

Supported by the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIJA), 'Afghanistan Study Group Japan', whose membership has experience in assisting various sectors in Afghanistan, was formed and conducted a series of discussions on the international intervention in Afghanistan since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Under the auspices of the JIJA, the ASGJ presents summary recommendations, which was made based on the group's discussions. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent those of the organizations with which the respective ASGJ members are affiliated.

Summary Recommendations

The state of Afghanistan remains fragile despite seven years of international assistance. Since 11 September 2001, the international community has focused on state-building and reconstruction in Afghanistan in the hopes of winning the “war on terror”. However, in reality, anti-government forces have gained influence over the southern and eastern parts of the country, empowering the terrorist elements. The people’s lives remain difficult, with weak government and rampant corruption. The initial confidence and hopes that people had toward the government and the international community have drastically diminished, leading them instead to rely reluctantly on anti-government forces for security and livelihood.

As a recent response, the international community signed the Afghanistan Compact at the London Conference in January 2006, promising assistance as the government progresses in the areas of governance, security and reconstruction. The international community also reaffirmed its continued commitment to assisting the country at the NATO Conference in April 2008, recognizing that the improvement of security in Afghanistan is the highest priority. However, despite the refocus on security sector reform and talks about NATO force expansion, the security situation has yet to improve.

The ASGJ contends that the international intervention efforts need to be refocused on improving and securing the actual lives of the people. Much of the aid has focused on a “top-down approach”, from the perspectives of donors and the Afghan government, perhaps in haste to build the state. However, this has resulted in lesser attention given to the actual needs and insecurity of the Afghan people in their

communities, and at times has created a vacuum exploited by destructive elements.

ASGJ thus calls to attention the following points:

1. Importance of addressing the “human security” needs of the Afghan people in communities as a matter of priority.

i) The majority, if not all, Afghans live by distinctive rules and codes of conduct established historically by communities with strong ties to their ethnicity and tribes. The international intervention should focus on strengthening and building up these communities, not destroying them. Improving human security – protection, capacity building, and development -- in these communities to make them resistant to terrorism is the most effective way to counter terrorism.

ii) The international community should readjust its assistance to ensure “Afghan ownership” with a view to improving relations between the government and the people in communities. The government should be empowered to directly provide protection for the livelihood and dignity of the people to enhance national solidarity.

2. “Human security” can only be ensured through promoting reconciliation amongst the population and establishing social order and sustainable livelihood in individual communities.

i) ***Restoring social order***

While security sector reform remains one of the key requirements in stabilizing the country, it has yet to produce satisfactory results. Many of the current challenges should be readdressed from a “human security” perspective centered on communities.

The immediate objective of the Afghan National Army (ANA) supported by the international forces is to fight terrorism. An army is not a tool to directly provide security to people in communities. What is happening in reality is that communities themselves are being destroyed as military operations combat terrorists mixed amongst communities, resulting in further alienation of the people. This paradox should seriously be addressed and the rules of engagement, along with the role of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), should be clarified and aligned.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Disarmament of

Illegally Armed Groups (DIAG) have been intended to promote human security in communities. However, in reality, the continued lack of security and alternative livelihoods is hindering progress. The DIAG process in particular is stifled in the north, for example, as people in the south are rearmed to form an “auxiliary police” to fight terrorism alongside the ANA.

The establishment of the Afghan National Police (ANP) was thought to be crucial in restoring law and order. However, the formation of the police has been painfully slow and its mission remains ambiguous, especially in relation to the auxiliary police.

These ambiguities in the functions of various security establishments -- ANA, ISAF, PRT, ANP and the auxiliary police – and the slow establishment of the rule of law in communities feeds the distrust of the people toward the government.

For these establishments to take roots, it is absolutely important to promote cooperation and coordination with leaders and representatives of local communities.

ii) ***Restoring relations and trust between people***

Although a legitimate government has been established through the Bonn process, the government still lacks the capacity to protect its citizens from threats to their survival and enable them to maintain their livelihoods and dignity. While the government capacity must continue to be built with a “top-down” approach, efforts must also be made to strengthen self-sufficiency and sustainability of communities with a “bottom-up” approach. These efforts must be built on the existing system and the rules of Afghan society. In this sense, proposals and plans on security and order developed by local communities should be respected and followed by the government.

“Ownership” requires giving choices to the Afghan government and its people to rebuild their society in manners that are compatible with their ways of life. Values forced from the outside cannot take root. In order to encourage Afghan “ownership”, it is important that donors improve their own ability to identify Afghan capacity and to encourage and draw upon it. Current modes of assistance need to be reviewed, and changes in “behavior” and “mentality” made, by donors.

It is also important not to forget the coming generation of Afghans. There are many youths who are understandably concerned about their

country's future. Empowering the next generation is a must for the long-term stability of the nation.

Afghan state-building requires establishment of a social order based on existing community-level rules and structures. It is therefore important to empower rural communities to enhance security and economic development. The Community Development Council (CDC) established under the National Solidarity Program (NSP) has been hailed as a success story in promoting rural development. The program encourages community initiatives and ownership, but also at times destroys the existing community order. If reviewed and redesigned to respect communities' ways of life, the program has the potential not only to form a base for development activities but also to enhance security in rural communities.

iii) ***Providing alternative livelihoods***

For counter-narcotics efforts, DIAG, reintegration of refugees and other activities to succeed, it is necessary to secure alternative livelihoods. Counter-narcotics measures cannot be sustained by eradication alone and disarmed men will need alternative sources of income and security. The international community and the government should establish a strategy not only to create immediate jobs, but also to build an economic structural base to facilitate the flow of goods in markets.

iv) ***Promoting reconciliation***

Having experienced 23 years of open violence between various domestic factions, the Afghan people will eventually require ways to resolve past injustices if they are to regain trust and form a solid nation. Amongst the diverse sources of animosity, the most crucial one to address is the Taliban issue. The problems of security and disorder in the rural areas will never be solved if the Taliban remain excluded.

With the above observations, ASGJ recommends the following:

1. **Restore social order**

The on-going international assistance in the security sector and other areas should be reviewed with a focus on promoting human security. Practical suggestions

include:

- i) ANA and NATO/ISAF need to clarify and strictly adhere to their rules of engagement. Various PRTs should also align their Terms of Reference and clarify their roles.
- ii) The roles of the national police as well as the auxiliary police should be clarified and promoted among the general public. While central authorities should continue to be trained in law enforcement, rural communities should be empowered to maintain the nationally-established rule of law in their villages.
- iii) The existing rules and codes of conduct in rural communities should be respected and strengthened. People in smaller communities should also be made responsible not only for local development activities but also for local governance and security.
- iv) A security plan developed by local leaders and some volunteers utilizing local community networks that has recently been identified by the ASGJ should be examined by the government and the international community, and be made a base for cooperation and coordination between local people and the government and international community.
- v) International advisors should not functionally replace Afghan government authorities, but instead should focus on training and capacity-building the government. Donors should revisit Item 21 of the Co-chair's Summary of Conclusions adopted at the Tokyo International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan dated 22 January 2002, and work to harmonize their operational practices regarding the distortionary wage and rent inflation they have caused that is undermining the government's state-building efforts.

2. **Promote sustainable livelihood**

To promote the human security of people in communities, economic structural bases must be built to sustain alternative livelihoods. While working to establish a "top-down" economic infrastructure, local communities should also be empowered to promote "bottom-up" efforts to meet half-way in building a sustainable economy. Examples of this are as follows:

- i) The international community should support the Afghan government in establishing regional strategies for infrastructure, industrial and

market development. The donors should then support the implementation of the strategies, starting with those regions having the most potential to succeed.

- ii) Review and redesign NSP initiatives to better promote human security in communities. With the continued support of donors, the community-led initiatives should be eventually linked to other national programs and sectors to expand their impact and ensure sustainability.
- iv) Multi-year training programs should be developed for both public and private sector personnel, as well as for youth.

3. **Promote reconciliation**

A procedure should be established to incorporate the moderate Taliban and others who were excluded from the Bonn process. The list of terrorists established by the international community should be revised, with agreement by the Afghan government, to drop those who have proven their genuine willingness to participate in state-building.

4. **Minimize external interference**

While encouraging domestic solidarity and development, the international community should also focus assistance on minimizing the impact of external interference. Practical areas include:

- i) Promoting dialogue with Pakistan, Iran and other neighboring countries
- ii) Improving border control not only to stop the flow of drugs but also to facilitate the flow of legal trade
- iii) Enforcing strict laws against drug-lords and traffickers, and not punishing rural farmers who have no alternative source of livelihood and security