanistan's main intelligence agency from 2002 to 2014. As previous chapters served to inform, combined with the MoD and MoI, the NDS intelligence forces form the institutional foundation and help further document the overall journey of Afghanistan's process of attempting to achieve security, stability, and order.

CHAPTER 5

National Directorate of Security Field Operations

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research findings pertaining to the two key security

institutions in Afghanistan from the period beginning in 2002 to 2014 were divulged: The

MoD and MoI. This chapter is focused on analytically examining the research findings

relevant to the intelligence sector in Afghanistan known as the National Directorate of

Security. The third chapter of this dissertation provided background information

regarding the inception of the NDS and the bureaucratic structure and organizational

details of the directorate from 2002 to 2014. This chapter examines key research

findings related to field operations characteristic of the NDS in order to assess the SSR

agenda in terms of reforming Afghanistan's intelligence sector.

Often the most active and well-funded security apparatus in stable and

developed economies is the intelligence sector which is irrefutably the link between

national security and a state's durability and political legitimacy. As a vital state security

institution, intelligence apparatuses' duties and responsibilities are generally

constitutionally enshrined and are vast and sophisticated (Wilson, 2005, 93). From

count1er-intelligence to intelligence gathering, security risk assessment to covert

operations, from maintaining human intelligence assets to cyber-security initiatives, the

intelligence sector is constantly evolving. Recurrently, the operational changes in the

intelligence community are inherently tied to fluctuations in intensity of the global threats

posed by non-state actors against states.

While the military and police apparatuses also face certain operational challenges, which range from asymmetrical warfare to countering technological sophistication employed in criminal activity, their roles are predominantly static and well-defined (Erhart, 2005). For the intelligence apparatus, the duties and responsibilities associated with the sector are fluid and evolve in direct response to technological advancements, the rise of threats from non-state actors, and consistent methodological sophistication in collecting sensitive information (Chuter, 2006, 7-12).

The intelligence apparatus of the state is also the primary instrument for gathering information, analyzing intelligence, assessing the potency of specific national security threats, and coordinating a plan of action with the military and the police. In the interests of safeguarding the state's national security from multifaceted threats both from state and non-state actors, the intelligence sector of the state is at the forefront of threat deconstruction and concocting coherent and context-specific responses to counter foreign and internal meddling attempts (Jackson, 2011, 1807). For this reason, the relevance and the role of the intelligence apparatus cannot be detached from foundational aspects of state legitimacy and national security.

Background

As highlighted by Jackson (2011) and Wilson (2005), the intelligence apparatus is the most sophisticated sector of the state in gathering and analyzing sensitive information which in turn provides the state with invaluable intelligence regarding the intentions of state and non-state actors. Shared security concerns formed the backbone of liberal institutionalism in the aftermath of the Second World War, fostering the

inception of multilateral security organizations including NATO and NORAD in the twenty-first century. Liberal institutionalism aimed to create a system of information sharing which would facilitate responsible global governance by states while accepting the anarchic nature of the international system (Moravscik, 2001, 27-33). But anarchy on its own as a natural condition of the international system is not the sole and exclusive determinant of conflict nor is it an impediment to shared security threats to liberal institutionalists.

Through institutions such as the UN and NATO, states continuously work to make information available to one another to prevent major shocks to international security by rogue and non-state actors. Not only does the availability of information facilitated through international institutions safeguard international security but it also allows for states to enhance their individual national security (Moravscik, 1997, 527-529; Moravscik, 2001, 35-37).

National interests include but are not limited to economic, cultural, political, and social aspects of a given state which begs the following questions: why do states employ intelligence gathering techniques to collect information on other states, including allies, while international institutions are present? Is the underlying anarchic nature of the international system responsible for this perceived distrust? Are national security interests a disconnected feature of the national interest which disallows global cooperation? For instance, classified global surveillance disclosures leaked by whistleblower Edward Snowden from 2013 onwards demonstrated the wide expanse of the US government's espionage and intelligence gathering techniques employed by the National Security Agency (NSA) on traditional allies.

The diplomatic fallout from the NSA scandal shed light on the extraordinary

efforts the American government undertook by utilizing intelligence resources to obtain

additional information pertaining to the inner workings of allies and foes alike (Lucas,

2014, 34). Despite unsurpassed levels of cooperation facilitated by international

institutions and established multilateral relations in the West since the end of the

Second World War, the global quest to protect against potential state subversion has

steadily progressed. Under these circumstances, state intelligence apparatuses are

indispensable security organs which embody duties and responsibilities concerned with

security enhancement of the state.

National Directorate of Security Field Operations in Afghanistan from 2003-2014

Since 2003, the dearth of academic literature concerning the field operations

component of the NDS has hindered efforts to comprehensively analyze and assess

NATO's holistic SSR approach in Afghanistan. This chapter aims to bridge the gap

between speculation and policy with insight from high-ranking Afghan intelligence and

NATO officials directly involved with the day-to-day field operations at the NDS. To

expand the paradigms of SSR knowledge beyond the relationship between the military

and the police, it is imperative to incorporate the operational section of the intelligence

sector for an accurate appraisal.

As referred to earlier in Chapter 2, to facilitate the institutional establishment of

the intelligence apparatus in 2002, the foundational development of the NDS was

coordinated with the Afghan government in conjunction with the Pentagon and the CIA.

In stark contrast to the ANA and ANP, the NDS was institutionally structured based on

the CIA's directorate-led system instead of the ministerial bureaucratic structure. Reporting directly to the President, the NDS was institutionally spared the bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining approval for crucial covert and special operations against insurgents across Afghanistan.

The National Directorate of Security Force in Urban Areas

According to Afghan Official 11, an Afghan General who served in the NDS from 2002-2015 as deputy minister of special operations, the NDS field operations were professionalized due to a range of factors. First, the institutional adoption of the NDS by the CIA in early 2002 laid the groundwork to streamline personnel training programs in accordance with modern intelligence techniques. Unlike the MoD and the MoI, the NDS recruits were trained at Camp Peary in Virginia with a special emphasis on counter-terrorism field operations training including the utilization of state-of-the-art tactics, techniques and combat equipment. In turn, the comprehensive training provided by the CIA allowed the first batch of returning recruits in late 2002 to be directly embedded in tactical combat situations throughout Afghanistan without delay.

In addition, Afghan Official 11 alluded to another key factor which pertained to the NDS field operations from 2002 to 2014: compartmentalization of the operations department within the NDS under the direct guidance of the CIA. The operations section of the NDS was divided into the following three distinct categories: the NDS Force in urban areas, the NDS counter-terrorism special operations unit, and the external investigative and operations command. The NDS Force in urban areas was created with

the deployment of the first returning recruits from Virginia in late 2002 with directives

from the CIA and Pentagon officials to create a security buffer in major urban centers

across Afghanistan. The Initial beneficiaries of the NDS Force included the cities of

Heart, Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, and Mazar-e-Sharif, while cities including

Baghlan, Ghazni, and Lashkargah were added later between 2003 to 2005, stated

Afghan Official 11. The primary focus of the NDS Force was to serve as a tertiary

security force in support capacity to the capabilities of the ANA and the ANP.

Operationally, it was deployed in major urban centers to mainly protect against

insurgent attacks and to prevent against the infiltration of insurgents in security

apparatuses.

Afghan Official 8, who served as the field operations manager of the NDS and in

various departments in the NDS Force from 2002 to 2012, confirmed Afghan Official

11's assertions. He added that the NDS Force in urban areas proved to be operationally

effective and efficient leading up to 2005, at which point the Karzai administration came

to be convinced that the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan was defeated. There was

profound trust in the NDS Force and trust that it was operationally capable of preventing

Taliban insurgent attacks in urban centers and sufficiently trained by the CIA to gather

security intelligence in their area of operations.

Afghan Official 8 asserted that the sharp decline in violence in the early years of

the NATO-led campaign in Afghanistan from 2003-2005 facilitated the reallocation of

the bulk of the NDS Force from Baghlan, Ghazni, Heart, and Jalalabad to other

administrative branches of the directorate. As outlined earlier in the third chapter, the

administrative and bureaucratic branches of the NDS grew exponentially and

professionally from 2003-2005 and this surge was largely attributable to the reallocation of personnel from the NDS Force. According to Afghan Official 8, the strategic decision to reallocate the NDS Force from previously mentioned urban centers was meant to allow for the professional development of the ANA and the ANP personnel in the operations theater who were less rigorously trained in field operations.

Afghan Official 8 proclaims that the reallocation of personnel had a monumental impact on the urban centers from which they were withdrawn. The ANA and the ANP forces were unable to independently provide the same level of security and field operations service and expertise as the NDS. In effect, they began to surrender hard-earned territory to Taliban insurgents in urban centers such as Baghlan, Ghazni, and Heart, and Jalalabad. Moving toward 2014, explained Afghan Official 11, the remaining NDS Force based in Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, and Mazar-e-Sharif continued with its assigned duties in an increasingly perilous areas of responsibility.

The withdrawal of the NDS Force from previously mentioned urban centers had a two-fold impact on the field operations of the intelligence apparatus. Afghan Official 11 adamantly insisted that the vacated urban centers by the NDS Force came to be heavily dependent on under-equipped and operationally deficient ANA and ANP. This policy miscalculation by the Pentagon and the CIA in 2005 to reallocate the NDS Force personnel to administrative branches led to the consequential deprivation of a tertiary security and intelligence force for Baghlan, Ghazni, Herat, and Jalalabad.

NATO Official 11, a member country representative at the NATO Headquarters and an SSR expert with in-depth knowledge of the NDS field operations, posited his reservations regarding the creation of the NDS Force in 2002. He analytically

questioned the operational value of an intelligence security force which embraced the responsibility of a traditional military and police force. Despite the NDS Force being highly trained in counter-terrorism with special emphasis on covert operations, NATO Official 11 asserted that the Force's duties and responsibilities unnecessarily overlapped with those of the ANP and the ANA.

This in turn, created a system of mass dependency by the ANP and the ANA on the NDS Force to contain the insurgency in urban areas. While tasked with the prevention and neutralization of suicide and guerilla-style attacks in major cities across Afghanistan, the NDS Force concurrently monitored, trained, and assisted both the military and the police. NATO Official 11 claimed that the NDS's assignment as a rapid reactionary response against Taliban attacks was largely due to the Special Forces training provided to the NDS by the CIA. The training at Camp Peary had adequately and comprehensively prepared them for a range of operations which included response tactics in instances of sophisticated insurgent attacks. Henceforth, they gained a positive reputation within ISAF and the ANSF as the most capable and advanced counter-terrorism force.

Afghan Official 11 also authenticated NATO Official 11's claims by articulating the complex operational challenges the NDS Force faced while deployed alongside the ANA and the ANP. He pointed to the fundamental and institutional purpose of the intelligence apparatus operating within the structure of the state – to collect, gather, and analyze intelligence both within and outside the demarcated borders of the state to protect and enhance national security. The operational mandate of the NDS Force, which was initially intended to operate as a support group to counter-terrorism and

intelligence personnel in urban areas, came to be largely dependent on the progress of the ANP. Thus, the operational sphere of the NDS Force continued to be dictated by the deficiencies noted within the ANP law enforcement structure.

That is, where the ANP struggled to enforce the law and maintain security and stability in major urban centers, the NDS Force operated as the primary rapid reactionary force. NATO Official 11 also conveyed that while a considerable number of the NDS Force personnel began to be reassigned to administrative duties in 2005, the cycle of ultimate dependency had been entrenched in the operational core of the NDS. Between 2005 and 2014, NDS personnel continued to operate in the same theater and in the previously discussed major urban centers across Afghanistan as a security stabilization force. While NATO had initially envisioned a rigid separation in roles and responsibilities for the ANA, ANP, and the NDS, the operational capabilities and effectiveness of the NDS Force led to a significant overlap with the mandates of the ANA and the ANP.

This considerable overlap in duties and responsibilities between the NDS Force and the ANP described by NATO Official 11 prompted ISAF and Afghan security officials to re-evaluate the feasibility of this approach. The joint Afghan and ISAF re-evaluation team was created to devise a plan for the gradual disengagement of the NDS Force from assigned law enforcement duties which should have belonged to the ANP. Afghan Official 12, an NDS special agent with experience in various departments of the directorate, shed light on the reformative procedures implemented in late 2010 to restructure the operational purpose of the NDS Force. He described the general agreement reached in 2010 with ISAF and senior security officials in the Karzai

administration to create a rapid response force in order to allow the NDS Force to evolve into an intelligence force.

In order to disengage, the agreement stipulated a capability milestone which had to be reached for the operational capacity of the ANP. Afghan Official 12 proclaimed that the capability milestone entailed an internal multi-force agreement which accentuated that the NDS Force along with ISAF would supervise the creation of the ANP-led rapid reaction force under the command of the MoI. With direct assistance from the NDS Force and a secondary advisory role provided by the ISAF and Norwegian Special Forces, this agreement led to the creation of the Crisis Response Unit (CRU) in Kabul in 2010.

At its core, the CRU was meant to replace the NDS Force and become a potent reactionary force armed with advanced modern weapons training and adept in rapid tactical responses to insurgent attacks. Therefore, asserted Afghan Official 12, the central focus of the CRU was to reduce the operational burden imposed on the NDS and to further compartmentalize a commando-type force within the ANP. Maintaining a tactical response unit within the police apparatus not only enables it to respond to various emergency and life-threatening situations with the utmost professionalism, but generally enables operational independence from the intelligence and military (Vecchi et al., 2005, 541).

The creation of the CRU at the MoI with assistance from the NDS Force in 2010 set in motion the strenuous and monumental task of focusing on personnel recruitment within the ranks of a partially effective ANP. Afghan Official 12 explained that the first battalion of the CRU numbering around 300 officers was trained by the NDS Force in

late 2010 and deployed in various strategic locations around Kabul. NDS Special Agent Afghan Official 12 stated that advanced tactical training programs spearheaded by the NDS Force for the CRU continued until early 2012 to expand the operational capabilities of the unit to all 34 provinces across Afghanistan. The expansion program under the supervision of the NDS Force and ISAF was completed in early 2013 with the deployment of the last CRU battalion in Lashkargah, Helmand.

The NDS Force evolved into a multifaceted security force in 2010 which embodied a training assignment with the advent of the CRU. Contemporaneously, it continued to operate as a security stabilization force in direct support of both the ANA and ANP in its realm of operations. The rapid development of the CRU and its deployment in all 34 provinces in a little more than three years across Afghanistan proved to be highly effective. In turn, the deployment of the CRU gradually reduced the operational burden of the NDS Force as the frontline rapid reactionary force in critical security situations. In early 2013, the ISAF advisors along with the NDS officials began to reassess the operational role of the NDS Force and emphasized that it should transition into an intelligence-related force.

NATO Official 14, a military intelligence policy advisor to NATO who served extensively in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2014, identified the NDS Force's new domain of operations in 2013. The discontinuation of the reactionary role of the NDS Force in 2013 along with the relative success of the CRU in comparison to the ordinary ANP personnel served to punctuate the multifaceted capabilities of the Force. In early 2013, the NDS was requested by the Ministry of Defense to help train and advance the capabilities of the Military Intelligence Unit (MIU) at the MoD.

NATO Official 14 further specified that the request for assistance from the MoD was further endorsed with the issuance of an Afghan presidential decree which directed the NDS Force to fully support the development of the MIU at the MoD. Many of the shortcomings at the MIU from 2002 to 2013 were documented in the 2013 quarterly SIGAR's report and were mainly attributed to a lack of intelligence personnel, oversight, and professional development (SIGAR, 2013). The NTM-A led military training mission for the ANA recruits only provided basic combat training without a particular emphasis on the development of an internal intelligence body to catalyze information gathering procedures for the Afghan military on the frontlines.

As explained by NATO Official 14, the developmental aspect of the MIU only began to garner attention from ISAF's SATs in late 2010 with the loss of significant territory in Helmand and Kunar province. Mounting combat casualties observed by the ISAF within the ANA ranks against Taliban insurgents as a direct result of the severe shortage of intelligence assets within the MoD led to overhauls in the policy framework. Although the MIU became a loosely connected arm of the MoD's Military Police (MP) from 2010-2012, it suffered remarkably from a lack of direction, purpose, and resources, according to coalition military policy advisor NATO Official 14.

By mid-2012, ISAF's SATs in tandem with bureaucrats at the MoD laid the administrative foundation of the MIU within the ministerial structure to support the ANA with its own dedicated and progressive intelligence branch. Having instituted the MIU as an entity under the umbrella of the MoD in Kabul, the ISAF SATs faced monumental challenges in attempts to enhance and shore up human capacity at the MIU. As revealed by NATO Official 14, the performance milestone jointly agreed upon by both

the MoD and the SATs was the deployment of an individual field operations unit within all the ANA Corps installations.

As acknowledged by NATO Official 13, a NATO military trainer who served in ISAF's SATs in both the MoD and MoI between 2005-2014, the MIU failed to gain performance-based traction as envisioned in 2012 and further leading up to 2013. At the time, the emerging consensus among the NATO SATs was that it would be prudent to recruit promising ANA soldiers and provide them with in-depth military intelligence training in the United Kingdom (UK) and the US. By reference to the NTM-A's positive assessment of the CRU's response and threat neutralization rate to critical situations, the ISAF SATs in early 2013 reconsidered their decision pertaining to the establishment of an overseas training program for the MIU.

The NTM-A report had concluded that the emergence of the CRU had not only reduced response time in critical situations but had allowed the ANP to prevent and repel major insurgent attacks with minimal assistance from the ISAF. Furthermore, the rapid expansion of the CRU to all 34 provinces across Afghanistan had fundamentally deprived armed opposition groups of the ability to gain a foothold in any major urban centers. NATO Official 13 specified that an in-depth appraisal of the CRU's rapid development and operational success determined that it was principally due to the comprehensive training provided by the NDS Force.

As such, the SATs embedded within the MoD proposed an intelligence-based training program for the MIU to be directed by the NDS Force in early 2013. The training program for the MIU began under the NDS Force command in the Kabul Military Training Command (KMTC) in 2013 with basic principles of intelligence gathering

strategies and techniques and security coordination methods with other arms of the ANA. NATO Official 13 proceeded to specify that the six-month long NDS Force training program exposed the MIU recruits to a variety of trying situations including close-combat, hostage negotiations, and tactical neutralization which assisted in preparing them for field deployment.

The first batch of the MIU recruits graduated in late-2013 and the NDS Force training program continued towards the end of 2014. NATO Official 13 concluded the interview by noting that in October 2014 the NDS Force began a transitional training program that not only trained the MIU recruits but high-ranking ANA commanders as well to serve as future supervisors and instructors themselves. The scope and timeline of this research study does not allow for an appraisal of the overall effectiveness of the instructor training program as this dissertation is primarily concerned with NATO's combat and SSR mission led by ISAF from 2003 to 2014 and not with the transitional training program that began in 2014. Nevertheless, future research focused on the performance and reformative aspects of the post-SSR mission after 2014 in Afghanistan can reflect on the operational effectiveness of the MIU.

To revisit earlier points made in this chapter concerning the main purpose of the NDS Force; it was intended to operate as a support group to the counter-terrorism and intelligence personnel operating in urban areas. Insight from interviewees revealed that the NDS Force digressed from its main prerogative due to the underdevelopment of the ANA and ANP capabilities. Intrinsically, the NDS Force morphed into a tertiary security assistance and training force with distinct uniforms, insignia, and marked vehicles acting as the predominant reactionary force.

In consonance with the testimony of Afghan and NATO officials discussed

earlier, the creation of the CRU as an extension of the ANP significantly reduced the

operational burden on the NDS Force from 2010 to 2013 and provided the MoI with a

capable, sustainable, and professional force. Also, the NDS Force's commitment to

training the MIU from 2013 to 2014 further diverted attention away from its intended

purpose. These measures undertaken by the NDS Force have been hailed as the

penultimate example of a successful indigenous-led training model by SATs. Yet, they

concomitantly draw attention to the identity and role of the NDS Force functioning as an

operational branch of the primary intelligence service of Afghanistan.

As discussed previously with insight from interviews in Brussels, Hamburg, and

Kabul in 2017-18, the security assistance and stabilization tasks conducted by the NDS

Force fell far beyond the traditional duties and responsibilities of the intelligence

apparatus. In fact, the training, funding, and advanced equipment provided by the

Pentagon and the CIA to institutionally develop NDS as an intelligence directorate in

2002 was predicated on collection, processing, and analysis of information pertaining to

national security. The NDS Force, which was practically created to serve as a support

combat group dedicated exclusively to the NDS, was embroiled in a circle of perpetual

dependence until 2014.

The reallocation of some personnel to administrative branches of the NDS levied

significant pressure on the field operations aspect of the NDS Force. From 2010 to

2014, intelligence, combat, and support forces were fully incorporated and dedicated to

training reactionary forces of the ANP and the intelligence arm of the ANA. This in turn,

sidetracked the original purpose of the NDS Force and its practical purpose failed to

come to fruition due to the training model imposed upon it by both Afghan and ISAF officials.

Thus far, this section of the chapter has uncovered the rapidly changing field operations dynamic of the NDS Force in Afghanistan from 2002 to 2014. The evidence disclosed herein demonstrates three main factors for consideration: 1) The extensive overlap in security duties and responsibilities among the ANP, ANA, and the NDS. 2) The gap between theory and practice observed in field operations during the development and organization of the NDS Force by the Pentagon and the CIA. 3) The fluid and less-fluid operational nature of the NDS Force in adapting to a variety of duties and roles as a result of security situations.

The following section of this chapter considers the field operations aspect of the NDS Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Force (CTSOF) from 2002 to 2014. The aim of this section is to portray the multifaceted role of the NDS in Afghanistan by stressing the field operations facet of the internal intelligence and counter-terrorism branch of the NDS. Similar to the NDS Force personnel, the CTSOF was provided the same length of comprehensive training at Camp Peary in Virginia but was assigned to distinct branches of the NDS based on ranked preferences of recruits, provincial security needs, and chosen areas of expertise. Lastly, the CTSOF was also deployed in all 34 provinces across Afghanistan and commanded by the provincial NDS commanders who conformed to the operational directives from the NDS headquarters in Kabul.

National Directorate of Security Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Force Field Operations (CTSOF)

Vacillations in strategies and tactics employed globally by armed groups against the central authority of states has led to significant reconfigurations in intelligence apparatuses in the past few decades (Jackson, 2011, 1812; Wilson, 2005, 93). Traditionally, the intelligence agencies were occupied with aspects of non-conventional security optimization which included but were not limited to engaging in cyber warfare, countering foreign interference, and the establishment or neutralization of state-sponsored proxy groups. Paradigmatic shifts within intelligence apparatuses in their ever-evolving and widening area of duties and responsibilities have become more pronounced in weak states – such as Afghanistan (Berg, 2012, 11-17; Schroeder et al., 2014, 219-221).

Considering that NATO's mission in Afghanistan was fundamentally coordinated to defeat the main pillars of global terrorism in 2003, the SSR agenda pursued by ISAF in coordination with the ANSF also embodied in various methical ways the traits of counter-terrorism. The NDS' CTSOF, the foremost beneficiary of the CIA and Pentagon training from 2002 to 2014, undertook the main counter-terrorism and special operations responsibilities with the establishment of the directorate.

This section of the chapter is informed by high-ranking NATO and NDS officials who shed light on the ambiguous identity of the Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Force. For purposes of clarity and coherence, it is imperative to divide this section into two separate parts. First, this chapter discusses the research findings pertinent to field operations characteristic of the NDS' CTSOF. Secondly, it elucidates

the findings concerning the special operations branch of the CTSOF with emphasis on the field operations commands. It is critical to specify that although the NDS' CTSOF was subsumed and structured under one broad field operations category by the CIA in 2002; it maintained distinct command centers within the NDS headquarters with divergent mandates as reported by Afghan Official 12.

National Directorate of Security Counter-Terrorism Force Field Operations

The deployment of the National Directorate of Security Counter-Terrorism Force Field Operations (CTF) in late 2002 in Helmand, Heart, Kabul, and Kandahar and in all the other remaining 30 provinces by 2008 culminated with the withdrawal of Taliban insurgents from all major urban centers across Afghanistan. Afghan Official 14, a high-ranking special agent with extensive experience in the CTF, implied that despite it being an intelligence force first, it began field operations in support of UK, US, and Norwegian-special forces in 2003.

The supervisory and advisory role played by the UK, the US and the Norwegian forces exposed the CTF to ISAF's professional standards of field operations and to the distinct modalities of special operations execution. The CTF field operations began with retaking pockets of territory from the Taliban in 2003 in the provinces of Helmand (Gereshk district), Kandahar (Spin Boldak district), and Kunar (Dangam district). As per Afghan Official 14, these joint operations at first saw little resistance from the armed groups and the insurgency mostly subsided until June 2004. Meanwhile, the CTF had continued special operations training with Special Forces from various contributors to ISAF. Afghan Official 14 argues that the political fallout from Karzai administration and

NATO's unwillingness to negotiate with remnants of the Taliban in 2004 was counterproductive and further contributed to the severity of the insurgency.

NATO Official 15, one of the senior military operations planners for Afghanistan section at NATO, validated Afghan Official 14's claim by confirming that the CTF's independent field operations started in the summer of 2004. He explained that during the advisory and supervisory mission led by the UK, the US, and Norway, the CTF was mainly operating in newly liberated urban centers. But the summer of 2004 was an operational test for the CTF as it began to be deployed in mountainous areas bordering Pakistan. The influx of insurgents inundating villages bordering Pakistan and using guerilla tactics in keeping with asymmetrical aspects of warfare raised monumental challenges for the CTF.

Some of the operational challenges faced by the CTF included the proper and timely identification of enemy combatants; the timely deployment of advanced communication interception equipment from central headquarters to eastern and southern provinces; and operational compensation for shortcomings of the Afghan Border Police that were directed by the ANP. Similar to the NDS Field Operations Force partially fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the ANA and ANP, as discussed previously, NATO Official 15 stated that the CTF assumed partial border control responsibilities of the ABP to prevent insurgent infiltration into Afghan territory. Comparable to other branches and divisions of NDS, the CTF was allocated limited operational funds and in undertaking the work of other ANSF organs including the ABP, the ANA, and the ANP, it severely restricted the ability of the CTF to effectively and efficiently carry out its own counter-terrorism mandate.

Afghan Official 15, an NDS General who has commanded various CTF operations since 2003, discussed the effectiveness of the force in terms of coordinating intelligence and sharing information with the ANA and the ANP. In addition to serving an elite counter-terrorism force, he contended that the CTF was and is the primary source of internal intelligence gathering across Afghanistan. For instance, he explained that in approximately 80 percent of cases when a suicide bomber entered Afghanistan via Pakistan, they were alerted by advance credible intelligence through Human Intelligence (HUMINT) sources. The General further noted that the CTF could not simply be perceived as a reactive force, but rather should be understood as a proactive force that could avail itself of many various avenues of intelligence analysis. This in turn guided the Force's response and actions which allowed it to comprehensively coordinate with the ANA and ANP in improving security outcomes.

Additionally, the General credited the operational excellence of the CTF in field performance to certain key factors including recruitment of operatives from all tribes, ethnicities, sects, and tribes. Put simply, from 2002 to 2014 the CTF was based on meritocracy and devoid of nepotistic appointments and favouritism thus subverting the institutional progress of the ANA and ANP, discussed earlier. Additionally, in keeping with the training provided to the CTF at Camp Peary in Virginia, operatives were adept at coordinating information with not only the ANSF but also with regional and international intelligence partners thus improving overall security outcomes. All this was facilitated through advanced information-sharing systems provided by the CIA and the NATO intelligence liaison office based in Kabul.

Similar to Afghanistan's other security apparatuses, the NDS' CTF also had its own set of shortcomings which affected or hindered its performance in field operations. NATO Official 14, a military intelligence advisor at NATO, contended that in analyzing the NDS' CTF from 2002 to 2014, a US Department of State's comprehensive publication on Afghanistan's terrorism subversion methodology concluded that the CTF was deficient in maintaining a formal national Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy. When presented with the assertions of Afghan Official 15 — which postulated that the CTF has been a proactive force in preventing and eradicating terrorism across Afghanistan — NATO Official 14 agreed but said as a proactive field operations force, it was inherently deficient in addressing the root causes of terrorism due to the absence of rehabilitation and reintegration programs for combatants.

Moreover, Afghan Official 15 posited that the CTF policy of chiefly targeting villages and districts bordering Pakistan since 2003 and leading up to 2014 allowed the Taliban and other smaller armed groups to set up safe havens in areas that were not contiguous with Pakistani soil. Taking into consideration the monumental developmental issues which were largely extant in both the ANA and ANP, the CTF could not prevent the loss of territory to insurgents. NATO Official 14 explained that from 2003 to 2014 Taliban insurgents consistently managed to devise complex organizational and operational structures deep inside Afghan soil including throughout Ghazni, Kunduz and Wardak and with considerable impunity in other areas patrolled by the ANA and the ANP.

Many of the advances made in the battlefield against the ANSF by the Taliban, including the CTF, can be traced back to severe institutional failures in interministerial

security coordination among the ANA, ANP, and the NDS. Despite the intelligence provided by the CTF in tandem with the NDS to the ANA and the ANP, NATO Official 14 argued that the absence of a formidable counter-terrorism force mirroring the CTF led to loss of territory and expansion of insurgent networks. In brief, the critical capability gap identified by the SIGAR's 2005 quarterly report underscored the importance of developing intelligence and security coordination among all the ANSF organs. The documented lack of security sector coordination continuously hindered the progress and sustenance of the CTF and was particularly egregious given the higher burden of responsibility placed on it to carry out the duties of other noted security organs (SIGAR, 2005).

Lastly, in assessing the field operations aspect of the CTF as a whole, NATO Official 15 maintained that precarious policy models pursued by the CIA, ISAF, and Afghan security officials contributed to the resilience of the Taliban insurgency moving towards 2014. Precisely, NATO Official 15 noted that belief-based policy structures which eschewed security coordination as a primary determinant and condoned individualistic development of institutions in improving overall security outcomes resulted in casualties for both the ANSF and civilians throughout Afghanistan from 2002 to 2014. For this reason, the CTF became embroiled in defeating a perpetual Taliban insurgency due, as was noted earlier, to visible performance-based disparities between the ANSF apparatuses in enforcing their mandate, maintaining adequate training programs, and developing a national CVE strategy.

However, NATO Officials 14 and 15 and Afghan Officials 14 and 15 all concluded that the resolve, morale, and professionalism of the CTF from 2002 to 2014 was

unparalleled compared to any other active security force in Afghanistan. In the view of

Afghan Officials 14 and 15, the CTF was the ultimate pillar of security, stability, and

order in violently perturbed parts of Afghanistan. Likewise, NATO Officials 14 and 15

described the CTF as being at par with, if not superior to, to all other counter-terrorism

forces in the region, and a beacon of hope and stability for NATO's UN-mandated ISAF

in improving national security outcomes. Thus, the overall observed sentiment with

regard to the CTF field operations was that the post-2014 burden of combat and

eventual disengagement of NATO from Afghanistan was heavily dependent on the

further professionalization of the NDS's CTF.

National Directorate of Security Special Operations Force Field Operations (SOF)

The compartmentalization of NDS recruits by the CIA upon returning from

training at Camp Peary was to progressively organize the force and to assign specific

duties and responsibilities to each divisional entity. In this regard, another sub-unit

belonging to the CTSOF was the special operations forces of the NDS deployed in 2002

to assist the ANP in its effort to eliminate rampant elements of endemic criminality.

During an interview, Afghan Official 11 emphasized, as the academic literature has

shown, that the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 and the security vacuum left behind

fostered the rise of criminal gangs, drug and weapons traffickers, and kidnappers,

among others, in major cities (Wardak and Brathwaite, 2012, 201-206).

Mostly commercial and urban centres were affected by the security vacuum

which included Heart, Kabul, Kandahar, Lashkargah, and Mazar-e-Sharif. The fall of the

Taliban regime coupled with billions of dollars in unprecedented foreign aid flowing into

Afghanistan helped institute a vibrant private sector (Verkoren and Kamphuis, 2013, 507-511). As a direct result of the emergence of previously non-existent business opportunities, Afghan Official 11 noted that the rapid expansion of the private sector concurrently provided opportunities for criminal elements within major cities. Complex networks of associated criminal gangs began to capitalize financially through extortion, abduction, and murder of prominent merchants throughout Afghanistan.

Again, the underdevelopment of the ANP was the prominent theme of many interviews which highlighted the need for the creation of the SOF. Initially, the SOF recruits were either assigned to the CTSOF or the NDS Force during training by the CIA at Camp Peary in Virginia. The reassignment of the NDS recruits, comparable to the case of the NDS Force, began in 2002 upon their return to Afghanistan. NATO Official 11 agreed with Afghan Official 11 and emphasized that early observations by the US and later by ISAF in 2003 shaped the mandate of the SOF. As both Afghan and NATO officials agreed, in early 2003, the technical and professional incapacities and deep-rooted involvement of the commanders of the ANP in heinous crimes stunned the commanders of the NATO-led ISAF engaged in the SSR project in Afghanistan.

Along with militias comprised of rogue miscreants in large urban cities, several senior police officials were accused of being complicit in the extortion, abduction, and murder of prominent merchants from Afghanistan's rapidly expanding business community from 2002 to 2003. NATO Official 11 explained that a series of unforeseen rises in violent crime against the business community prompted the creation of the SOF under the tutelage of the NDS. The main prerogative of the SOF was to address mounting violent crime trends against the private sector and to disrupt the flow of arms

and drugs which found their way into the illicit black market. Neither NATO nor Afghan officials interviewed specified the size of the SOF and only divulged that it was active and present in Afghanistan where provincial governors requested security assistance between 2003-2014.

The field operations command of the SOF was headquartered in Kabul in 2002 and was initially tasked with disbanding armed criminal gangs that were sources of illegal revenue from exploiting vulnerable businesspersons with extortion and kidnapping. Such disbandment and neutralization were prerogatives which mundanely fell under the provisional jurisdiction and authority of the police apparatus. However, NATO Official 11 specified that from 2002 to 2014 the ISAF commanders along with Afghan security officials were keen to implement an Afghan-led solution to the scourge of endemic police corruption and major crime reduction.

The Afghan-led transient solution progressing towards the end of the NATO combat mission in 2014 became to assign significant policing duties of the ANP to the SOF. Working parallel to the ANP, the SOF gradually assumed full responsibility for investigating cases of drugs and weapons trafficking, extortion, and kidnapping. According to NATO Official 11, the operational logic behind the SOF as a parallel security force was that it could plan, strategize, and execute high-risk operations independently which would not jeopardize the integrity of sensitive investigations. Instead of devising strategies of security coordination with the ANP, the SOF independently and proactively pursued perpetrators of major crimes. Although there is a lack of statistical evidence to assess the efficacy of the SOF, NATO Official 14 added that the assertiveness and precise surgical operations carried out by the SOF managed

to disband complex extortion and kidnapping gangs in Heart, Kabul, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif.

Also, in direct coordination with the CTF, as the sister division of the Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Forces or SOF, the SOF continuously managed to prevent major suicide attacks and intercepted large shipments of bomb-making material destined for urban centers across Afghanistan. However, NATO Official 14 cautioned that the patchwork approach of assigning the SOF to the duties of the ANP to carry out its duties was not a durable and long-lasting solution. He proclaimed that since the SOF assumed the duties of the ANP for major crimes in 2003, the ANP had failed to transition and supplant the SOF as the preeminent public law enforcement force. Identical to the NDS Force and the CTF, the SOF had been extensively trained to carry out multifarious activities in the sphere of national security and special operations although NATO Official 14 thought the ANP should have supplemented the SOF.

In general, NATO Officials 11 and 14 stated that the methodical and systematic training programs created for the NDS by the CIA enabled operatives and entire divisions to be deployed rapidly to train, advise, and assist the ANA and the ANP. Among other tactics, explained NATO Officials 11 and 14, the field operations facet of the SOF from 2003 to 2014 involved the utilization of advanced interception equipment and tracing methods to apprehend kidnappers and criminals involved in Afghanistan's lucrative opium trade. Afghan Official 15 also alluded to the complex multi-provincial network of prisons administered by the NDS with various classified locations for detainees. He explained that these prisons were designed with maximum security specifications and exclusively housed detainees arrested by the CTF and the SOF, and

in doing so, ensured that high-value prisoners were not beneficiaries of corrupt practices documented in the MoI-administered prisons.

In particular, Afghan Official 15 claimed that the NDS administered prison-housed detainees until they were sentenced by Afghan courts, at which point they were transferred to the Pul-e-Charkhi federal prison in Kabul or handed over to the US-administered prison in Bagram Air Base. NATO Official 14 further expounded that the SOF field operations personnel maintained an inter-agency interrogation team skilled in advanced methods and techniques of information analysis and collection. Frequently, information gained from high-value prisoners led to disruption in planned terrorist attacks against civilians, against the ANSF, and against ISAF, and provided further classified information to the SOF and the CTF in order to track down high-profile Taliban commanders.

For instance, NATO Official 14 credited the SOF for the information provided to the ISAF command regarding the exact location of ruthless Taliban leader Mullah Dadullah in Helmand. Dadullah was killed in a remote village in Helmand in 2007 in a special operation coordinated by the SOF with the British and the American Special Forces. The intelligence regarding his whereabouts was obtained by the SOF in coordination with the CTF from a group of intercepted suicide bombers tasked with carrying out attacks on the NATO installations in Kabul.

In the same way, NATO Official 15 commended the SOF for the capture in coordination with the CTF of Anas Haqqani in 2014, son of the founder of the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani Network Jalaluddin Haqqani. Anas Haqqani was widely considered to be the most high-profile prisoner in captivity, given his prominent role in planning and

executing the most sophisticated attacks on both foreign and local security force installations. Thus, according to NATO Official 15, the SOF's area of duties and responsibilities constantly expanded from supplanting and supplementing the ANP to taking part in counter-terrorism operations along with the CTF.

Finally, the strength and effectiveness of the SOF in field operations from 2002 to 2014 also raised many human rights issues. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission along with Open Society Foundations in a 2012 report titled *Torture, Transfers, and Denial of Due Process* specifically castigated the NDS' SOF for cruel treatment of prisoners. Allegations levied against the SOF included violent beatings, suspending detainees from the ceiling for extended periods of time, administering electric shocks, and sexual abuse (Open Society Foundations, 2012).

The report further specified that despite NATO being fully apprised, acts of torture and abuse were routinely exercised in all the NDS prisons to obtain confessions or other information from detainees. When presented with the testimony documented in this critical report, both NATO Officials 14 and 15 refuted such accusations against the NDS and posited that the NATO investigative teams had routinely monitored and visited the NDS detention centers where they had found no evidence of torture or extrajudicial killings from 2003 to 2014.

To reiterate, research findings in this section revealed three key findings pertaining to the SOF's field operations. First, the SOF served an atypical role as the NDS' extension of a major crime task force, thus supplanting the ANP in major urban centers, as discussed above. Second, inter-agency coordination between the CTF and the SOF from 2002 to 2014 was continuous, fluid, and professional. Lastly, the SOF's

field operations results expanded into a parallel program with a complex network of prisons which produced invaluable intelligence for the NDS and concomitantly ensured due process under Afghan law with relatively little interference from corrupt officials in the ANP.

Conclusion

Over the course of interviewing the NDS and NATO officials involved with the directorate's field operations, the research findings demonstrated superior capabilities for all operations forces assigned to the directorate. The difference in field operations superiority for the NDS in comparison to the ANA and ANP was the extensive and overseas training provided by the CIA (instead of the CSTC-A and the NTM-A). The commitment, morale, and resolve of the NDS field operations personnel from 2002 to 2014 was exemplary and unwavering as communicated by the NATO and Afghan Officials interviewed as part of this research study.

The NDS Force's operational domain was marred by the underdevelopment and inadequate capabilities of the ANP and the ANA. The NDS Force served as the primary rapid reactionary force until it was able to gradually train, equip, and mentor the ANP's CRU. Among NATO policymakers, the comprehensive training provided by the NDS Force to the CRU was hailed as a success story about an Afghan-led mentorship program. The CRU training program overseen by the NDS Force yielded greater than expected results in successfully instituting a capable and professional high-readiness ANP sub-unit. Later in 2013, the transition of the NDS Force to become trainers for the

MIU in the ANA redesigned its mandate as a rapidly deployable security stabilization training force.

Furthermore, the success of the CTF among all other ANSF subunits was unsurpassed in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2014. The field operations realm of the CTF was dominated by intelligence-gathering; seizure and securing of operations against insurgents; and proactively devising counter-terrorism strategies to strengthen the overall offensive and defensive posture of the NDS. Analogous to the NDS Force, the CTF continuously pursued a patchwork policy to fulfill and augment the ABP's performance deficiencies in volatile border regions. However, despite the CTF's entanglement in a multi-dimensional operations arena, it continued as an efficacious and preventive counter-terrorism force by coordinating with the ANA and the ISAF command from 2003 to 2014. Therefore, the highly-trained and readily deployable operatives employed by the CTF were perceived to be the prominent counter-terrorism operations combat force in the aftermath of the NATO's combat mission in 2014.

Briefly, the SOF field operations realm was also predominantly shaped by performance-based shortcomings, and endemic corruption, documented within the ranks of the ANP from 2003 to 2014. Consequently, the SOF replaced the ANP as the central investigative authority directed to prevent major crimes including extortion, abduction, and infiltration of Taliban insurgents within the ANA and the ANP ranks. Also, the high level of consistent security coordination between the CTF and the SOF facilitated the capture and killing of high-profile Taliban insurgents. Hence, insurgents captured in the SOF operations across Afghanistan produced valuable intelligence which not only improved security outcomes but simultaneously demonstrated the SOF's

independence and professional capabilities. To conclude the field operations discussion

of the NDS, this chapter strived to present a comprehensive appraisal of the NATO's

SSR process in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2014. To research the paradigmatic and

operational issues of SSR involves the comprehension of the intelligence, military, and

police as units which are implicitly interconnected and can only be systematically

accounted for if referenced to as a whole.

The research findings discussed in this chapter regarding the multiple facets of

the NDS field operations command warrant further analysis into answering the following

question: **In terms of the liberal institutionalist model of SSR, what worked and

what did not work in reforming the NDS field operations between 2003-2014?** First,

the separation of the training program for the NDS from the CSTC-A and NTM-A helped

it to grow professionally with generous funding from the Pentagon and the CIA

beginning in 2002. The unprecedented support from the CIA coupled with the

opportunities for professional development between 2003-2014 facilitated the

institutional development of the NDS with various active operational branches (CTF,

CTSOF, NDS Force etc.). In accordance with liberal democratic objectives of SSR, the

NDS implemented a series of rules and procedures in planning and conducting field

operations. For instance, the decentralization of authority to the judicial branch for

counter-terrorism operation approvals implemented numerous checks and balances on

the NDS field operations.

Additionally, the intensive overseas training program conducted by the CIA for

the NDS recruits – drawn from all ethnicities and sects in Afghanistan – at Camp Peary

in Virginia introduced them to modern intelligence gathering techniques and strategies

which helped them adapt to various theatres of operations. Lastly, the cross-divisional coordination between various branches of the NDS proved to be a clear indicator of institutional progress which worked to not only prevent major security breaches in major urban centres but also signified the gradual development of high morale and discipline in field operations between 2003-2014.

On the other hand, SSR efforts at reforming the NDS were affected by a set of circumstances that hindered SSR's effectiveness and institutional capacity and growth. Primarily, the NTM-A's proposition in the late 2000s to the NDS to provide operational assistance to the ANP's underperforming branches such as the ABP strayed from the core SSR mandate of the intelligence sector reform. While NATO-led ISAF had initially proposed a parallel SSR approach for the MoD, MoI, and the NDS, their mandates and training programs were at different periods of time either combined or separated between 2003-2014. This inconsistency in NATO's SSR approach in Afghanistan perversely affected the operational capabilities of the NDS. From conducting criminal investigations to deploying advanced intelligence assets to border areas, from training and developing the CRU at the ANP to the development of the MIU at the MoD, they all exerted pressure on the limited resources of the NDS as an intelligence apparatus. Therefore, the constant ISAF-led change in SSR strategy as a direct response to the underperformance of the ANA and the ANP had debilitating and far-reaching effects on the intelligence sector reform in Afghanistan between 2003-2014.

CHAPTER 6

**The Feasibility of NATO's Liberal Institutionalist
Security Sector Reform Approach in Afghanistan**

Overview: Goals of Research and Research Questions

The fundamental goal of this dissertation was to analytically examine the practicality of NATO's liberal institutionalist SSR approach in Afghanistan. Specifically, the purpose of this research study was to gain a comprehensive insight into the intricate and previously incomplete account of the SSR process in Afghanistan. To restate the primary and secondary research questions of this study:

In terms of NATO's Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2014, what worked, and what did not work? The secondary question pertaining to this research study asks: Why did certain aspects of SSR fail? The introductory chapter of this dissertation aimed to provide the reader with a brief understanding of the complicated security situation in Afghanistan and the liberal institutionalist approach to SSR. The intertwined web of various factors that continued to protract the armed conflict in Afghanistan were brought to the fore, along with documented criticisms of SSR. These criticisms were noted to be neither conclusive nor complete and did not necessarily indicate a total failure of the SSR project from 2003 to 2014. This thesis did not test whether the NATO-led ISAF mission in Afghanistan was a success or not. In order to maintain objectivity in conducting this research study, it is important not to judge the entire NATO-led SSR mission in Afghanistan as a clear case of success or a failure given that NATO's SSR mission lacked clear indicators of progress and deficiencies from 2003-2014. As such, the focal point of this research study was to

investigate and reveal what worked and what did not work, not whether it was a complete success, abject failure or in between.

Principally, the analysis in this dissertation served to provide readers with a synopsis of the critical literature from academics who were keen to point out the deficiencies of the SSR process and to encourage further research and fieldwork to alleviate the intricate context-specific and deep-rooted problems. The introductory preface endeavoured to shape the theoretical framework to systematically analyze the SSR policy solutions operationalized by NATO in response to the conflict in Afghanistan.

Theoretically, liberal institutionalists emphasized the process of state-building in Afghanistan through SSR in favour of the long-term objective of building a capable multi-faceted security force through gradual institutional and operational reforms with support from NATO. Liberal institutionalists proposed that a functioning security sector, inclusive of intelligence, military, and police, is a crucial measure for stability in post-conflict situations (Glickstein, 2014, 96; Maley, 2013, 264-266). As outlined in previous chapters, the SSR model remained committed to the development and professionalization of Afghanistan's vital security apparatuses. Although NATO member countries provided advisory assistance to reform the judicial sector in tandem with the reintegration of ex-combatants, such assistance largely remained the tertiary focus of the SSR process in Afghanistan. Hence, NATO's SSR agenda in Afghanistan focused exclusively on reforming three key institutions – intelligence, military, and police.

In this context, SSR became a key concept for improving overall governance and implementing key measures of accountability and oversight in Afghanistan. Further,

SSR as a reform and process in Afghanistan was composed of an overarching

approach that not only focused on the integration of the defense, police, and intelligence

sectors, but concurrently incorporated liberal democratic undertones. This included the

consolidation of democracy, the promotion of human rights, and principles of good

governance – accountability and transparency in Afghanistan (Dursun-ozkanca and

Vandermoortele 2012; 141-143 Gross, 2009, 38). Broadly speaking, SSR in

Afghanistan included the reformation of security institutions, strengthening of control

mechanisms, and the institutional restructuring of the security sector from 2003-2014.

Theoretical proponents of the liberal institutionalist school of thought pointed to

the various advantages of NATO, as a multilateral security organization, given the broad

range of political and economic instruments at its disposal to institute reformative

procedures in Afghanistan. They argued that NATO, as the very model of liberal

institutionalist security cooperation, was traditionally well-positioned to effectively

implement SSR activities through collective policy instruments at its disposal in

Afghanistan (Abrahamsen, 2016, 285; Koehler and Gosztonyu, 2014, 237-241). The

arguments presented by liberal institutionalists in the second chapter posited that not

only does NATO possess the political and economic instruments, it further

collaboratively possesses the institutional and security sector expertise to help

Afghanistan in its slow progress towards democracy, stability, and reconciliation (Ayub

and Kuovo, 2009; Berman, 2010, 6; Wilén, 2018, 68). The specific case of Afghanistan

chosen for this research study, however, highlighted the tumultuous trajectory of

challenges and processes in implementing the SSR project wherein state legitimacy

was violently contested, and organized crime and corruption thrived from 2003 to 2014.

Contrary to NATO's past SSR missions, such as Bosnia and Kosovo in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, Afghanistan's SSR experiment is suitably described because it is an intersection of security reform initiatives and concurrent systemic institutional overhaul. As indicated earlier, Eva Gross' (2009) research findings illustrated that systemic and wide-ranging security stabilization initiatives were being carried out in tandem with institutional capacity-building efforts by international donors in Afghanistan (Gross, 2009, 11-12). Because of this joint initiative by intervening states (and NATO) to strengthen security institutions and legitimize the state, the SSR process came to be incoherent, inconsistent, and at times less important to the state-building enterprise (Gross, 2009, 11).

But these evident challenges did not necessarily lend credence to the positions of critics but rather, they highlighted the documented transformations in global conflicts and how NATO's SSR efforts since 2003 have progressed and expanded from short-term security stabilization to long-term institutional commitment to nurture the requisite framework for the promotion of the liberal democratic order (Jarstad, 2013, 390; Weigand, 2013, 71-73). Given this, the research findings discussed in the previous chapters imparted crucial practical proficiencies and deficiencies of NATO's liberal institutional approach to SSR in the following realms: organizational structure of security organs, bureaucratic and institutional reform in the ANA, ANP, and the NDS, and the field operations aspect of all three security organs.

Post-structural Assessment of SSR

As discussed in the first and second chapter of this dissertation, post-structuralists emphasize the dominance of undemocratic principles which have imprisoned the consciousness of local populations in conflict-prone zones (Campbell, 2007, 209). In the instance of Afghanistan, post-structuralists maintain that the power wielded by Western powers and their proposed prerogative of rebuilding security institutions in reality subjugated the actual realities of the conflict (Bell, 2010, 61-63). Further, they argue that beliefs in intervention and promotion of democracy are a result of cognitive factors – which range from metaphysical beliefs about the world to policy agendas – based on value-rational decisions. Moreover, interventionism fails to provide a rationale in understanding the epistemological deficiencies or processes embedded in the flawed notion of 'democratization' and 'reform' (Darby, 2009, 701-707).

Additionally, post-structuralists pointed out that the concept of overdetermination is largely omitted from the mainstream textual presentations of security studies. This epistemological term accentuates the interconnectedness of theory with practical discourse. In substance, it holds that as humans we are historically conditioned to detect and analyze what we have been traditionally directed to see (Ringsmose and Børgesen, 2011, 509-512). In particular, this signifies that the concepts learned and operationalized over time are obdurately attached to the flaws in mainstream epistemological lenses. Over time, human perceptions become an extension of this flawed epistemology and Westerners can often subjectively assess the need for intervention and SSR for far-distant lands – such as Afghanistan.

Post-structuralists admit to the powerful effect of discourse on constructing reality both in terms of mainstream cognitive perception and the resulting understandings as to what constitutes objectivity in modalities of democratic governance (Widmaier, 2007, 751-753). The power of discourse rests in its ability to transform thoughts about real understandings of the social world into systematic processes of differentiation that presume important variances in gender, race and geography. In short, post-structuralists maintain that our limited theoretical understanding aided by social experiences and discourse lead to analysis that selectively isolates aspects of the world.

Furthermore, some Western-based experiences are based on false understandings of democratization and SSR which are enmeshed within the constant flow of mainstream discourses. Falsehoods can become concomitant with theoretical frameworks because we are not able to correct and self-regulate our interpretations as they are grounded in discourse. Thus, as an ontological starting point, all observed processes are continuously in a state of transformation and cannot be uniformly applied in different geographical contexts.

For post-structuralists, in order to understand the true realities of the conflict in Afghanistan, there is a genuine need for theoretical empowerment to study global politics from the bottom up. They want to focus on the local, inconspicuous, undramatic, quotidian and banal practices, and the relevant strategies through which humans ontologize, fix or naturalize the world. Thus, this approach emphasizes the deconstruction of reality based on what we already know with what we should know about the conflict in Afghanistan (Williams, 2011, 71). To proprietors of the post-

structural narrative, insistence on appreciating cultural values, understanding historical

details of power dynamics, exploring ethnic divisions and considering religious values

are better starting points. Only then can flawed concepts like 'democratization' and SSR

be systematically deconstructed.

Moreover, the policy-relevant implications of the post-structural theoretical

framework have profound limitations in terms of what they can offer as tangible policy

options to reach a lasting resolution in Afghanistan (Hanssen, 2014, 41). Although it is

somewhat convincing to reframe the conflict in Afghanistan by utilizing an

epistemological critique that analyzes NATO's shortcomings in terms of SSR between

2003 and 2014, post-structuralists would maintain to do so is inherently limited in scope

and practice. Rather than answer the primary and secondary research questions of this

dissertation - which are themselves embedded in a liberal-institutionalist theoretical

framework - post-structuralists tend to myopically and solely focus upon the failures of

the NATO intervention due in part to cultural values, historical details of power

dynamics, ethnic divisions and religious values predating 2003-2014, factors that

arguably will continue to stymie SSR going forward.

Key principles of post-structuralism dictate that local development and security

should be led at the local level and preferably once patrimonial and patriarchical ideas

pertaining to conflict, ethnicity, gender, and race are further deconstructed. Therefore,

post-structuralist accounts are useful in exploring the deficiencies of the SSR policy

options between 2003 and 2014 and yet constrained by contextual specificity,

theoretical impracticality and their limited number of inferences that can be drawn for

the purposes of generalization.

Another prevalent methodology in post-structural explanations of conflict is the deconstruction method. Sajed (2012) refers to this as a process of intellectual and cultural decolonization that critiques mainstream epistemologies of conflict and global security (Sajed, 2012, 145). Deconstructionist methods attempt to deconstruct liberal institutionalist understandings of security building, state building and reconstruction by challenging the biases that are emitted from far-distant lands. The deconstruction method at its core is primarily concerned with the evolution of mainstream knowledge. Although deconstruction is largely hailed as a formidable method in the field of international relations that deviates from mainstream positivist approaches, it does have its own set of limitations resulting from an overreliance on critical frameworks (Wang et al., 2012, 14).

In other words, stark operational variances in deconstruction methods in comparison to mechanistic aspects of positivism and the scientific method are hindrances in terms of addressing research questions. The task of critiquing problem-solving approaches in security studies essentially targets any theoretical framework and subjects it to deconstruction where inherent deficiencies will inevitably arise (Jabri, 2012, 9-10).

Moreover, post-structuralists argue that the interventionist campaign in Afghanistan carried with it a colonial undertone which continued to re-popularize the flawed epistemologies of white/coloured, inferior/superior and developed/developing. Similar to post-modern narratives, post-structuralists assert that it is falsely deemed and understood to be the 'white man's burden' to civilize the savage other and that by doing so, the West is fulfilling the duty of benevolence bestowed upon it (Doty, 1993, 307).

Thus, post-structuralists accounts seek to illustrate the failures of the NATO security framework and SSR by questioning the epistemological and practical merits of liberal institutionalist prerogatives.

Finally, post-structuralist methods of deconstruction can involve delving into critical reappraisals of foreign policy from a historical perspective, which brings to the fore the actual suppression and marginalization of the Afghan population. In terms of SSR and liberal institutionalism, post-structuralists argue that the promotion of universal promises of democratization pursued by NATO – which included economic progress, development, and security – continued to dominate the 'structural' dynamics of Afghanistan (Bell, 2010, 65). Although post-structuralists are unable to provide precise strategic directives to shape concrete foreign policy options, they emphasize the untapped power of internal reform that could be led by Afghans and that could set in place real state-building that does not over rely on powerful external actors such as NATO (Loeppky, 2005, 91). Such post-structural critiques filter through to highlight cultures of hypocrisy, inequality and patrimony prevalent in mainstream explanatory and normative theories of international relations. Although these can result in important reiterations of epistemological concerns, their accounts rarely capture the attention of practical policymakers. The inability of post-structuralist deconstruction to prescribe policy recommendations based on empirical facts means their critical stance remains detached from practical realities shaping policy frameworks.

Feasibility of SSR in Afghanistan

The research findings in this dissertation indicate that NATO's SSR journey in Afghanistan between 2003-2014 was fraught with both progress and setbacks. While progressive institutional and bureaucratic overhauls took place in some areas, they relapsed in others. The field operations performance by the MoD, MoI, and the NDS varied significantly due to a multitude of factors ranging from how personnel were recruited to how training programs were set up and then developed. In short, NATO's SSR approach in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2014 allowed for an inquiry into the intricacies associated with SSR policy formulation and its subsequent implementation.

SSR, on its own, without a clear set of indicators or assessment criteria, was primarily driven by liberal democratic objectives of accountability, responsibility, and transparency surrounding the proper institution of reforms. However, the SSR model rooted in the liberal institutionalist framework was overly vague, untested, and subject to constant reform across different security organs in Afghanistan. Not only was the SSR model deployed in uncharted territory with its own set of culture and values on proper governance, but the chosen case study for liberal institutionalism's SSR experiment was also a difficult one from the very beginning.

Afghanistan, where no formal government had existed since the fall of Dr. Najibullah's communist regime in 1992, became the subject of NATO's most massive SSR experiment. NATO's arduous and monumental project sought to rebuild institutions in tandem with capable national security apparatuses in Afghanistan, although poverty, illiteracy, patrimonialism and patriarchy dominated (e.g. illiteracy rates lingered around 90 percent in 2002). Surprisingly, by the end of NATO's SSR mission in 2014, as this

dissertation shows, Afghanistan had a functional and somewhat capable intelligence, military, and police apparatus that attempted to uphold the legitimacy of the central government. The SSR experiment resulted in a mixed record of success and failure, yet in the context of the case selection itself, Afghanistan was an atypical hard case, perhaps the most laborious experiment the international community could have fastened upon in the world at that time.

To summarize, both the SSR model and the case of Afghanistan were problematic. SSR was not fully developed in 2003 – there was no ideal model; it was continually evolving. Moreover, the case upon which SSR was imposed was itself overly challenging and inappropriate. As discussed in chapters 2, 3, and 4, the liberal institutionalist campaign that sought full-fledged democratization in Afghanistan was hindered by NATO's execution methods. Despite difficulties in field operations and insurmountable challenges in terms of implementing institutional accountability across all security sectors, liberal institutional precepts did, however, manage to alter the landscape of governance in Afghanistan.

Thus, the end of the SSR mission in Afghanistan in 2014 and the withdrawal of 140,000 NATO troops saw the democratic transition of power for the first time in Afghanistan's modern history from external powers to internal actors resulting in significant improvements in both the bureaucratic capacity and field operations performance of security apparatuses. The recent history of Afghanistan is not covered in this dissertation (as it ends with events in 2014). However, it would not be far-fetched to conclude that the story of the past few years (between 2015-2019) and the next few years after that (e.g. 2020-2024) will also reflect the mixed record brought out in these

pages - a narrative or story without a happy ending, but rather an evolving narrative which this thesis has captured as a snapshot in time.

Chapter-by-chapter summary of research findings:

In order to maintain clarity and coherence, this chapter proceeds to analytically assess the findings from the key empirical chapters of this dissertation in chronological order before communicating the overall results of this research study.

Chapter 3: Overview of Research Findings

Guided by the accounts and narratives of interviewees, the third chapter of this dissertation reported on the institutional strengths and weaknesses of the key security institutions in Afghanistan – the MoD, MoI, and the NDS. Owing to the notable gap in academic literature between theory and a general understanding of issues associated with policy implementation in security institutions, it provided this research with the impetus to supplement it with definitive accounts from knowledgeable technocrats, policy officials, and senior executives at the MoD, MoI, and the NDS.

In the past, the scarcity of literature on the institutional aspects of the MoD, MoI, and the NDS categorically inhibited the requisite discourse necessary for an accurate assessment of institutional development within Afghanistan's security apparatuses. Having academically engaged the previously uncharted realm of NATO's SSR approach to institutional reform by interviewing relevant policy officials, there are several inferences regarding the above-mentioned institutions which can be drawn.

First and foremost, the emergence of the ANA as a national defense entity under the direct authority of the MoD brought to fore the complex challenges in professionalizing the institutional backbone of the national army. The nepotistic appointment of warlords with little to no formal experience to lead senior policy and executive positions in the day-to-day operations of the command structure of the ANA hindered the bureaucratic progress of the MoD. The proto-bureaucratic culture of favouritism, coupled with the unprofessional appointment of individuals to valuable posts devoid of the procedural recruitment process, was paradoxical to the SSR model of maintaining accountability, fairness, and transparency.

Additionally, the ISAF-led undertaking which formed the Civil Service Commission as an administrative advisory body embedded within the MoD to improve effectiveness and efficiency resulted in mixed outcomes. The Security and Support Division staffed by rank-and-file bureaucrats at the MoD immensely gained expertise from advice and training from the Civil Service Commission. Interviewees consistently conveyed satisfaction with the Security and Support Division, given the staff's openness to change, facilitating bureaucratic reform, and implementing better practice initiatives in everyday routine tasks. Nevertheless, they communicated that the senior policymakers at the MoD operated on the premises of corruption, informalism and patrimonialism - and resisted any reformative efforts proposed by the ISAF to implement oversight mechanisms. Resistance to the ISAF-led better practice initiatives gave way to 'big seed' corruption in the logistics and procurement subdivision of the MoD. Nevertheless, both Afghan and NATO officials proclaimed that human and institutional capacity at the

MoD significantly improved due to the special attention of ISAF in building up the main battle and defense group of Afghanistan.

Moreover, the international community's insistence on conditional and performance-based aid facilitated the continuous recruitment of both senior and mid-level bureaucrats by rules and procedures which were previously non-existent. 'Big seed' corruption at the MoD's administrative branch and the frustration of international donors led to the creation of the NPA by way of a presidential decree in 2014. The NPA at the MoD was not only overseen by the SIGAR, but mostly came to be monitored by the World Bank, UNAMA, and independent appraisers to prevent corrupt backdoor arrangements. Lastly, the improvements in public accessibility and infrastructure allowed for the development and expansion of the MoD satellite branches across all 34 provinces as part of the larger goal to maintain a national presence to improve security outcomes in volatile regions. Thus, the institutional aspect of the MoD has been described by interviewees as a mixed record of selective departmental progress as well as setbacks in introducing the core liberal doctrines of accountability, oversight, and transparency.

Furthermore, the third chapter accentuated the institutional development of the MoI and the ANP and explored the multitude of factors that shaped its image as the primary public protection force in Afghanistan. The discussion and analysis of the administrative branch revealed that the creation of the MoI in 2002 was premised on an incentive and reward system. Initially designed to integrate pro-US warlords and militia groups under a national police entity, it oppositely evolved into a corrupt system of compensation for militia, which assisted the US-led combat forces in ousting the Taliban

regime in 2001. The far-reaching effects of the informal reward system systematically deprived the MoI of a capable and functioning administrative branch as envisioned by NATO in 2003. Without surprise, the MoI found itself at the crossroads of facing international pressure for increased institutional capacity building on the one hand and catering to the preferences of the warlords who were keen on maintaining the informal culture of nepotism and corruption on the other.

The inefficiencies of the incoherent administrative system were further compounded with the emergence of an acrimonious internal dispute between distinct divisions of the MoI. The focal point of the dispute centered on an institutional flaw whereby the allocation of donor aid was unequally and arbitrarily appropriated to specific branches and divisions leading up to 2011. Also, the constant change in ministerial positions at the MoI led to a disjointed institutional reform agenda due to the monumental problems posed by powerful pressure groups led by former warlords in order to maintain the informal culture of status quo. In turn, continuous changes in command and the paucity of clear policy directions held the technocrats and rank-and-file officials back from performing their duties to the best of their ability.

Proclamations from participants revealed that another vital factor that further exacerbated the institutional flaw at the MoI was reported to be the change of international advisory command from Germany to a mixture of an American-German assistance initiative. The emergence of CSAC proved to be much more effective in training the bureaucratic staff by ushering in the military mindset to the MoI, but it also concomitantly neglected the past advisory direction of Germany in bringing about strict institutional accountability.

The research findings about the institutional development at the MoI indicated that these inherent problems continued to hamper the multiple aspects of administrative progress leading up to the conclusion of the NATO combat mission in 2014. Furthermore, the research results indicated that the adoption of a complex administrative structure by German advisors at the MoI in 2002 also stymied institutional progress. In general, the adoption of a complex bureaucratic and administrative structure, which idealistically emulated procedural features highlighting the importance of accountability and oversight evident in well-developed Western institutions brought about a period of confusion, inefficiency, and a lack of direction.

Finally, the third chapter's final area of attention served to provide an appraisal of the institutional features of the intelligence sector in Afghanistan. It discovered that in comparison to the MoD and MoI, the NDS was not plagued by similar forms of institutional malignancies. Participants described that the implementation of a simple command structure in tandem with the rigorous training provided by the CIA and other NATO members' intelligence agencies in early 2003 gave way to the professionalization of the institutional framework at the NDS. The systemic enterprise to create an internal watchdog along with an educational and awareness program for the NDS technocrats on procedural functions of the directorate set in motion the type of institutional obedience seen in well-developed Western institutions.

Although the NDS fared better in terms of institutional performance and in maintaining professional responsibility, the directorate found itself caught in the midst of a rancorous administrative battle between traditional bureaucrats and reformists. The

period from 2006 to 2010 was defined by traditionalists lobbying for the weight of their personal experiences, judgements, and nationalist motivations.

Meanwhile, the reformists were keen to familiarize themselves with modern forms of analytical and organizational methods in making informed policy and administrative decisions. Following the assertions of Afghan Official 7, the directorate's policy direction leading up to 2014 was derived from a combination of beliefs and dated forms of analysis but with an outlook of significant potential in incorporating the modern methods of intelligence analysis and planning.

In short, the interviewees described the institutional professionalism of the NDS' organizational performance as being in line with the policy-making models apparent in other developing countries. They elucidated that the orderly transition from human-centric models to the EBPM was an organized process that was dependent on the development of high levels of personnel expertise and organizational sophistication analogous to proven scientific methods. In light of the discussed institutional deficiencies, the NDS was widely considered by interviewees to be the most effective institution administratively in comparison to the MoD and MoI. Therefore, the existence of a coherent chain of command staffed by professional bureaucrats embodying a progressive and partially scientific policy-making model discussed earlier provided the NDS with considerable potential for further reform.

The institutional issues discussed in the third chapter also concurrently pointed to the complexities and difficulties in establishing strong institutions in Afghanistan with little infrastructure and a lack of professional capacity. By analyzing the institution building and organizational reform through the lens of SSR and liberal institutionalism, it

becomes clear that a prevailing culture of favouritism rapidly shaped the institutional features of the MoD, MoI and the NDS. The information provided by research participants indicated that liberal institutionalist values were either partially or fully overlooked during the reformative years of institution building in Afghan security apparatuses.

In the broader context, the state-building endeavour is one which is difficult to frame within the confines of a procedural and linear process, one which would ultimately yield the exact same results across time and space. Similarly, the institutional development of security apparatuses forming the backbone of emerging states in terms of possessing the coercive capacity to monopolize violence would require an extensive appraisal of the context in which they seek to be established. It also bears emphasis that conventional theories in the field of security studies are overwhelmingly becoming dominated by critical literature questioning the epistemological bases of prescriptive security policies. That is, there is increasing emphasis on reforming the definition of security to make it more inclusive by incorporating contemporary dynamics of security such as environmental, food and human security.

At the same time, this shift in focus towards the multi-faceted forms of security and securitization studies is detracting attention from the SSR literature which has been at the frontline of state-building endeavours to reform security institutions. However, the case of Afghanistan's SSR journey presented an opportunity for security experts to assess and study the challenges associated with establishing responsible and accountable security institutions in post-conflict situations. Without doubt, the liberal institutionalist model for institutional progress is one, which is confronted by various

difficulties as documented in this research study. For one, the lawlessness and factional control over territory in Afghanistan leading up to the US-led invasion and ISAF combat and training mission had in fact destroyed all remnants of an Afghan state including its security institutions. The rapid build-up of security institutions with assistance from NATO member countries in the aftermath of the collapse of the Taliban regime should be understood as a partially successful endeavour in bringing about some degree of stability and order where none had existed in the decade before.

The institutional challenges described in this chapter pertaining to the bureaucratic structures of the MoD, MoI and NDS are meant to provide a window of opportunity for further inquiry to engage the core assumptions of liberal institutionalism and the lessons which can be incorporated in future SSR initiatives. One crucial lesson learned from the case of Afghanistan is that the SSR model must maintain a level of rigidity and a comprehensive plan of action to build democratic and accountable institutions. A series of rigorous checks and balances led by a ministerial watchdog to prevent corrupt practices in emerging institutional bureaucracies needs to be incorporated in SSR models for institutional reform. War-torn countries, such as Afghanistan, are often governed by a mixture of informal and factional modality of governance split along ethnic, tribal and ideological fault lines facilitated by the culture of lawlessness as a result of years or even decades of civil war. In post-conflict situations where SSR is being presented as an opportunity towards democratic progress, it requires a degree of rigid operational principles to ensure that the institutional features of reform are in accordance with the liberal institutionalist model of good governance.

This also means that future SSR models must incorporate ongoing training programs for locals in good governance as a progressive policy to ensure accountability in security institutions and to act as a safeguard against the infiltration of corruption and nepotism. In order to achieve the objective of good governance, financial aid to security institutions in fragile states must be conditional on the progress made towards professionalization of the bureaucracy. Allocating financial resources to the development of security institutions without addressing the systemic issues of corruption, informalism, and nepotism as barriers to democratic bureaucratization is bound to yield inconsistent results. Therefore, a uniform training model in good governance for the intelligence, military and police bureaucracies along with a series of oversight bodies within ministerial settings is a necessary requisite to achieve democratic progress in state security institutions.

Chapter 4: Overview of Research Findings

The fourth chapter of this dissertation explored the field operations realm of the ANA and the ANP. Since 2003, ISAF's SSR mission commanded the largest training mission for security forces in the alliance's entire history. This mission was multifaceted in the sense that it not only involved the training and equipping of multiple security organs of Afghanistan from their inception, but also encompassed capacity-building for the institutions discussed above as well. The research findings discussed in this chapter were supplemented with interviews conducted with senior NATO and Afghan officials, which in tandem exhibited the turbulent trajectory of the SSR process in Afghanistan.

Despite the turbulent relationship between the NATO trainers and Afghan recruits, the establishment of the ANA as Afghanistan's primary defense entity came to be known as a model of gradual progress among policymakers. The accelerated training program based on which 178,000 ANA soldiers were armed, trained, and deployed across all 34 provinces in Afghanistan was unprecedented, if also fraught with unprecedented operational difficulties. Interviewees delineated that the operational ability of the ANA to maintain a nation-wide military presence and maintain control over large swathes of territory in the face of a complex and asymmetrical insurgency was a testament to the gradual build-up of morale and professionalism within the ANA ranks.

Another positive development highlighted by both the NATO and Afghan officials was the unwavering financial and moral support committed to the ANA by the NATO members. The complex challenges posed by the Taliban against the nascent national unity of the Afghans facilitated an environment conducive to national reconciliation where members from every ethnic sect patriotically joined the national defense forces of Afghanistan.

Research findings demonstrated that the land warfare Corps of the ANA consistently exhibited its ability to professionalize despite the limited resources allocated to it while the aerial warfare branch's progress faced significant developmental hurdles. The Afghan Air Force only benefited in improving its transport and utility duties, and it continued to rely on the NATO coalition for strategic and precision airstrikes due to the lack of a tactical fighter squadron. Interviewees indicated that while the NATO member countries were satisfied with the professional development of the Afghan pilots in being able to operate and support the ANA with a limited number of aircraft, NATO policy until

the end of the combat mission in 2014 was strategically engineered to limit AAF funding and personnel in favour of building capacity at the ANA. As such, progress in all divisions of the AAF was not symmetrical and varied across many divisions and branches due to the specific emphasis on building transport and utility squadrons.

This research study also discussed the findings relevant to aspects of the ANP's field operation as the primary public law enforcement agency of Afghanistan. Predominantly, the topic of paramilitarization dominated accounts and narratives about the ANP, along with the other parallel distinct training programs. The explanations put forth by various interviewees regarding the ANP's disparate field operations performance in Afghanistan were manifold.

For the most part, the discourse surrounding NATO's SSR process in Afghanistan was dominated by the performance, development, and assessment of the ANP. First, the training programs prescribed to institute police sector reform by the CSTC-A and later by NTM-A in 2009 were replete with militaristic traits. In sum, it was postulated that the program was a hybrid product of military and police training, which heavily emphasized counter-insurgency operations yet faintly covered what should have been the civilian and community policing duties of the ANP as the primary public law enforcement institution.

Additionally, the establishment of the ALP in coordination with the NTM-A as an extension of the MoI's field operations in rural districts proved to be counter-productive. The short three-week-long training program provided to the ALP proved to be limited in improving comprehensive police sector reform in rural districts. Criticisms registered by the interviewees included gross abuses of power, arbitrary arrests and detentions of

civilians, high desertion rates, and high levels of illicit drug use, which only worked to weaken and problematize NATO's overall SSR efforts in the policing sector.

Thirdly, the impatience of the Pentagon in 2009 resulted in a major reinvigoration of ANP training with the merger of the CSTC-A and the NTM-A command until 2014. Personnel in the ANP were encouraged by the US-based military and police trainers to adopt an aggressive military posture in facing the resilient counterinsurgency led by the Taliban. These trainers, which included the PMT and the POMLT were primarily military and Special Forces trainers with a predominant focus on threat neutralization through the use-of-force tactics. On the other hand, the understaffed EUPOL Mission stressed the development of civilian policing tactics and adopted a somewhat softer approach in conveying the fundamental principles and underpinnings of SSR to improve law enforcement across Afghanistan.

Lastly, the CMR system adopted by CSTC-A and NTM-A found only marginal progress in different operational aspects of the MoI and the ANP. As detailed by NATO Official 12, a series of annual reports detailing the complex web of policy appraisal about the ANP performance leading up to 2014 noted certain key facts. The ANP was most effective when constantly advised, mentored, and trained by coalition forces in their realm of operations. Furthermore, providing military training to the ANP recruits neither improved policing methods nor resulted in the reduction of crime and violent incidents. Hence, the reliance on measuring police effectiveness with firepower and the omission of public sector input as part of SSR was attributed to the incompetence, mistrust, and violent incidents that brought into question the operational ability of the ANP.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation highlighted the operational challenges faced by the military and police apparatuses in Afghanistan and how the constant change in both strategy and command affected the effectiveness of the police and the Afghan Armed Forces. The lessons learned from the case of Afghanistan's police and military reform are useful in appraising the shortcomings of the SSR agenda and how it can be better aligned with liberal institutional objectives of democratic reform. One key lesson learned is that multilateral intervention in war-torn countries opens the floodgates to corruption, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness in security apparatuses if policy frameworks are not in place to guide the operational aspect of the military and the police. That is, there is a genuine need for a separation of duties and responsibilities within NATO member countries to uphold the integrity of the SSR process. NATO member countries must clearly adopt a role in SSR and then, stay within the scope of their roles and responsibilities to ensure uniformity, strategic coordination and continuity in reforming the military and police sector. As witnessed in the case of ANP, the constant back and forth in the training command between the US and German trainers not only affected the civilian community policing initiative but was also a setback in terms of operational efficiency given the lack of direction for Afghan police recruits.

Secondly, the paramilitarization of the police force must be given considerable thought within NATO policy circles to assess whether it is conducive to the SSR process. As discussed in chapter four, a core feature of good governance in the police sector is the incorporation of civilian community policing in upholding the constitutional rule of law. The relationship between the locals and the police need not be defined only from the perspective of coercive capacity of one over another but rather requires a

civilian approach to foster cooperation and nurture the growth of an emerging police force in a post-conflict setting. Thus, falsely perceiving paramililtarization of the ANP as an effective tool against terrorism severely affected the civilian community policing model that deviated from the core principles of SSR's police reform agenda.

Finally, the military sector reform in future SSR models must consider the importance of maintaining a balance between different branches of the military. As revealed by research participants, disproportionate allocation of resources to certain ANA Corps in Afghanistan affected the development of the Afghan Air Force. Despite the shortcomings, the gradual development of the ANA allowed for a certain level of morale and discipline to prevail in cementing the identity of the modern Afghan state and the sanctity of its constitution. Given the rapid build-up of the ANA in the aftermath of the collapse of the Taliban regime, it fared better than its police counterpart largely due to the singular training model led by the US for Afghan recruits. In other words, consistency in maintaining constant training models for recruits is paramount for NATO in ensuring similar levels of combat expertise in field operations. Thus, there is a need for improvement in devising divergent policy models for police and military sector training programs to ensure there is no overlap in duties and responsibilities between the two.

Chapter 5: Overview of Research Findings

The final chapter of this dissertation was exclusively dedicated to the field operations realm of the NDS. The research findings demonstrated superior capabilities for all operations forces assigned to the NDS in comparison to the ANA and the ANP.

The differentiating factor in field operations superiority for the NDS in comparison to the ANA and ANP was found to be the extensive overseas training provided by the CIA instead of the CSTC-A and the NTM-A. As communicated by both NATO and Afghan officials interviewed as part of this research study, the unwavering commitment, morale, and resolve of the NDS field operations personnel was admirable.

As previously explained, the NDS Force's operational domain was marred by underdevelopment and the incapacities of the ANP and the ANA. The NDS Force served as the primary rapid reactionary force until it was gradually able to train, equip, and mentor the ANP's CRU. Among the NATO policymakers, the comprehensive training provided by the NDS Force to the CRU was hailed as a success story of an Afghan-led mentorship program. The CRU training program overseen by the NDS Force yielded higher than expected results in successfully instituting a capable and professional high-readiness ANP sub-unit. Later in 2013, the transition of the NDS Force as trainers for the MIU in the ANA redesigned its mandate as a rapidly deployable security stabilization training force.

Furthermore, the success of the CTF among all other ANSF subunits was unsurpassed in Afghanistan. The field operations realm of the CTF was dominated by intelligence-gathering, seizing and securing operations against insurgents, and proactively devising counter-terrorism strategies to strengthen the overall offensive and defensive posture of the NDS. Analogous to the NDS Force, the CTF continuously pursued a policy of patchwork fulfillment in augmenting the ABP's performance deficiencies in volatile border regions. However, despite the CTF's entanglement in a multi-dimensional operations arena, it continued as a productive and preventive

counter-terrorism force by coordinating with the ANA and the command of NATO's ISAF. Therefore, the highly trained and readily deployable operatives employed by the CTF were perceived to be the prominent counter-terrorism operations combat force in the aftermath of NATO's combat mission in 2014.

In short, the SOF field operations realm was shaped by performance-based shortcomings and the endemic corruption documented within the ranks of the ANP. As a result, the SOF replaced the ANP as the central investigative authority directed at the prevention of significant crimes, which included extortion, abduction, and infiltration of Taliban insurgents within the ANA and the ANP ranks. Also, the high level of consistent security coordination between the CTF and the SOF, as conveyed by interviewees, facilitated the capture and killing of high-profile Taliban insurgents. Hence, insurgents captured in the SOF operations across Afghanistan produced valuable intelligence, which not only assisted in improving security outcomes but simultaneously demonstrated the SOF's independence and operational capabilities.

Future Research Agenda

It is hoped the findings in this thesis provide future decision-makers and analysts with more empirical evidence that further aids their efforts and understanding. One area of future research could involve a more detailed operational post-2014 appraisal of the ANA, ANP, and the NDS in order to more deeply assess their capabilities and development in the aftermath of NATO's combat and SSR mission. It will be important to analyse the professional development and evolution of the ANA, ANP, and the NDS in future years in order to assist in the task of improving these forces' approach to

ensuring future peace and security in Afghanistan. As this research study focused

exclusively on the period from 2003 to 2014, and NATO's combat and SSR process in

Afghanistan during those years, more research on the period 2015-2026 would be

useful. Such a future research agenda could traverse many developmental phases of

the ANA, ANP, and the NDS in order to comprehensively engage with the relevant

literature, reports and interviews and to expand associated parameters of knowledge.

Final Conclusions

This research study did not find all-encompassing faults and failure with the SSR

project in Afghanistan, Instead, it was discovered that the execution of the SSR project

including its various stages of policy development, as described herein, proved often

inconsistent and incoherent. Originally, liberal institutionalism seemed sound and

capable, in terms of providing a framework that could explain how vital institutions could

be established; how transitions of power could be more democratic; and how the

international community and important security institutions, like NATO, could be

engaged. However, It was discovered during the research process and particularly

during the interviews of high-level NATO and Afghan officials, that the tenets underlying

liberal institutionalist principles were often poorly and inadequately understood and

implemented between 2003 and 2014. During the long-term course of SSR

implementation, here was continual conflict in terms of instituting reforms – for example

between traditionalists and modern reformists – and this meant indications of

institutional progress digressed from core liberal institutionalist objectives, particularly

objectives surrounding accountability, responsibility, and transparency.

To reiterate, the case of Afghanistan has proven to be a challenging case for SSR, in particular given the parallel mandates that were assigned to the NATO-led ISAF mission to build both state and security apparatuses in a country divided along ethnic, ideological, and tribal fault lines. What became clear from the research was that the NATO-led SSR mission in Afghanistan lacked clear and transparent indicators of progress and of related deficiencies.

Evidently, Afghanistan is a challenging and an unprecedented case for SSR implementation, particularly since no formal state institutions existed since the fall of Dr. Najibullah's Communist regime in 1992. It needs also to be appreciated that NATO's mandate constantly shifted from short-term security stabilization to different mandates committed to safeguarding the emergence of the fragile democratic order in Afghanistan, for instance through the establishment of the ANSF. The organizational commands for field operations within the MoD, MoI, and the NDS, for example, were direct and indirect attempts to professionalize the ANSF through NATO's professional-led ISAF. Yet despite such limitations in institutional and human capacity, the NATO-led initiative to establish the ANSF set in motion the gradual and long-term build-up of vital security organs.

What has become clear from the research findings in this study is that although the ANSF has gained some levels of proficiency in field operations and modern counter-terrorism tactics, there remains significant room for improvement in order to fully professionalize the ANSF. The core liberal democratic objectives of SSR – accountability, responsibility, and transparency –were simply not previously fully implemented in institutional features and operational aspects of ANSF. The overlooked

missed challenges may largely be attributed to the challenging case of Afghanistan -

where the statebuilding enterprise continued to be pursued in tandem with SSR

initiatives. As this dissertation demonstrates, the processes that led from the incipient

stages of state-building to full-fledged democratization and that were supported by high

levels of security were beset with setbacks, trial-and-error policy formation and inherent

tribulations. However, not to have set forth on the road and to have instead expected

failed and failing states to provide sufficient political capital and will to attain fair and

inclusive governance on their own would be misplaced, naïve, and fail to consider the

rights of all stakeholders within and without the state.

Appendix 1: Research Methodology Revisited

Participants in the study were primarily asked to reflect upon a set of issues, including but not limited to the following four themes:

Theme 1: the extent of bureaucratic and institutional reform at the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD), Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the National Directorate of Security (NDS);

Theme 2: the field operations aspect and capabilities of MoD, MoI, and NDS units;

Theme 3: the aspects of NATO's SSR approach that worked, did not work, and why?

Theme 4: how NATO's SSR agenda could have been done better in hindsight? And what could be done better now?

In short, participants were asked what they thought about how NATO's SSR agenda provided institutional assistance to the rebuilding of the security sector in Afghanistan. In order to better understand what is revealed by the research process itself – as well as the interviews of participants who engaged in SSR – the study makes use of qualitative interviews. It needs to be emphasized that the interviews focused mainly on what interviewees – having participated in devising security policy in Afghanistan – thought about crafting and institutionalizing security policy. Interviewees for this research were mainly comprised of mid-to-high-level elites and policymakers in NATO and Afghanistan who were extensively involved in SSR. Approximately the same set of questions was asked of each person.

This methodological approach was selected from the beginning of the research study because it was assumed that the interviewer would encounter a varied group of interviewees, each with their own sets of occupation-and training-related language or

jargon, understandings, and specializations. In short, many of the questions were designed to be universally relevant and the final questions at the end of the interview were designed to be specifically relevant, depending on the interviewee's position, past experiences and occupation.

This research made use of non-invasive observation techniques including elite interviewing (Lancaster, 2016, 7), as well as other techniques such as examining training and education manuals and relevant pieces of legislation including various and significant documents and articles related to SSR itself. In total, 30 people were interviewed by the author, Sakhi Naimpoor, at various institutions including NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium; Hamburg, Germany; Kabul, Afghanistan; and Ottawa, Canada between February 2017 and October 2018. The interviews were conducted at different institutions and locations listed in the chart, 'Interviews Conducted' included as an Appendix in this thesis.

The interviews were conducted in public spaces including boardrooms, cafeterias, hotel lobbies and offices. All interviews were conducted in the English language as each interviewee chose to speak English (rather than Farsi). Each face-to-face interview lasted approximately 30 minutes to one hour. The only identifiable information that was collected included the interviewee's full name, work address including work email address; and information about where the interview will be and was conducted. The interviewer's handwritten notes identified the research participant by a number, not their name, address or any personal information. All this information was not shared with others and this information was collected in order to contact the participant by email and to arrange the location and time of one study visit interview.

A general outline of relevant questions had been developed and was approved as part of the September 2017 application to the University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board. Some of the approved questions were intentionally devised as open-ended to allow for a diversity of responses. Approximately the same set of questions was asked of each person. See the following **Non-Medical Research Ethics Board Approved Interview Questions.**

Non-Medical Research Ethics Board Approved Interview Questions

To mitigate against the possibility of biased evidence selection and researcher subjectivity as well as to clarify the research agenda, these NMREB-approved research questions were asked of each interviewee:

1. In your opinion, what were some of the advantages and disadvantages of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) agenda pursued by NATO in Afghanistan?

2. In your opinion, what were some institutional barriers and shortcomings in NATO's attempts to institute SSR in the Ministry of Defense (MoD)?

3. In your opinion, what were some institutional barriers in NATO's attempts to institute SSR in the Ministry of Interior (MoI)?

4. In your opinion, what were some institutional barriers and shortcomings in NATO's attempts to institute SSR in the National Directorate of Security (NDS)?

5. Did the increase in the number of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) represent a core feature of SSR as pursued by NATO?

6.. In your opinion, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the field operations capabilities of the Afghan National Police (ANP)?

7. In your opinion, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the field operations capabilities of the Afghan National Army (ANA)?

8. In your opinion, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the field operations capabilities of the NDS?

9. In hindsight, do you think that NATO's SSR process was effective, somewhat effective, deficient or a failure at instituting Western-style security structures?

Addendum: Non-Medical Research Ethics Board Approved Interview Questions

1. The Non-Medical Research Ethics Board Approved Interview Questions are the
   questions which the University of Western Ontario's Ethics Review approved,
   before the interviewees were selected, and then contacted by email to request
   interviews. (No persons were contacted with an in-person recruitment script).
   This form of interview method sought to provide the researcher with reliable,
   comparable qualitative data from seasoned mid- to high-level bureaucrats who
   subsequently expressed no concerns about feeling pressured to grant interviews.
   None of the interviewees declined to participate in the study. None withdrew from
   the study, during the single study visit, or afterwards by email or telephone.

2. At the beginning of the research process, the author had published nascent
   opinions about the practical considerations for Canadian and Afghan policy of
   continuing involvement in Afghanistan (Naimpoor, 2016a, 2016b, 2017a,
   Naimpoor and Simpson 2017b, Naimpoor, 2017c). But during the research
   process, the collaborator discovered more about theoretical constructs and
   institutional approaches that were helpful to mid-and high-level decision-makers.
   Those discoveries led to important implications for making further theoretical and
   empirical contributions to the international security field that the author published
   in 6 opinion pieces or 'op eds' and 1 short journal article (Naimpoor, 2017d,
   Naimpoor and Simpson, 20118a, Naimpoor, 2018b, 2019a, 2019b, Naimpoor
   and Simpson, 2020a, Naimpoor, 2020b). However, none of the interviewees
   were identified and none of the exact information they conveyed was used in
   these publications. For that reason, the bibliographic references to these

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publications were not emailed to the interviewees. Once this thesis is successfully defended and published through the School of Graduate Studies, its URL and bibliographic reference will be emailed to each interviewee. Future publications will not use the information, published herein, without the interviewee's permission, as outlined in the written Information and consent letter.

3. Each interviewee was selected through a NMREB-approved recruitment process using email. The email specified the purpose of the study, potential risks (*i.e.* none) and benefits (*i.e.* benefits to society), their right to confidentiality, and their right to refuse to participate in the study.

4. The interviewees comprised "elites" – policy-makers who have been directly involved in the process of Security Sector Reform – and by employing a NMREB-approved respondent-driven sampling process, the researcher did not contact potential participants, identified by another participant in the research study.

5. Some interviewees mentioned this study to others and provided details of the study and contact information to them so that they could contact the author if they were interested in taking part in the study. However, the author was the only person who made initial email contact with potential participants; and the author had access to contact information due to organizational structures historically made available on NATO websites and the homepages of the Afghanistan government.

6. Before the face-to-face interview proceeded, the author asked for the interviewee's written consent in an 'Information and Consent Letter'. The letter

asked to use their position and title and the information that was being directly or indirectly collected. Due to the sensitive role of NATO and Afghan officials and security protocols, each interviewee verbally requested not to be directly quoted with their names, titles and institutional affiliations associated with their direct quotations. But each interviewee assented to have their full name; position; title; location; and date of the interview published in the dissertation. Then each interviewee consented in the 'Verbal Assent Script' - that exactly reflected the written Information and Consent Letter - that all the information they would impart could be included in the published thesis so long as they themselves were not identified by name using direct or indirect quotes. Then they were informed, and later in writing in a 'Debriefing Letter' that the bibliographic reference to the dissertation would be emailed to them upon publication of the thesis. As outlined in the letter that was emailed to them a few days after the interview was done, each interviewee received two emails that detailed the project title: "NATO's Security Sector Approach in Afghanistan"; the project's number, NMREB 107921; the project's Principal Investigator (PI), Dr. Erika Simpson; and the project's collaborator (the author of this thesis, Sakhi Naimpoor). These emails and all such written materials also included the project's sponsor (Social Science Centre, The University of Western Ontario), and in case of concerns about conflict of interest, the contact information and mail address of the PI's office in the Social Science Centre at the University of Western Ontario.

7. For more detailed information on the recruitment process including the written and verbal script of the letter of information and consent letter (which included a

set of boxes with questions that were checked or not checked) as well as the

debriefing letter, please see Project ID NMREB 107921, Project Title "NATO's

Security Sector Approach in Afghanistan", created 02/Sep/2017, available upon

request from the Office of Research Ethics and WREM, its online research

protocol submission form, retrieved Jan. 26, 2020 from

https://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/human/WesternREM.html. If you have

further questions about the Ethics protocol, please contact the Principal

Investigator (PI), Dr. Erika Simpson or if you have any questions about the

conduct of this study, you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics 1

(519) 661-3036 or 1-844-720-9816 or email: ethics@uwo.ca

8. The interviewees conducted by collaborator, Sakhi Naimpoor, without the PI

present, were conducted without using audio or video recordings, and therefore

without transcribing the interviews. In each case, the 30 interviewees declined

written and verbal offers in the Letter of Information and Consent Letter and

Verbal Script to audio-record the interviews, therefore no transcripts were made.

With the permission of the interviewee, however, the researcher took handwritten

notes during the interviews. These handwritten notes were numbered, without

identifying the interviewee, and are retained in a locked filing cabinet in the

researcher's office in Ancaster, Ontario. Separately, the master list of

interviewees, with their associated numbers, but without the handwritten notes,

are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the PI (Dr. Erika Simpson's

Office in Room 4157, Social Science, University of Western Ontario). The

handwritten notes, master list of interviewees, and the list of associated numbers,

will be destroyed in 7 years, according to the University of Western Ontario's

protocol. Nobody except the author has access to the handwritten notes and the

master list with associated numbers, and only the PI has access to the list of

associated numbers. As the Consent Letter explained, the information in the

notes will not be used for any future publications, including book chapters, journal

articles or opinion pieces ('op eds').

Date: 6 April 2020

To: Dr. Erika Simpance

Project ID: 107921

Study Title: NATO's Security Sector Approach in Afghanistan

Application Type: Continuing Ethics Review (CER) Form

Review Type: Delegated

Meeting Date: 01/May/2020

Date Approval Issued: 06/Apr/2020

REB Approval Expiry Date: 25/Apr/2021

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Dear Dr. Erika Simpson,

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board has reviewed this application. This study, including all currently approved documents, has been re-approved until the expiry date noted above.

REB members involved in the research project do not participate in the review, discussion or decision.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Daniel Wyzynski, Research Ethics Coordinator, on behalf of Prof. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).

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