

NATO's Security Perspective in the Post-Taliban Afghanistan

Mukesh Kumar Vishwakarma

Centre for Inner Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi-110067 (India)

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 12 June 2019

Keywords

NATO, Security, War, Terrorism, Taliban, Al Qaeda, Peace Stability.

Corresponding Author

Email: immkv84[at]gmail.com

ABSTRACT

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) engages and has played a critical role in the political and security transition in Afghanistan. Without its support, the government of Afghanistan and international security supporters would not have been able to move Afghanistan on a path of peace, reconstruction and stabilisation. On 11 September 2001, the Al Qaeda's attack on the United States would come into view further to strengthen NATO's significance. The mission of NATO in Afghanistan has been seen as a test of the coalition partners' military competency and their political will. The overall conditions in Afghanistan have raised the level of hostility because of the increased military campaign against Taliban and Al Qaeda, and augment in terrorist activities. In this mission, how much NATO became victorious in leading the international military force to support the Afghan government to build security and sustained peace? The United States has been functioning with NATO in continuing the combat against the terrorist group, and involving Afghanistan in counter-terrorism and working hard to restrain the spreading of weapons of mass obliteration. The main purpose of this article is to analyse NATO's involvement in Afghanistan in the security and peace perspective. This article attempts to evaluate how and to what extent NATO and its alliance have succeeded over the support of the Afghan government to create peaceful stability.

1. Introduction

Afghanistan lacks sufficient institutional, material and human resources to make substantial progress on its own. That is why the U.S. always took an interest in Afghanistan. The Taliban and Al Qaeda are significant problems for security perspective regarding personal and collective. The Government of Afghanistan has been incapable of tackling the security situation as well as many more issues entirely. Afghanistan has been dependent upon financial assistance from outside countries for an extended period. The logic behind is that Afghanistan has been suffering due to many wars. The conditions of Afghanistan are feeble because the institution of government is not functioning properly due to lack of finances. They are not capable of training their police forces and not provide the latest weapons to their troops. That is why they need some support from outside to enhance its security.

In the Cold War, the most important component of the United States' strategy is the NATO Alliance for containment against the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new era of globalisation started all over the world. From this period, the new age of opportunity for peace and prosperity emerged from the international community. These opportunities provide a stable, cooperative, and secure international order. Nowadays, NATO struggles to transform itself into an active military alliance capable of countering the threats of the 21-century environment the coalition partners. The emergence of many deadly, transnational, and asymmetric menaces are the problems for the country. The most significant current threats are Al-Qaeda and its allies, supporting an ideology of violence and terror. The rise in terrorism is a statistical trend in the last 30 years and indicates this area of persistent conflict has only just begun (Booth, 2008).

Afghanistan is such a region, but it would be wrong to reach any conclusion without contextually and objectively analysing the common facts. Afghanistan is known as a preferred destination for international terrorist organisations like AL-Qaeda that planned and executed the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. Some of these issues will briefly deal with this paper. The role of the international community cannot dismiss 9/11 terrorist attack because western countries came together to the U.S. against this attack and actively participated in 'war on terror' campaign. Hence, the paper seeks to focus particularly on NATO's role in Afghanistan in security perspective that took the accountability of setting up peace and order in Afghanistan. From NATO's point of view, Afghanistan's importance has been discussed- Firstly, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and NATO is the first time in its history beseeched Article 5 related to collective defences. It implies that an attack on a member country should be treated as an attack on all. Secondly, NATO had started its mission in Afghanistan that was the first time outside of the Euro-Atlantic region. This mission is one of the longest and challenging missions for NATO. Lastly, even after the extended stay in Afghanistan, it is hard to conclude that NATO's Afghan mission was a success in the tranquillity and stability that are still a far-off dream for the ordinary people in Afghanistan (Triparthi, 2015). The paper argues the analysis of NATO's role in the country.

NATO is a multinational force that helps Afghanistan in nation-building process which basic aims to achieve peace and stability. It is also contributing to preventing terrorist groups from becoming a haven for terrorists again. NATO's presence in Afghanistan is a directed result of the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001. After this attack, a US-led operation was immediately deployed to Afghanistan to oust Al-Qaeda. That had taken

responsibility for the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the repressive Taliban regime that harboured it (NATO, 2012). Once again, the 9/11 terrorist attacks triggered a vigorous debate about NATO's aims and American strategic interests in Europe. It brought about a shift in US attention to other parts of the world. Traditionally, the Western European countries are considered by the US as its most important political allies, for they share common values and traditions. Besides, they are the United States' principal trading partners and are in a position to provide the hard assets of military forces and military bases that can help to secure US interests in the European region (Begum, 2010).

2. Nation-Building Process in Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Security Perspective

NATO can build a robust system that controls the security situation in Afghanistan. NATO has its objectives for doing work in Afghanistan. The goals of NATO in Afghanistan came to include a reformist state-building agenda. NATO aimed to establish a state with the centralised rule, a democratically elected leadership, a liberal market economy, and a commitment to human rights principles. Although Loya Jirga (traditional council) is the creation of traditional representative institutions at the national and local levels that boosted the legitimacy of the new Afghan government. NATO has largely limited its capacity-building programs to supply-driven technocratic strategies (Larsen, 2013).

All coalition forces are working under the supervision of the United States and NATO. NATO took command of alliance troops in 2003. International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations have gradually mandated by the United Nations Security Council along with its expansion outside of the capital city and to cover the entire of Afghanistan (NATO, 2012). Therefore, NATO did not contribute to the toppling of the Taliban regime. This administration had openly sponsored international terrorism, including the attacks on 11 September 2001, which compelled NATO to activate its collective defence article for the first and, thus far, the only time in its history. U. S.-led coalition forces pushed the Taliban out of its southern stronghold of Kandahar in November 2001. Al Qaeda retreated into Pakistan shortly after that. However, it was necessary to create a strategy for the post-conflict phase, to avoid allowing Afghanistan to disintegrate back into a haven for international terrorism. The UN initiated a development plan in which NATO came to assume a larger responsibility for time (Larsen, 2013).

NATO's primary objective in Afghanistan has been "to enable the Afghan authorities to provide effective security across the country and ensure that the country can never again be a haven for terrorists". The political-military posture of NATO was all about "assisting legitimate Afghan authorities" to create a safe, secure and stabilised country. However, this mission strongly connected with some other essential state building mechanism, such as infrastructure, economy, health care, community policing and public security. Corruption, terrorism, organised crime, drug trade, the insurgency are some of the emerging challenges, which would affect the overall strategy of the NATO and its allied forces

(NATO Centre of Excellence Defence against Terrorism, 2014).

The Bonn Agreement¹ (2001) set out a democratic peace-building blueprint for post-Taliban Afghanistan. It outlined the international community's commitment to supporting Afghanistan's adoption of a national constitution and the election of an entirely representative government (Larsen 2011). The Bonn agreement recommended the formation and stationing of a United Nations Security Council mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Since 2001, ISAF has been engaging in Afghanistan under the terms of reference for the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1386. ISAF involved in Afghanistan with a peace-enforcement mandate under Chapter VII of the United Charter. The ISAF is the NATO-led multinational force in Afghanistan (NATO 2012). The United Nations proclaimed its commitment to supporting a democratic model with the Afghanistan Compact (2006), which listed three main pillars: development (economic and social), governance (the rule of law and human rights), and security, tied specifically to the NATO-led ISAF (Larsen, 2011). The goals of ISAF were: to assist the newly established Afghan Transitional Authority (ATA), to help the ATA in creating a secure environment in and around Kabul, and assist in the reconstruction of war-ravaged Afghanistan (Begum, 2010).

At least three factors stirred instability in Afghanistan in the short term and therefore made democratisation a steep path for NATO to pursue. First, democratisation sowed the seeds for future violent conflicts with the Taliban, which opposed liberal democracy and women's rights as a model and Western phenomena. Second, democratisation exacerbated the ongoing conflict between the Northern Alliance (supported by the United States and NATO) and the Taliban regime (backed by Al-Qaeda); this conflict culminated in a resurgence of violence in 2006. Third, warlords, drug lords, and local power brokers did not want to see their power or poppy production curtailed by the rule of law. NATO's co-opting of these actors in the political process in the interest of short-term stability hindered Afghanistan's democratic development (Larsen, 2013).

3. NATO's Mission in Afghanistan

NATO-ISAF and American coalition forces did not have a permanent command base in Afghanistan. The United Nations Security Council authorised NATO, through Resolution 1510 to root out terrorism by the Charter of the United Nations. The UNSC also requested ISAF to continue to work in close consultation with the government in Kabul, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative, and the Coalition for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) (Begum, 2010). NATO's mission in Afghanistan divided into three categories:

- *Combating insurgencies;*
- *Strengthening Afghanistan's Security Institutions and*
- *Curtailing the opium trade*

¹ The Bonn Agreement is on provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the Re-establishment of permanent government Institutions.

NATO forces were deployed early in the less volatile provinces of Afghanistan. After spending sometimes, the U.S. and its coalition partners demanded to increase and called on to carry out combat operations, rather than stabilisation and reconstruction mission. Besides it, the United States has separated started an Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) against the Al Qaeda and its allied groups in Afghanistan. In these operations, many of coalition forces became casualties. Thus, the strength of troop gradually became less due to it. In the meantime, NATO forces commanders demand more troops and equipment for conducting an operation against terrorist groups, while the belt of terrorists is in southern and eastern parts of Afghanistan that are the most dangerous regions for the troops.

Moreover, the Taliban and Al Qaeda also affected directly in security perspective of the country. Despite, NATO's member countries remain unwilling to get involved in completely in this combat operation. For this combat operation, there have been debating about encumber contribution and coalition harmony (EU 2009). Reconstruction efforts have damaged due to the activity of the civil war. The United States made a Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) with the combination of civilian and military personnel for reconstructing the capacity building of Afghanistan. In this rebuilding capacity of Afghanistan, NATO and ISAF are also operating their function for giving security from the Taliban and Al Qaeda groups. Again, they have their agenda through which they work. The critical of this plan are counterinsurgency instead of reconstruction and stabilisation of Afghanistan. The tasks of these military and civilian units have undertaking infrastructure projects. This project supports to expand the authority of national government into the entire country and provides security. Presently, twenty-six PRTs are moving the whole of Afghanistan. This PRT runs by different ISAF countries. All of these countries had their interest and got benefited from this PRT. Besides it, the reconstruction process sponsored by the ISAF considerably detached from other efforts. However, the PRTs have unsuccessful in involving a significant means with humanitarian assistance organisations (EU 2009).

The security and rebuilding troubles are enforcing the conditions of Afghanistan. It also enhances instability in the machinery of government that do not provide it accurately. Besides it, safety and the relief effort has fragmented. The rebuilding process has not been happening outside of the metropolitan centres. As US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates currently stated, "Afghanistan doesn't just need more boots on the ground. It needs more trucks, teachers, judges, foreign investment, alternative crops, sound governance, and the rule of law". That is why the Taliban have been fully functioning in getting the opportunities of this vacuum situation. In these conditions, NATO and its allied partners have taken a few sensible decisions to offer education for girls where the absence of school and to collect hold up from the local people (EU 2009).

In the similar way, NATO forces have trained; motivated monitored and equipped Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan National Army (ANA) units. These have been the best-qualified success. The Government of Afghanistan has

been spending the small budget on training and equipping and oversight over the forces at the national level. That is why the competence of the ANP and ANA has proven very weak in controlling conflict situation. The international community such as Germany has taken command of training these ANP and ANA. But the people of Afghan are not well educated. That is why the trainer has faced many problems such as language problem for training by Afghan people. Due to it, the German training program failed to collect enough talented recruits. For strengthening Afghan security forces, Germany created a big European Police Training (EUPOL) college in 2007. Though, the image of ANP remains bad among the public. Afghan Police forces a recurrent aim of Taliban attacks. Taliban operative infiltrated against equipped Afghan police forces. NATO has been more successful in training and mentoring of the ANA.

ANA includes about 80,000 troops with numerous experts. They agree that Afghanistan would require growing from 150,000 to 200,000 for competence for making secure in its country. As a result, ANA entirely dependent on NATO assistance, while Afghanistan has not competent to build as a stand-alone force. Moreover, Italy supports to create Western-style justice system. It supports for introducing a new pattern of justice to protect human rights as well as smooth functioning for giving a decision on the case. Lastly, NATO efforts have failed for destroying enlargement of the narcotics industry. In the world market, ninety per cent of opium supplies by Afghanistan. Afghanistan is producing with a few alternatives crops despite opium cultivation. Some NATO members have supported a hard policy line. Through this policy, it has seen that NATO forces have been working with the Afghan government to destroy crops and narcotic labs. While other members of NATO have disagreed, this would lead to further weakening the support for it. An efficient counter-narcotics policy would have to wait. NATO allies decided and authorised ISAF forces for destroying drug and services. The Taliban gets its financial assistance from this source. For this time being, the prolonged forecasts of that assignment remain vague (EU, 2009).

The U.S. troops and Afghan armed forces fought comparatively to combat operational largely in the southern and eastern part of Afghanistan. These included "Operation Mountain Viper", "Operation Avalanche", "Operation Mountain Storm", "Operation Lightning Freedom", and "Operation Pif". NATO-led operations started in the main districts of Afghanistan but did not put off consequent penetration (Katzman 2017). "Nor did pre-emptive combat and increased development work produce durable success. U.S. concern was reflected in a September 2008 Comment by then-Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Admiral Mike Mullen that 'I am not sure we are winning' in Afghanistan" (Katzman, 2017).

4. The Role of US-allied Partners to the Afghan Government

In the instant outcome of the 9/11 attacks, the 'Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was launched by the United States against the war on terror. The purpose of this operation is counter-insurgency as well as to remove from the exploitative regime of the Taliban in Afghanistan that had harboured Al-Qaida, and its allied who are accountable for this event.

Afghan security forces could not control the security of the country. Therefore, the Bonn Conference has put in Germany regarding the Afghanistan issue. Besides it, the allied partners requested to the United States to approve a force that would help in the mentoring and training of security forces of Afghan (NATO in Focus, 2013).

The United States and its allied remain of impending efforts to stabilise the country. The U.S. objectives in Afghanistan are encouraging stability and enduring economic and political enlargement, incorporating Afghanistan into the regional economy, developing its capacity and self-sufficient Afghan armed forces, beating the Taliban-led insurgency, and reaching an Afghan-led legitimate government. All these things will segregate Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters dedicated to aggression. It would prevent come back of that violence and enhance regional stability (Hanauer and Peter Chalk 2012). However, even after more than a decade of the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and approximately the same years in Iraq, there is a scarcity of clearness in the U.S. policy and planning circles. The security and stability establishment of Afghanistan are the significant interest of America, which comprise encouraging provincial stability, to ensure admittance to resources, and surmounting international terrorism. That is why U.S. military forces intervened in Afghanistan. The United States and Afghanistan counterfeit a "strategic partnership". The goal of the partnership is to "help ensure Afghanistan's long-term security, democracy, and prosperity" under "a government based on democratic principles, respect for human rights, and a market economy" (Thaler et al., 2008). The U.S. Air Force (USAF) plays a significant role in defeating terrorist activities by supporting to build up Afghan air power and efficient warfare power. USAF capabilities are expected to be in huge demand in and around Afghanistan for several years. The "USAF can leverage numerous programs, including International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), the Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), and the Air National Guard State Partnership Program" (Thaler et al., 2008).

PRTs are the most important framework of the coalition partners' dedication to rebuilding and growth efforts in Afghanistan. They help for extending the authority of the Government of Afghanistan during the country by providing regional safety and supporting the reconstruction and development activities of Afghan. After providing regional safety, PRTs also use their financial and diplomatic capability in helping security sector reform (SSR), promoting better governance and facilitate rebuilding and growth. Moreover, civilian components of PRTs escort on political, economic, humanitarian and social aspects of their work. Additional, PRTs are in charge of directing aid to the civilian elements by giving security of people (NATO, 2012).

ISAF forces have offered various relief funds, distributing medication, food and winter supplies to help villagers and manage with harsh climate conditions in different parts of the country. ISAF is working to create the conditions whereby the Afghan government can exercise its authority throughout the country. To achieve this goal, ISAF conducts security

operations to protect the Afghan people, neutralise insurgent networks and deny sanctuary in Afghanistan to extremists. Fifty nations are contributing troops to the ISAF. It includes 22 non-NATO partner nations from around the globe constituting the biggest coalition in recent history. Altogether, they represent almost a quarter of all the member countries of the United Nations, underlining the broad international support for ISAF's mission. However, ISAF was initially under the leadership of individual NATO Allies; NATO agreed to take command of the force in August 2003 (NATO, 2012).

For over a decade, the NATO-led ISAF was the foundation of Afghanistan's delicate security and stability. Afghan authorities assumed full responsibility for national security and stability, with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) at the core. The transition from self-reliance to self-sustaining security architecture is fundamentally an Afghan responsibility (Barakat and Brooke Smith-Windsor 2015). They include the long-term development of the Afghan National Security Forces, the consolidation of Afghan democracy, more forceful measures to combat corruption and the drug trade, and the peaceful reintegration of former insurgents into their communities. The withdrawal of ISAF troops by the end of 2014 will not mean the end of Allied support for Afghanistan. The long-term partnership between NATO and Afghanistan formalised at the 2010 Lisbon Summit. They will endure in future also (NATO in Focus, 2013).

5. Indian Response to NATO forces

Since 2001, Afghanistan has allowed India an opportunity to underscore its role as a regional power. India has been growing stakes in peace and stability in Afghanistan, and the 2011 India-Afghan strategic partnership agreement underlines India's commitment to ensuring that positive momentum in Delhi-Kabul ties that maintained. The author examines the changing trajectory of Indian policy toward Afghanistan since 2001. He argues that India has been responding to a strategic environment shaped by other actors in the region. As the U.S.-led NATO forces prepared to leave Afghanistan in 2014, India stands at a crossroads as it remains keen to preserve its interests in Afghanistan. There has been a broader maturing of the U.S.-India defence ties, and Afghanistan is likely to be a beneficiary of this trend. Managing Pakistan and unravelling Islamabad's encirclement complex should be the biggest priority for both Washington and New Delhi in the coming years if there are to be any hope of keeping Afghanistan a stable entity post-2104 (Pant, 2012).

India's approach in Afghanistan is secure and safe in term of the war on terrorism. India has been contributing to the war against terrorism that guided by her long-term national interest in the Asian continent. India's preferred strategy seems aimed at reconciliation and stability. Thus, it plays a significant role for balancing the terrorism groups in the international area that made it a predestined role. The prospect of India's peaceful and strategic engagement with Afghanistan is revolving around the withdrawal of US-led coalition forces from Afghanistan in 2014. The withdrawal of NATO forces does not mean that the terrorist groups would not uproot from Afghanistan. Military interventions aim is to enable the local people to elect stable governments. India can

play a major role in establishing democratic institutions in Afghanistan (Dar and Naseer Ahmed Kalis, 2013).

India's objectives in Afghanistan stem from a carefully calculated assessment of its domestic, regional, and global interest. Countering Pakistan's influence is certainly one of India's goals. India's most fundamental goal for Afghanistan is to prevent Afghanistan from being used as a base in Pakistan-supported extremists to launch terrorist attacks in the country or against Indian interests. That is why India is providing military and police training and maintaining its close relationship with the Karzai administration. India has been playing a role in fostering internal stability and marginalised the Taliban and other extremist groups that target India. By promoting bilateral and regional trade, encouraging private investment, and contributing development aid, India will boost its economy while also facilitating Afghanistan's integration into the regional political and economic structure and promoting the type of economic growth that is critical for Afghanistan's long-term stability (Hanauer and Peter Chalk, 2012).

6. A Consequence of NATO's Presence in Afghanistan

The role of NATO has been critical for Afghanistan since its presence. Afghanistan yet has been going through a critical phase as the nation-building process is still a controversial issue. However, the NATO commitment has given support in capacity building and democratic Afghanistan, including human rights, capable of securing the safety of the Afghans and much more issue (NATO 2008). ISAF's involvement in Afghanistan and focused more with the Afghan National Army (ANA) on its employees and on bringing capacities of Afghan forces. ISAF Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) are training and supporting to ANA troops for their purpose of counterterrorism. These teams also play a vital role in coordinating ANA and ISAF operations. By March 2008, ISAF had deployed OMLTs, each composed of between 12 and 19 personnel. The coalition forces are functioning and increasing their number subsequently. Individual NATO member countries are also supporting the ANA by helping finance the development of training infrastructure and by donating military equipment and ammunition (NATO 2008).

The most important part of the NATO security perspective is enforcing Afghan capacity building in every field. So, the country can easily provide its own security that helps in creating national defence structures and institutions. NATO is lending support in this area under a joint program. This joint program is launched by both NATO and Afghanistan in September 2006, which established a framework for cooperation. This cooperation will concentrate on defence reform, defence institution building and the military. Public diplomacy will be another focus of cooperation. Moreover, NATO consulted with the Afghan government and agreed to assist the Afghan Ministry of Defence in developing a sustainable defence process and budget capability (NATO 2008).

Through a Trust Fund, project support is also being given to Afghanistan to secure its weapons. The project aims to build national capacity. Technical assistance and advice are providing to improve security and management at two national

ammunitions depots. Moreover, financial assistance also supported the Afghan authorities for the development of a national action plan for ammunition stockpile management, including the disposed of weapons. At present, other areas of cooperation consider under the NATO-Afghan program of cooperation include support to strengthen Afghanistan's professional military education system and to promote integrity in the defence sector (NATO 2008). The Enduring Partnership equally provides for tailored access to NATO training and educational programs. This programme includes NATO's Building Integrity and Defence Education Enhancement Programs, to advise partners on how to build, develop, and reform, educational institutions in the defence and security domains (Barakat and Brooke Smith-Windsor 2015).

7. Conclusion

After the removal of the Taliban regime, the future of Afghanistan determined in a conference held under the United Nations Security Council. On the request of the new government in Kabul, the UNSC authorised the formation of the ISAF in Afghanistan in December 2001. The command of ISAF was handed over to NATO. Afghanistan was NATO's first out of Europe mission. In 2006 it assumed full responsibility for ISAF operations in Afghanistan.

The years 2007-2008 were the worst since the coalition attacked Afghanistan in 2001, for the death toll was the highest. NATO and the US-led coalition have been unable to control the insurgency, maintain peace and stability or curtail opium production. NATO commanders and diplomats even began to think on the lines that negotiations must be held by the Taliban to bring an end to the war. With the increased violence and instability in Afghanistan, NATO troops have had to engage in more deadly operations. These operations have daunted most NATO countries from deeper involvement in the war-torn country. There is pressure from public opinion on European governments to bring soldiers back to their respective countries. The people are now beginning to question the role and involvement of NATO in Afghanistan. It is apparent that there is no long-term role for NATO in the country. It said that if the US has a firm hold on Afghanistan and Iraq, it will make it easier for Washington to achieve multiple strategic goals, i.e. keep out Russia from the region, encircle a defiant Iran and contain emerging giant China. What would be NATO's gain in this war is a big question.

Although there is a strong belief that NATO is not likely to engage in other intervention like Afghanistan, the unrest in various places continues to threaten the security of the Alliance. Even if the political will and the consent of the populations for such a campaign will remain limited, NATO may be forced to intervene in another civil war or a failed state in the future. If NATO is going to stick with its current mandate, it should keep in mind that counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations may be part of any potential peacekeeping mission. Although the allies will be more selective and cautious with the conditions, NATO may not have the luxury of being able to select missions or prevent "launching a COIN campaign in a country where the government is too weak to do the job itself". Indeed, such a

scenario makes the deployment of NATO more likely as a more stable; the stronger government is hardly likely to need military intervention.

One of the most imminent challenges in a failed state is the public perception of security. Many other factors in state

building such as intelligence, local support, justice and the provision of infrastructure rely on the public perception of security. Hence the local policing functions have to be established promptly. It also requires tailored training programs for local security forces, in particular, police forces, which can deliver imminent, although limited, results.

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