

Disarming Afghanistan's Warlords

Jake Sherman

Three years after the Bonn Agreement established a process for steadily rebuilding government institutions in Afghanistan, rule of law has not yet replaced rule by the gun. The central government still does not have a monopoly on the use of force; in most areas of the country, military commanders and armed groups continue to act with impunity. They interfere in—and in some cases are members of—district and provincial governmental administrations. They support and benefit from the booming illegal drug trade, which threatens to transform Afghanistan into a narco-state. Moreover, they subject the Afghan people to daily human rights violations, such as intimidation and illegal taxation to rape and murder. Indeed, the United Nations' Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan recently noted that the problems of security caused by continuing military power of warlords and local commanders, as well as the increasing economic power of those involved in the cultivation, production and trade of illegal drugs, are critical to understanding the ongoing violation of human rights.¹

No one is more aware of this fact than Afghans themselves, who consistently and overwhelmingly identify Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) as the number one priority for their personal and communal security.²

Based on the author's experiences in the northeast region of Afghanistan,³ there are three serious problems facing the UN-administered Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP)—the organization responsible for implementing DDR. Afghans' expectations of how much security the program will yield are predicated on addressing these problems. First, despite the ANBP's stated intent to provide commanders with incentives to participate in the process, many senior commanders do not feel they have received sufficient guarantees of their future. As the final decommissioning of their units draws near, these commanders are becoming increasingly less cooperative with the ANBP and the Ministry of Defense (MoD), an institution that many non-Tajik commanders still view as dominated by the Panjshiri followers of slain United Front (Northern Alliance) leader Ahmad Shah Masoud. Second, the ANBP has yet to address the problem of surplus weapons

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owned by official commanders, which could potentially be used to arm “unofficial” militias once their formal military units are decommissioned. Finally, the DDR program as designed is only targeting official Afghan Military Forces (AMF)—that is, units that fall under the MoD structure. The plan has, with very few opportunistic exceptions, left untouched the unofficial, private militias across the country, which are a far greater cause of insecurity for the majority of Afghans than the uniformed, formal units of the MoD. If these militias are left unaddressed, they could potentially fill the vacuum created by the planned decommissioning of official AMF units.

Disarming a Nation

Following the collapse of the Taliban, thousands of fighters demobilized and reintegrated on their own initiative. In many areas, both official and unofficial commanders collected weapons from these fighters and from the population at large.⁴ Yet thousands more *mujahedeen* (holy warriors who fought against the Soviets and Taliban) maintained their command structure and their arms, and were incorporated by the MoD into the AMF, or *qul-i urdu*.⁵ Still others remained outside the control of the MoD, becoming unofficial militias.

In December 2002, President Hamid Karzai issued the first decree on disarmament and weapons collection. The decree called on the *mujahedeen* to cooperate with the new government and for the process to be completed within six months.⁶ The goal of sustainable demobilization and reintegration was also identified as a priority in the government’s 2002 National Development Framework.⁷

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Following a second presidential decree in September 2003, the UN-administered ANBP was initiated in October 2003 to assist the central government, above all the MoD, with a national DDR program aiming to process 100,000 soldiers and officers over three years.⁸

As part of the pilot phase of DDR, which began on October 24, 2003, 6,037 soldiers and officers were reintegrated. However, the pilot project highlighted numerous problems of the program, not least its focus on rank-and-file soldiers rather than the commanders. As it is largely commanders who own the weapons, the pilot project unintentionally subjected demobilized soldiers to intimidation by commanders for their severance packages. Additionally, it failed to address the surplus of weapons held by commanders in excess of mobilized soldiers, with which they could rebuild their forces.⁹

In March 2004, as part of the donors’ conference on Afghanistan held in Berlin, Germany, President Karzai committed the Afghan government to the demobilization of no less than 40 percent of the stated strength of the AMF and to the cantonment of 100 percent of heavy weapons by June 2004 (the originally scheduled date for national elections).¹⁰ This benchmark was in part an effort to fulfill at least some of the demand by Afghans that disarmament be completed ahead of the

country's first election, thereby reducing the likelihood of political intimidation influencing its outcome.¹¹

The "main phase" of DDR—actually comprised of three phases—commenced on May 17, 2004. Attainment of the Berlin benchmark was achieved under the first of these phases. By the end of the current, third phase, all AMF forces are to be decommissioned. This should be achieved by March 2005, though reintegration activities are expected to last until June 2006. The reintegration strategy focuses on two factors, as identified by ANBP: "first, the possibilities for isolating and engaging commanders in legitimate enterprise; and second, employment and training opportunities for the ex-soldier."¹² The ANBP description continues by noting, "The challenge will be to alter the relationship of commanders to communities through robust economic interventions specifically targeting the middle ranks of the commanders."¹³

The main phase of DDR has increased momentum as resistant commanders have come under intense pressure from the MoD and international community to cooperate. As of December 2, 2004, the ANBP had disarmed 25,981 soldiers across the country and completed reintegration of the overwhelming majority of this number. Nonetheless, the process has encountered routine delays and, more importantly, has failed so far to identify the "robust economic interventions" necessary to engage the commanders.

Convincing the Commanders

Commanders are a—if not the—principal cause of insecurity for the majority of Afghans, in particular the significant population living outside of urban centers. Yet many commanders see themselves as deserving special entitlement for and deriving legitimacy from having defended Afghanistan twice—once by driving out the Soviets and again by fighting and, with considerable international assistance, defeating the Taliban. They have a point, but only to an extent; it was the very abuse of power by *mujahedeen* across Afghanistan that helped usher in the Taliban in the first place. Few commanders have used their position to further their communities ahead of their own power and self-gain.

Likewise, some commanders argue that they and their forces are still necessary for guaranteeing security. They are willing to comply with DDR, but cite continued activities by Taliban and al-Qaeda, under-equipped and under-trained police, and a still fledgling—if not politically biased—Afghan National Army (ANA) as reasons to wait. The ANBP also acknowledges this, noting at its inception, "[N]either the Afghan National Army nor the National Police have the capacity to fulfill security needs in the provinces."¹⁴ In the northeast, this last point is made primarily by ethnic Uzbek commanders, many of whom point to their lack of representation in the Transitional and post-transitional Cabinets and to the pro-ethnic Tajik political leaning of the MoD as evidence.

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The commanders have a point, though again an extremely limited one. Increasing numbers of trained Afghan National Police (ANP) and ANA are being turned out and deployed throughout the country. In the northeast region of Afghanistan, provincial governors, chiefs of police, and the National Security Directorate (NSD) that is responsible for intelligence, have expressed confidence that the current police force is sufficient to provide security. They claim that reduction of AMF forces should therefore proceed. Ongoing reform of the MoD and other security institutions is gradually creating a truly national outlook, rather than one serving the interests of any particular faction. Meanwhile, armed men affiliated with commanders are the primary cause of the intimidation and human rights violations that Afghans face.¹⁵

The ANBP recognizes, “The need to address the fundamental problems associated with the operation of warlords, rather than disarming only their lower-level troops, presents a complicated political challenge for the Government.”¹⁶

At present, however, it is a reality that if the central government is not willing to disarm resistant commanders by force—something that it has been hesitant to do

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and which still risks uniting *jihadis* (those who participated in the holy war) against the government—then it must be willing to negotiate with them. This means conceding some ground by offering sufficient incentives for commanders to disarm voluntarily. From the outset of the DDR process, commanders and senior officers have consistently expressed concerns about their future to the United Nations and to the MoD. Many commanders aspire to roughly equivalent positions in the civil administration, the ANA or the ANP, but significantly fewer have the necessary qualifications for such posts. Further complicating this is the fact that the AMF has a disproportionately high number of senior ranks. The commander and senior staff of nearly every division, regiment, and often brigade is a general, even if the individual in question has no formal military, let alone high school, education. Clearly, not every demand for appointment as a provincial governor or chief of police can be fulfilled in a country of thirty-four provinces. The number of eligible candidates becomes even fewer if one considers that histories of war crimes and ongoing human rights violations would better entitle many to prison rather than to government office.

In spite of their stated reservations, an overwhelming number of commanders have so far complied with the initial rounds of DDR aimed at downsizing their forces, albeit often only after delays resolved through intense negotiations and pressure from the central government. However, there is evidence that, if left unaddressed, these concerns will become an increasing impediment to progress as decommissioning of units draws near under the final phase of DDR. One commander made clear his position that while the AMF may no longer be needed to maintain security, continued progress of DDR without first dealing with commanders’ requests would itself become a primary source of insecurity. This resistance is

most evident in *jihadi* strongholds across the north and northeast and those units directly subordinate to “national” *mujahedeen* figures like Marshall Fahim, General Abdul Rashid Dostum, Abdul Rasoul Sayyaf, and former president Rabbani. The MoD thus far has had only limited engagement in an open and transparent discussion with commanders about the reintegration opportunities that await them and in addressing particularly those senior commanders who have aspirations of joining the government. Commanders of the 55th and 29th Division in Takhar and Baghlan, respectively, suggested that the MoD could appoint two or three senior commanders from their units—themselves included—to positions prior to their decommissioning as a confidence-building measure.¹⁷ This would be a positive development, especially if taking up the positions was made contingent upon commanders’ immediate cooperation with the DDR process.

As the aim of the DDR process is to decommission the previous *jihadi* units to create space for the new ANA and ANP, there are justifiable concerns about appointing even qualified commanders to positions in government in which they would have access to weapons and control of security forces. For example, while Afghanistan’s police are undergoing a crash basic training course, much of the ranks are filled with poorly and infrequently paid former *mujahedeen* fighters loyal to particular commanders. One option for dealing with commanders who wish to join the government and who possess sufficient qualifications is to provide them with non-security related posts, for example, as provincial directors of state factories, customs houses, and natural resources. Months or years in the future, should these individuals prove corrupt or incompetent, it would be easier to remove, if not arrest, them. Clearly not all commanders will be amenable to such positions and there is a likelihood that many commanders will seek to profit personally from such positions. But, if the government insists on immediate disarmament and is unwilling to find means of negotiating solutions to commanders’ demands, then it may find itself having to seriously consider how to remove such commanders from their power bases by other means.

In October 2004, the DDR program introduced a financial incentive package under which some 550 commanders and senior officers with the rank of brigadier general or higher would receive a monthly salary—equivalent to that for untrained ANA—for at least one year in exchange for their full compliance. A few commanders have already accepted this option, but the program is designed for commanders who have not used their position to amass considerable influence and wealth—often through both licit and illicit means—or engaged in human rights violations. The exclusion of mid-level officers has generated a few grievances. Several mid-level commanders have expressed scorn at the expectation that they are expected to become teachers or shopkeepers, being entitled to reintegration options at the same level as rank-and-file soldiers, but few complaints have been received once they actually enter reintegration.

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commanders will eventually comply. Significant progress was made in both DDR and the parallel heavy weapons cantonment in western Afghanistan after regional warlord Ismael Khan was replaced as governor of Herat on September 11, 2004. At the start of the programs, virtually no progress had been made in this region. Similarly, in November 2004 after over a year of stalling, General Dostum turned over a significant quantity of heavy weapons and entered several hundred soldiers after his strong showing in the presidential election. The move was likely an effort to comply with requirements for having Junbish-i Milli registered as an official political party ahead of the parliamentary elections, if not an effort to get appointed to a Cabinet position.

Surplus Weapons

One legacy of the *jihad* and the means by which weapons were distributed to the mujahedeen is that the weapons collected by commanders from their military units in Afghanistan are largely considered the private property of the commanding officer, rather than the unit or the soldiers. The ANBP works on the logical basis that soldiers must present a functioning weapon in order to be entered into DDR. As commanders have not been forthcoming about revealing the quantity of their stocks, there is no exact estimate of the number of weapons stockpiled by commanders. Eyewitness accounts, however, suggest that arms quantities greatly exceed the number of soldiers and officers under their command. General Sardar, commander of the 29th Division in Badakhshan, for example, has several thousand small arms, but only several hundred men under his official control.

This means that once all soldiers on the official payroll of a unit have undergone DDR and the unit is decommissioned, the commanders—particularly heads of divisions and sub-divisions—will still be in possession of numerous weapons, yet will no longer be subordinate to the MoD. According to Nazri Mohammad, commander of the 338th sub-division in Badakhshan, he had 250 men on his payroll

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but 1,000 weapons in storage; if his unit is decommissioned, he stated that he will no longer have any authority to keep these weapons and will have to redistribute 750 of them back to their owners.¹⁸ While this demonstrates that some commanders may see these extra weapons as a bargaining chip vis-à-vis the MoD, it also underscores the potential security risk of these weapons. If uncollected via the ANBP or a parallel government-led process, these weapons could potentially be used to arm unofficial militias, including loyal soldiers from their previous formal military units. Securing the agreement of commanders to hand over their weapons stores

will likely take a combination of considerable negotiation and pressure on the part of the MoD. In order to ensure that that the MoD continues to have leverage over these commanders, one short-term solution is to maintain a token number of soldiers within the MoD structure to “guard” the weapons until their handover to the

MoD can be brokered. Beyond this, the government is exploring the possibility of offering community development as an incentive for handing in weapons.

Unofficial Militias

Unofficial or irregular militias exist throughout Afghanistan. Estimates of the number of unofficial militia and their size are extremely imprecise, though NSD has conducted surveys in at least some provinces. Among the regions of Afghanistan, the northeast is believed to have among the highest numbers of unofficial militia. In mountainous Badakhshan province, for example, a center of *mujahedeen* resistance to the Soviet Union and the Taliban, estimates by the National Security Directorate (NSD) and the United Nations suggest that as many as 12,000 men may belong to unofficial militias. The number in neighboring Takhar is believed to be even higher. Most unofficial militias in the region appear to be led by small, independent commanders with localized areas of influence—a few villages, a valley, or a stretch of border—who were not integrated into the Ministry of Interior (MoI) police and border forces or the MoD. There are, however, also powerful commanders who control large territories of one or more districts and have other commanders beneath them, each with their own militias. The presence of these militias undermines the authority of local government, as officials are unwilling or unable to challenge their de facto authority, or control them for their own interests.¹⁹

Unofficial militia are generally not actively mobilized. Commanders have collected weapons and ammunition (this is true of AMF units as well) and most of their men have voluntarily demobilized, though there are exceptions, particularly due to geographic remoteness. However, a small group of loyal members remain armed in order to look after the interests of the commanders, including guarding weapons depots; acting as bodyguards; and in some cases, engaging in human rights abuses and criminal activities. If needed, such as in disputes with rivals, commanders can quickly mobilize their militias and redistribute weapons.

Outside observers, let alone the population at large, face significant difficulties in distinguishing between official and unofficial militias. Many official security units do not have standardized uniforms and not all members of those that do have uniforms always wear them. Even NSD has difficulty identifying them. With few exceptions, militiamen do not carry weapons in public, while non-uniformed bodyguards of government officials may look like unofficial militia. The fact that these militias are largely invisible not only frustrates efforts to estimate their number and strength, but also facilitates the deniability of their existence by commanders. As the majority of commanders, at least rhetorically, claim to support DDR and the peace process, admitting their control of unofficial militias would not only be potentially embarrassing, but also could also link them to crimes. Nonetheless, commanders openly admit that they have stocks of weapons that they claim to require for ensuring their security and that of their community.

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One category of unofficial militias is former soldiers who did not enter the DDR process after their AMF unit was decommissioned, in some cases because they were not given the option. In April 2003, for example, responsibility for the Afghan border forces was transferred from MoD to MoI. Along the northern border

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of Badakhshan, however, the MoD relinquished authority over the border force, but the units were never transferred to the MoI. Although they still have their weapons, these units no longer receive salaries and have degraded into unofficial militias. They now control the smuggling activities along the border they used to protect.

In some cases, commanders were not integrated because they rejected official positions, possibly because they believed themselves entitled to ranks beyond that offered. In other cases, they were intentionally excluded because of political or personal rivalries. In northeastern Afghanistan, several largely demobilized militias of considerable strength—thousands of men—are loyal to prominent Uzbek commanders in Takhar province who were denied official positions. Their case is unique within the region. Indeed, there are few similar cases in the country as a whole, since few other commanders of comparable size elsewhere in the country have been similarly excluded.²⁰ These commanders, including Mahmood Hassan, Pirham Qul, and others were not offered positions and therefore were never integrated into the civil administration or security structure. Now, lacking the ability to rely on official troops to further their goals and maintain their local power and engaged in rivalries with predominantly ethnic Tajik commanders who do hold official posts, they are more likely than most of their colleagues to rely on their militias in time of need.

However, there are commanders throughout all levels of the public administration who are appointed as provincial governors, district managers, chiefs of police, and other positions. (The process of appointment within the Ministry of Interior has a reputation for corruption marked by cronyism, purchasing of positions, and even buying back positions by those dismissed for incompetence or criminality.) In the northeast, some of these commanders still discretely maintain militias even if they control official units of police, AMF, border police into which they can incorporate part of their men. General Daoud, the previous commander of the northeast's 6th Army Corps, controls two districts of Takhar province through local militias. Likewise, Qazi Kabir, the provincial governor of Takhar province, controls three districts via an official border force battalion, local police departments, and village militias not formally integrated in any security service. Even individuals who benefit from positive reputations among the local population and/or the international community, like Engineer Omar, the governor of Kunduz, maintain militias in their areas of traditional influence.

Unofficial militias are used to control and protect political and economic interests—including control of drug trafficking—from the village level up to, in

some cases, whole districts. Challenges to their authority are frequently dealt with through intimidation and violence. While there are many infamous local commanders who directly engage in abuse, more powerful commanders are more apt to maintain small rogue commanders or gunmen under their protection, who account for much of the criminal activity in the areas under their control. Although rogue commanders may damage the reputation of their patrons, they are useful. On rare occasions, commanders may even be willing to offer up these commanders to the justice system in order to appease the local community and to demonstrate their "respect" for the rule of law.

As the DDR main phase enters its final months, policy makers from the Afghan government and international community have begun thinking about how to address unofficial militias after DDR of formal military units is completed. Preliminary discussions have taken place under the leadership of the government to design a weapons collection program supported by community development incentives. Such a programme would tie needed development assistance—including the potential of alternative livelihoods to combat poppy cultivation—to creating political space for improved local governance and security. Community representatives, including government officials and elders, will have an important role in influencing commanders to disarm. For small local commanders faced with the knowledge that even a small group of trained police or ANA forces could threaten their position, the opportunity to voluntarily disarm and receive something for their community might provide a good option. This could also have significant appeal to communities themselves, which might then put pressure on those commanders who will not voluntarily disarm to do so. In areas where competition between rival commanders is high, or where there is intermittent conflict, reconciliation will be necessary so that commanders are willing to turn over their weapons without fear of a security vacuum emerging.

For powerful commanders—especially those who have earned the title of warlord (*jang-i salar*) and are linked to lucrative organized criminal enterprises—community development is likely to be less of an incentive. Those in official positions are able to ensure that their areas are already beneficiaries of development projects. The government must also consider the strong possibility that such commanders, no matter how many weapons they turn in, will retain a reserve. If the government is not yet in a position to arrest commanders who continue to challenge its authority, then alternative incentives—such as offering government posts or business and travel opportunities—may be necessary. If these opportunities are not accepted by commanders, then the government may have to exercise patience for the national security institutions and courts to become strong enough to challenge the authority of the commanders. Indeed, as less powerful commanders succumb to the rule of law, those at the top of the pecking order may start reconsidering their options. Following the successful presidential election, some governors are demonstrating an increasing confidence and willingness to begin challenging

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criminal gunmen affiliated with commanders. Taking the weakest first may also minimize the risk that ambitious subordinate commanders will become independent and more difficult to control if the big commanders who control them are demobilized first.

Conclusion

Everyday, communities throughout Afghanistan are subjected to arbitrary rule by commanders and their militias. The control they exercise, even when relatively benign, remains one of the greatest obstacles to the emergence of a strong, centralized state in which Afghans are able to enjoy the freedoms and rights guaranteed in the new Constitution, and indeed, the peace and security that they want and deserve after more than two decades of war. Their influence compromises the emergence of an independent judiciary and effective public administration. It also impedes the rise of independent political candidates and parties who are afraid to challenge established *jihadi* parties, most of which have now been registered as political parties. Indeed, the upcoming parliamentary and local elections will be a critical test of the extent to which independent political voices are able to openly participate in shaping Afghanistan's political future.

The DDR process, despite its flaws and delays, has made gradual progress. It remains possible that despite the resistance of official commanders to the decom-

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missioning of their units, they may in the end have no choice. By March 2005, the MoD will end salary payments and the AMF will cease to formally exist. Many of these commanders, secure in government positions or wealthy from legal and illegal activities, may ultimately choose to accept this future without further complaint. Others, however, armed with stockpiled weapons and backed by unofficial militias, will remain a challenge to the expansion of state authority until such time as they can be taken down or are violently removed by rivals.

In the near term, the Afghan government must keep pressure on commanders to disarm, but it must also be willing to negotiate where necessary. Those commanders who retain militias and arms must understand that they will eventually have to give them up. Laws restricting possession of weapons or requiring registration are being introduced locally, while the MoD has emphasized that only ANA and ANP will be able to legally carry weapons once disarmament is completed in mid-March 2005. A new criminal code has been introduced; police are receiving basic training and equipment; the ANA is proving its effectiveness and earning popular support; and legal professionals are also gradually being trained. Slowly, these initiatives are strengthening the rule of law and the protection that it affords. In a study conducted in late 2003, a majority of Afghans stated that they felt safer than they did the previous year and believed they would be safer still the next year.²¹ This is encouraging news. But forward progress is by no means irreversible, as the record growth of illegal narcotics suggests.²²

In the long term, Afghans expect that those commanders who have abused their power, whether during past wars or since, will be called to account for their actions. The more effective the DDR process is now, the less time the Afghan people will have to wait for impunity and the rule of the gun to end.

ENDNOTES

- 1 United Nations, "Report of the Independent Expert of the UN Commission on Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan," A/59/370, (September 21, 2004): 2.
- 2 See The Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, "Speaking Out: Afghan Opinions on Rights and Responsibilities," (November 2003): 2.
- 3 The northeast region of Afghanistan is comprised of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz, and Takhar provinces. The first and last of which were centers of resistance against the Soviets and Taliban and have a relatively high presence of powerful commanders and unofficial militia.
- 4 In northeastern Afghanistan, disarmament was facilitated by the dominance of the Shura-i Nazar political faction and its allies. See International Crisis Group, "Disarmament and Reintegration in Afghanistan," *Asia Report*, no. 65 (Kabul/Brussels, September 20, 2003): 9-10.
- 5 Formation of the AMF included an element of weapons collection by commanders, as ranks were awarded on the basis of the amount of weaponry they controlled. See International Crisis Group: 10.
- 6 Decree 174 of the Chairman of the Islamic Transitional Government of Afghanistan, 15 December 15, 2002. It was accompanied by a decree establishing the new Afghan National Army, which would gradually replace the AMF, the old *mujahidin* forces formalized under the MoD after the fall of the Taliban, as their forces underwent DDR.
- 7 Perhaps indicative of the challenges—and delays—that DDR has faced, the related section was not received in time to be included in the conference version of "Securing Afghanistan's Future," dated March 17, 2004, which outlines Afghanistan's strategic investment priorities in order to become an economically sustainable state.
- 8 Decree 70 of the President of the Islamic Transitional State of Afghanistan, September 22, 2003. As the DDR program has progressed and the number of soldiers in each unit has been verified, the 100,000 soldiers have proven to be far less—around 50,000.
- 9 There are, of course, some exceptions such as household ownership, though many local commanders have conducted local disarmament, storing weapons in their own stockpiles, while some former fighters have individual weapons taken during fighting.
- 10 Islamic Transitional State of Afghanistan, "Annex I to the Berlin Declaration. The Way Ahead: The Work Plan of the Afghan Government" (April 1, 2003): 2, (hardcopy on file with the author).
- 11 By October 6, 2004, three days prior to the presidential elections, 20,300 soldiers and officers had entered the DDR program and 2,780—nearly 65 percent—of the functional or repairable heavy weapons known to exist in the country had been collected. Press Briefing by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Spokesperson, October 7, 2004, <<http://www.unama-afg.org/news/briefing/spokesman/2004/04oct07.htm>> (accessed on December 11, 2004).
- 12 ANBP Public Information Office, "ANBP Programme Summary," 1, <<http://www.undpanbp.org/Overview/programme%20summary.htm>> (accessed on December 2, 2004).
- 13 Ibid, 2.
- 14 ANBP Public Information Office, ANBP Programme Summary, (October 29, 2003): 1, (hardcopy on file with the author).
- 15 See United Nations, "Report of the Independent Expert of the UN Commission on Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan," A/59/370, September 21, 2004; Human Rights Watch, "Killing You is a Very Easy Thing for Us: Human Rights Abuses in Southeast Afghanistan," *Human Rights Watch* 15 (5c) (July 2003); Human Rights Watch, "The Rule of the Gun: Human Rights Abuse and Repression in the Run-up to Afghanistan's Presidential Election," *A Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper* (September 2004).

16 ANBP Public Information Office (accessed on December 2, 2004).

17 This was conveyed to author during a meeting with senior commanders on the DDR program in October 2004.

18 This was conveyed to author during a private meeting in June 2004.

19 Elsewhere, in Pashtun areas of the country, unofficial tribal militias, or *arbakai*, which serve as community defense forces and whose leaders enjoy legitimacy in their communities.

20 Other notable examples included Amanullah Khan in Shindand district, Herat, and Pacha Khan Zadran in Khost province, though the latter was briefly appointed as governor until tribal leaders arranged his ousting.

21 The Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium, "Speaking Out: Afghan Opinions on Rights and Responsibilities," *The Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium*, (Kabul, November 2003):16.

22 In 2004, Afghanistan's net opium cultivation increased 64 percent over that of 2003, accounting for 87 percent of world production. United Nations Information Service, "Fact Sheet – Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004," November 18, 2004, <http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/afghanistan_opium_survey_factsheet_04.pdf>, (accessed on December 6, 2004).