

SECURITY CONTENTS

Key Issues and Events	81
U.S. Reconstruction Funding for Security	86
Both Sides Increase Control of Districts	86
U.S. Forces in Afghanistan	89
Quarterly Highlight: Helmand's Embattled 215th Corps	92
ANDSF Elements Demonstrated Modest Improvements Over Winter Months	95
Afghan National Army	104
Afghan National Police	113
Women Comprise 1.4% of ANDSF Personnel	118
ANDSF Medical and Healthcare	118
Removing Unexploded Ordnance	120

SECURITY

KEY ISSUES AND EVENTS

Testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee on February 9, 2017, General John W. Nicholson Jr., commander of U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, characterized the security situation in Afghanistan as a “stalemate,” saying that he is particularly concerned about the high level of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) casualties. General Nicholson underscored the importance of Afghanistan for American national security by explaining that because the Afghanistan-Pakistan region has the highest concentration of terrorist groups anywhere in the world, the U.S. counterterrorism mission there plays a key role in protecting our homeland.⁷⁵

While the ANDSF prevented the Taliban from capturing any provincial capitals, security incidents and armed clashes increased, civilian casualties reached new heights, the ANDSF continued to suffer high casualties, and insurgents retained control in certain rural areas.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) reports that corruption remains the most significant obstacle to ANDSF progress.⁷⁷

Asked how the stalemate could be broken, both General Nicholson and General Joseph L. Votel, commander of U.S. Central Command, advocated for additional troops, which could come from the United States as well as NATO allies.⁷⁸ General Nicholson suggested that the United States reconsider troop levels using an “objectives- and conditions-based approach” rather than the force-strength ceiling currently in place.⁷⁹ U.S. and NATO leaders agree that additional troops and expanded authorities would enable their forces to provide the necessary advisory support below the ANDSF’s corps level. These authorities would be similar to the advising and assisting authorities the U.S. currently employs to support Iraqi forces.⁸⁰ According to General Nicholson, advising below the corps level would help address the ANDSF’s capability gaps, assist in essential leadership development, and allow for greater oversight of U.S. taxpayer dollars.⁸¹

Stressing that the ANDSF needs greater offensive capability in order to break this stalemate, General Nicholson discussed the “critical” importance of congressional funding approval for Department of Defense’s (DOD) plan to replace the Afghan Air Force’s (AAF) aging, Russian-made Mi-17



General John W. Nicholson Jr. testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee in early February about the security situation in Afghanistan. (Screenshot of DVIDS video)

helicopter fleet with American-made UH-60 Black Hawks procured from U.S. Army stocks. The advantage of this would be to continue to build indigenous air capabilities that the Afghan insurgents cannot match.⁸²

The projected bolstering of the AAF, as well as doubling the number of Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) is part of a four-year “ANDSF Roadmap” that Afghan President Ashraf Ghani is currently developing together with General Nicholson and other NATO commanders. The overarching goal of the four-year roadmap is to expand Afghan government control over more territory, increase the proportion of the population residing in that territory, and compel the Taliban to agree to a peace process leading to reconciliation and an end of hostilities.⁸³

USFOR-A said many ANDSF units participated in company-level training, conducted leadership development, and established operational readiness cycles—in which forces refit, retrain, or take leave—during the winter campaign in anticipation of heavy fighting over the next few months.⁸⁴ The Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) also saw modest increases in strength and slight decreases in attrition this quarter.⁸⁵

However, fighting has remained heavy in the key areas of Helmand, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Kunar, and Ghazni.⁸⁶ Notably, after months of skirmishes with the Taliban in Sangin District of Helmand Province in late March, the ANA's 215th Corps moved its base of operations out of Sangin's district center. Sangin has been a strategically important battleground for the 215th Corps, and the United States and its Coalition partners have spent much blood and treasure to help keep Sangin under Afghan government control. The United States is deploying 300 Marines to Helmand this spring to continue supporting the 215th Corps. General Nicholson believes that the Marines' “deep experience” in Helmand will provide “a more structured advisory effort than [U.S. Forces have] had up to this point.”⁸⁷ For more information on the challenges facing the 215th Corps, please see the Quarterly Highlight on page 92.

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan continued to be strained this quarter, with senior officials from both countries blaming the other for insurgent attacks. Pakistan closed its border with Afghanistan to all traffic between February 17 and March 20, conducted cross-border shelling, and targeted suspected militants on Afghan territory. The Afghan government has sought to deescalate these tensions while also pointing to the toll Pakistan's strikes are taking on Afghan citizens' security and livelihoods.⁸⁸

On April 13, 2017, the United States deployed a GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb, the largest non-nuclear bomb in its arsenal, on a network of tunnels utilized by Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-K) in Nangarhar Province. Nicknamed the “mother of all bombs” for its size, the GBU-43/B weighs approximately 21,600 pounds and is capable of destroying an area the size of nine city blocks. The April 13 mission was the GBU-43/B's first combat use. General Nicholson said, “this was the right

weapon against the right target.” Afghan officials initially reported 36 IS-K casualties, but later updated that figure to 94 IS-K fighters killed, including four commanders.⁸⁹

UN: Record High Security Incidents and Civilian Casualties

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General reported in March that Afghanistan’s security situation has worsened over the last quarter, with intensifying armed clashes between the Afghan security forces and the Taliban, and with notable high-profile attacks by insurgent and extremist groups. Security incidents throughout 2016 and continuing into the first quarter of 2017 reached their highest level since UN reporting began in 2007. Armed clashes between the security forces and the Taliban comprised 63% of all security incidents in Afghanistan during that period and marked a 22% increase from the same period in 2015–2016.⁹⁰

During the last year, half of all recorded security incidents continued to occur in the southern, southeastern, and eastern regions, according to the UN.⁹¹ Aside from the Taliban’s offensive in Sangin, the other major offensives this quarter include the Taliban’s attempt to take two districts in Laghman Province in early March, which the ANDSF foiled, killing a key Taliban leader; and the fall of Tala Wa Barfak District in Baghlan Province around March 1, which the ANDSF recaptured from the Taliban just days later on March 3.⁹²

A key achievement of ANDSF and Coalition forces this quarter was the late February killing of Mullah Salam, the Taliban commander and shadow governor for Kunduz Province, who General Nicholson said had “terrorized the people of Kunduz for too long.”⁹³ Kunduz had been the center of intense skirmishes with the Taliban in the last year and a half, during which period Kunduz City fell twice to the Taliban before ANDSF and Coalition forces could regain their hold there.⁹⁴ U.S. defense officials also announced the killing of another high-profile al-Qaeda leader, Qari Yasin, on March 19 in Paktika Province during a U.S. counterterrorism airstrike. Yasin had plotted multiple al-Qaeda terror attacks, including the September 20, 2008, bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad that killed dozens of civilians.⁹⁵

The UN recorded 5,160 **security incidents** between November 18, 2016, and February 14, 2017, as reflected in Figure 3.26 on the next page, representing a 10% increase from the same period the previous year, and a 3% increase from the same period in 2014–2015. The number of security incidents rose by 30 in January 2017 to 1,877, the highest number ever recorded for that month by the UN.⁹⁶

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also reported that 11,418 conflict-related civilian casualties occurred between January 1 and December 31, 2016, a 3% increase compared to 2015, and the highest total civilian casualties recorded since UNAMA began documenting them in 2009. Of the 11,418 casualties, 3,498 were killed and 7,920 were

“The ANDSF consistently retook district centers and population areas within days of a loss, whereas in 2015 it sometimes took them weeks to recover.”

—General John W. Nicholson Jr.,
U.S. Army, Resolute Support and
USFOR-A commander

Source: General John W. Nicholson Jr., U.S. Army, Resolute Support and USFOR-A commander, *Statement for the Record before the Senate Committee on Armed Services on the Situation in Afghanistan*, 2/9/2017.

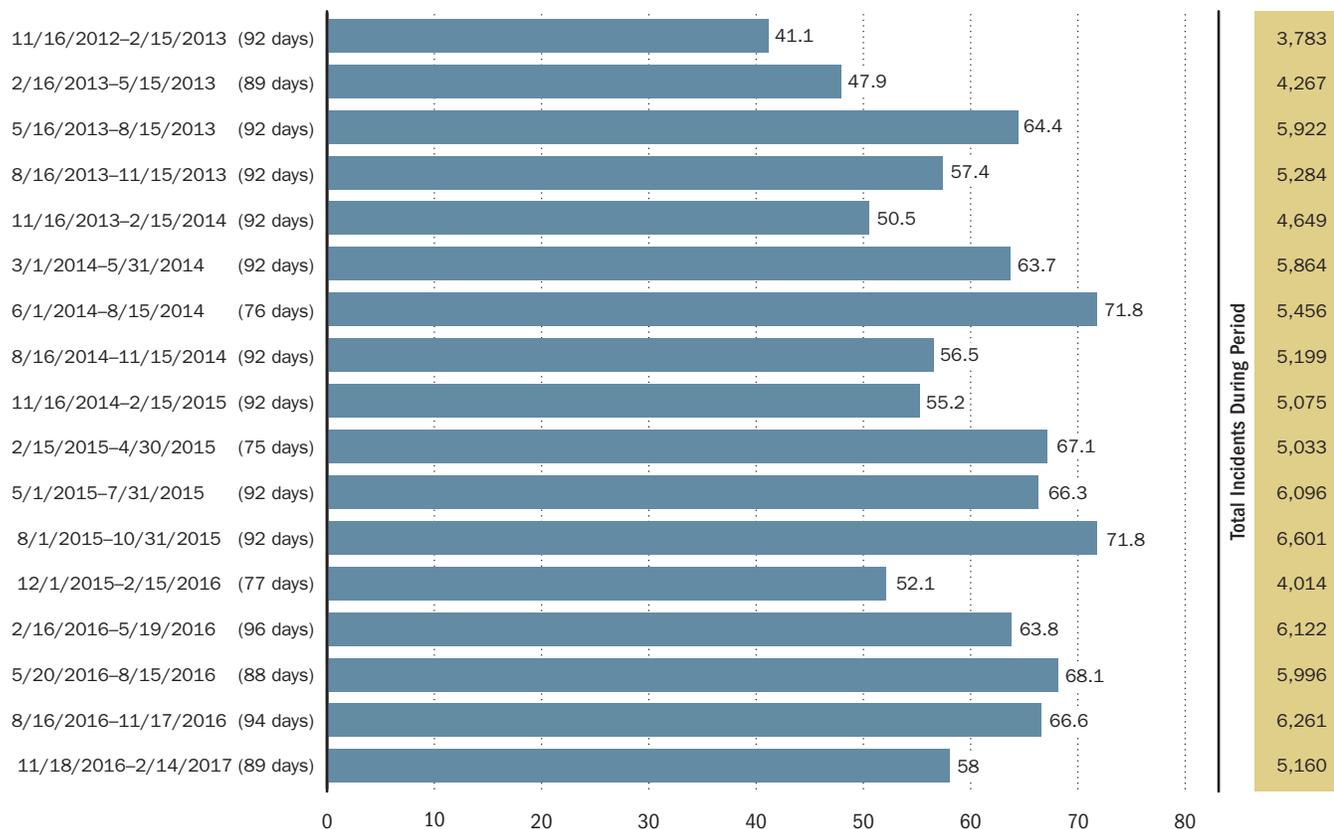
Security incidents: reported incidents that include armed clashes, improvised explosive devises, targeted killings, abductions, suicide attacks, criminal acts, and intimidation. Reported incidents are not necessarily actual incidents.

Source: SIGAR, analysis of the United Nations report, 12/9/2014.

SECURITY

FIGURE 3.26

AVERAGE NUMBER OF REPORTED SECURITY INCIDENTS PER DAY



Note: Security incidents were not reported for the month of November 2015.

Source: UN, Report of the Secretary-General, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, 9/7/2016, p. 5; 6/10/2016, p. 4; 3/7/2016, p. 6; 12/10/2015, p. 5; 9/1/2015, p. 4; 6/10/2015, p. 4; 2/27/2015, p. 4; 12/9/2014, p. 5; 9/9/2014, p. 6; 6/18/2014, p. 5; 3/7/2014, p. 5; 12/6/2013, p. 6; 9/6/2013, p. 6; 6/13/2013, p. 5; 3/5/2013, p. 5; 12/13/2016, p. 4; and 3/3/2017, p. 4.

wounded.⁹⁷ UNAMA found that antigovernment elements, mainly Taliban, were responsible for 61% of the civilian casualties, perpetrating illegal and indiscriminate attacks that deliberately targeted civilians.⁹⁸ Coalition air-strikes on Taliban targets during fighting in Sangin in early February may have caused as many as 25 civilian casualties, according to UNAMA. RS has acknowledged this possibility and is investigating the incidents.⁹⁹

High-Profile Attacks

While U.S. military leaders say the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan, Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-K), has been significantly degraded,



A Sardar Daoud Khan Hospital surgeon and a Resolute Support physicians' advisor discuss the medical management of recently admitted patients following the attack on the hospital in early March. (U.S. Army photo by Catherine Lowrey)

several news media outlets reported on IS-K's continued ability to conduct deadly attacks this quarter.

IS-K claimed responsibility for a large-scale attack in Kabul on March 8 at Afghanistan's largest military hospital. Armed militants dressed as medical personnel stormed the Sardar Daud Khan Hospital, detonated explosives, and indiscriminately shot civilians inside. Afghan officials reported more than 50 people were killed.¹⁰⁰ Outraged parliamentarians subsequently voted on the impeachment of the Ministers of Defense and Interior and the Director of the National Security Directorate for failing to thwart the attack, but failed to garner enough support.¹⁰¹ Afghan officials are currently investigating IS-K's claim of responsibility and possible help for the terrorists from inside the hospital.¹⁰²

Several news organizations and Afghan analysts questioned the likelihood that IS-K carried out an attack of this magnitude and complexity given their degraded numbers, the hospital's heavy security, and IS-K's proclivity for conducting sectarian attacks against Shia targets. It was also noted that the Taliban had previously attacked that same hospital, and that due to a desire for increased political legitimacy, the Taliban have recently avoided claiming responsibility for attacks that result in high civilian casualties.¹⁰³

On February 8, suspected IS-K militants also fatally shot six International Red Cross workers in an aid convoy in Sheberghan, Jowzjan Province; two workers are still missing. No one initially claimed responsibility and the Taliban denied involvement, but the Jowzjan governor pointed to IS-K, saying that they are "very active" in the area.¹⁰⁴

In recent reports, UNAMA and the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict highlighted the targeting of medical facilities and personnel in

"This past year we became increasingly concerned about the growing threat posed by the ISIS affiliate, Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K). Although their operational capacity has diminished as a result of U.S., Afghanistan, and Pakistan military operations, we remain focused on defeating the group in both countries."

—General Joseph L. Votel,
Commander of U.S. Central
Command

Source: General Joseph L. Votel, U.S. Army, U.S. CENTCOM Commander, Statement Before the Senate Committee Armed Services on the Posture of U.S. Central Command, 3/9/2017.

Afghanistan. In 2016, UNAMA reported 119 conflict-related incidents targeting or impacting health-care workers.¹⁰⁵ A contributing factor could be that last year 23 medical facilities were occupied for military purposes.¹⁰⁶ UNAMA attributes responsibility of 80% of these incidents to antigovernment elements, including the Taliban and IS-K, with the remaining 20% to the ANDSF and other pro-government forces.¹⁰⁷

Other major high-profile attacks this quarter targeted Afghan government officials and ANDSF personnel. IS-K claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on the Supreme Court in Kabul on February 7 that killed at least 20 people and injured 40 more, many of whom were female employees.¹⁰⁸ On March 1, the Taliban attacked a police-district headquarters in Kabul that killed 23 and wounded 106 people. The Afghan Ministry of Interior (MOI) is investigating police claims that the Taliban used chemical weapons during the attack.¹⁰⁹

U.S. RECONSTRUCTION FUNDING FOR SECURITY

As of March 31, 2017, the U.S. Congress had appropriated more than \$71.2 billion to support the ANDSF. This accounts for 60.7% of all U.S. reconstruction funding for Afghanistan since FY 2002.¹¹⁰

In 2005, Congress established the Afghan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) to build, equip, train, and sustain the ANDSF, which comprises all security forces under the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the Ministry of Interior (MOI). Additionally, ASFF is used to support the Afghan Local Police (ALP), which falls under the authority of the MOI although it is not considered part of the ANDSF. Most U.S.-provided funds were channeled through the ASFF and obligated by either the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) or the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. According to DOD, ASFF funds are transferred to Da Afghanistan Bank, the country's central bank; the Ministry of Finance then sends treasury checks to fund the MOD and MOI based on submitted funding requests.¹¹¹ Of the \$66 billion appropriated for the ASFF, \$62.6 billion had been obligated and \$61.4 billion disbursed as of March 31, 2017.¹¹²

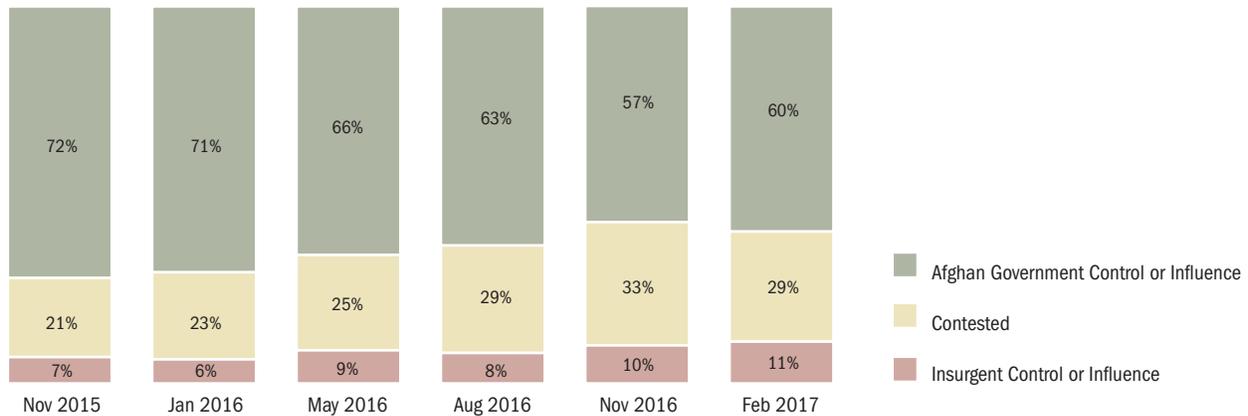
This section discusses assessments of the Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP), and the Ministries of Defense and Interior. It also gives an overview of how U.S. funds are used to build, equip, train, and sustain the Afghan security forces.

BOTH SIDES INCREASE CONTROL OF DISTRICTS

Preventing insurgents from increasing their control or influence of districts continues to be a challenge for the ANDSF. According to USFOR-A, the districts under Afghan government and insurgent control both increased this quarter.¹¹³ The number of contested districts fell. There was also an increase

FIGURE 3.27

HISTORICAL DISTRICT CONTROL OF AFGHANISTAN'S 407 DISTRICTS AS OF FEBRUARY 20, 2017



Source: USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 02/20/2017.

in the percentage of the Afghan population living in areas under both government and insurgent control or influence.

USFOR-A reported that approximately 59.7% of the country's 407 districts are under Afghan government control or influence as of February 20, 2017, a 2.5 percentage-point increase from the 57.2% reported last quarter in mid-November, but a nearly 11 percentage-point decrease from the same period in 2016. See Figure 3.27 for a historical record of district control.

The number of districts under insurgent control or influence also increased by four this quarter to 45 districts (in 15 provinces) under insurgent control (11) or influence (34). According to USFOR-A, 11.1% of the country's total districts are now under insurgent control or influence.¹¹⁴ USFOR-A attributes the loss of government control or influence over territory to the ANDSF's strategic approach to security prioritization, identifying the most important areas that the ANDSF must hold to prevent defeat, and placing less emphasis on less vital areas.¹¹⁵

With the increase in both insurgent- and government-controlled districts, the number of contested districts (119) dropped by 3.5 percentage points since last quarter, to 29.2% of all districts. It is not clear whether these districts are at risk or if neither the insurgency nor the Afghan government maintains significant control over these areas, as USFOR-A has previously described.¹¹⁶ As reflected in Table 3.6 on the next page, of the 407 districts of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, 243 districts were under government control (97 districts) or influence (146).¹¹⁷

USFOR-A reports an 800,000-person increase in the population under Afghan government control or influence this quarter. Last quarter, USFOR-A

TABLE 3.6

DISTRICT CONTROL WITHIN AFGHANISTAN'S 34 PROVINCES AS OF FEBRUARY 20, 2017						
Control Status	Districts		Population		Area	
	Number	%	In millions	%	Sq Km	%
GIROA			21.4	65.6%	404,503	62.8%
Control	97	23.8%				
Influence	146	35.9%				
CONTESTED	119	29.2%	8.2	25.2%	135,218	21.0%
INSURGENT			3.0	9.2%	104,068	16.2%
Control	11	2.7%				
Influence	34	8.4%				
Total	407	100%	32.6	100%	643,789	100%

Note: GIROA = Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, sq km = square kilometers.

Source: USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 02/20/2017; USFOR-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 4/11/2017.

remarked that the population under insurgent control or influence had decreased by half a million people from the previous reporting period, to 2.5 million people. However, this quarter, they assess that the population under insurgent control or influence has returned to 3 million people.¹¹⁸ As reflected in Table 3.6, of the 32.6 million people living in Afghanistan, USFOR-A determined that the majority, 21.4 million (65.6%), live in areas controlled or influenced by the government, while another 8.2 million people (25.2%) live in areas that are contested.¹¹⁹

According to USFOR-A, the NATO-led Resolute Support (RS) mission determines district status by assessing five indicators of stability: governance, security, infrastructure, economy, and communications.¹²⁰ USFOR-A identified the regions/provinces with the largest percentage of insurgent-controlled or -influenced districts as Uruzgan Province, with four of its six districts under insurgent control or influence (a one-district improvement since last quarter), and Helmand with nine of 14 districts under insurgent control or influence (a one-district decline since last quarter). The region with the most districts under insurgent control or influence is centered on northeastern Helmand Province and northwestern Kandahar Province, and includes the Helmand/Kandahar border area, Uruzgan Province, and northwestern Zabul. This region alone accounts for one third of the 45 districts currently under insurgent control or influence.¹²¹

U.S. FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN

DOD reported 8,300 U.S. forces serving in Afghanistan as part of Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) this quarter.¹²² Most are assigned to support the NATO RS mission to train, advise, and assist Afghan security forces. That mission consisted of 6,941 U.S. military personnel and 6,518 from 39 NATO allies and non-NATO partners, totaling 13,459 as of March 2017.¹²³ The remaining U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan conduct counterterrorism operations under OFS.

Between the start of OFS on January 1, 2015, through March 30, 2017, 19 U.S. military personnel were killed in action, in addition to 13 non-hostile deaths, for a total of 33 U.S. military deaths. During this period, 161 U.S. military personnel assigned to OFS were wounded in action.¹²⁴ RS reported one additional fatality on April 8, when a U.S. Special Forces soldier died from wounds sustained in combat while conducting counter-IS-K operations with Afghan forces in Nangarhar Province.¹²⁵

Insider Attacks

From January 1, 2017, through February 24, 2017, there was one attack in which ANDSF personnel turned weapons on U.S. or allied military personnel. DOD reported no U.S. casualties from this insider attack.¹²⁶

International media outlets reported an additional possible insider attack on March 19 at Camp Shorab in Helmand, where an Afghan Special Forces guard allegedly opened fire on three U.S. soldiers. According to these reports, the Afghan guard was killed and the three U.S. soldiers were wounded, though not critically. Pentagon officials told reporters that the incident is currently under investigation to assess the MOD claim that the guard accidentally shot the U.S. personnel.¹²⁷

From January 1, 2017, through February 24, 2017, there were 12 insider attacks in which ANDSF personnel turned on fellow ANDSF personnel. These attacks killed 12 Afghan personnel and wounded eight.¹²⁸ USFOR-A noted that the above figures on U.S. and ANDSF insider attacks and casualties are based on operational reporting and may differ from the official figures from the Afghan government or its ministries.¹²⁹

Updates in Developing the Essential Functions of the ANDSF, MOD, and MOI

Key areas of the RS mission are organized under eight Essential Functions (EF) that train, advise, and assist (TAA) their Afghan counterparts. The highlights of each function reported to SIGAR this quarter include:

- **EF-1 (Multi-Year Budgeting and Execution):** The MOD's end of FY 1396 (2017) budget execution was reported at 86%, the highest execution rate in the Afghan government and the best result MOD has ever achieved. EF-1 advisors are currently assisting the MOD and MOI with their FY 1397 budget cycle. The ANA Trust Fund Board approved

the 2017 Implementation Plan, which encompasses \$390.4 million in projects supported by 32 donor nations.¹³⁰

- **EF-2 (Transparency, Accountability, and Oversight):** The implementation of counter and anticorruption initiatives is not progressing as expected in the MOI and MOD, though, according to CSTC-A, ammunition and fuel-reporting processes have improved significantly. MOD reversed its previous decision to keep asset declarations in-house and turned over its leaders' asset declarations to the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption (HOOAC). So far, 190 asset declarations have been turned over. Additionally, 19 of 21 of the new zone-level inspector general (IG) officers have reported for duty, an increase of two since last quarter. The final two are awaiting approval by the lead IG. The officers have begun to submit reports but advisors have not yet evaluated them.¹³¹
- **EF-3 (Civilian Governance of Afghan Security Institutions):** After the Anti-Corruption Justice Center (ACJC) became operational in November 2016 it has prosecuted five major corruption cases, according to CSTC-A. Those prosecuted included two major generals, one from the Attorney General's Office and one from MOI. Two training sessions for ACJC prosecutors and Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF) investigators were held at Camp RS in Kabul. This quarter the number of gross violations of human rights (GVHR) cases identified by the MOD decreased from 16 to nine, and the number of MOI cases increased from 30 to 33. Investigations were completed for seven of the MOD and 11 of the MOI cases. MOD/MOI GVHRs stem from alleged extra-judicial killings of captured or wounded enemy fighters, alleged assault or torture of captured enemy fighters, and alleged cases of rape.¹³²
- **EF-4 (Force Generation):** In the past three months, 250 female students graduated from a police academy in Turkey. They will be assigned to police districts upon completion of follow-on training at the ANP Academy (ANPA). The Training General Command has created a literacy plan to sustain Afghan teaching capabilities. Annual training plans have been created at the ANP Staff College, Criminal Investigation Division training school, and ANPA. As of January 19, 2017, only 2.6% of active ANP personnel were untrained.¹³³
- **EF-5 (Sustainment):** In February 2017, CSTC-A approved the MOD's request to demilitarize 70 vehicles from the 201st, 203rd, and 205th Corps. The Afghan Automated Information Management team conducted the first receipt and transfer of ammunition into the CoreIMS electronic system, part of a new process to improve tracking in the supply chain. MOD approved a revised ammunition policy which creates a national-level reserve. Implementing this policy will be an ongoing focus of TAA efforts. Expeditionary sustainment advisory teams made assessments on the 209th, 215th, and 205th Corps. The

next round of assessments will cover all ANA corps' Forward Support Depots, the 111th Capital Division, and ANP zones' Regional Logistics Centers beginning in March 2017.¹³⁴

- **EF-6 (Strategy and Policy, Planning, Resourcing, and Execution):** According to the RS mission, ANDSF capabilities have improved slightly, as have the planning capabilities of the General Staff and Deputy Minister of Security. Of the five strategic goals for the MOI, CSTC-A reported progress on Goal 1, which they said had been difficult because the ANA employs ANP in defensive operations that prevent the ANP from developing law-enforcement skills, and on Goal 2, which saw gains in fighting corruption, but limited progress in combating illicit narcotics.¹³⁵
- **EF-7 (Intelligence):** As of February 25, 2017, the total ASFF funding used for ANA intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) programs was \$728 million, including \$468 million for ISR systems, \$157 million for ISR system support, \$83 million for ISR infrastructure, and \$20 million for ISR infrastructure support. MOI has established a 24-hour intelligence cell at the National Police Coordination Center to enhance collection and dissemination of intelligence. In addition, a civilian casualty avoidance database is being set up, which is similar to the Coalition forces' No Strike List. The MOD's National Military Intelligence Center has also begun exploiting social media as an intelligence source.¹³⁶
- **EF-8 (Strategic Communications):** As of February 25, 2017, senior spokesperson positions in the Strategic Communications Office of the Afghan Presidential Palace remained vacant. Overall, the Afghan government continued to improve its communication coordination at the national level and made progress towards developing systems for publicizing government successes and delegitimizing insurgent groups. MOD demonstrated increased capability in psychological operations. ANA corps demonstrated improvement in conducting media operations independent of the MOD, although corps commanders remain uncertain about engaging with the media without direction from Kabul. The 209th Corps successfully synchronized messaging between the corps command and the provincial government.¹³⁷
- **Gender Office:** The Gender Office reported that a \$3.8 million Gender Occupational Opportunity Development (GOOD) contract was awarded on February 1, 2017. GOOD is expected to provide literacy, English-language skills, computer skills, and office-management courses to women in the ANDSF. Together with EF-1, the Gender Office received approval for women's dormitories at the Air Force Academy for 40 cadets and 10 staff at a cost of \$2 million. EF-4 and the Gender Office are working with MOD to vacate women from male-only positions and vice-versa to permit recruitment of women to appropriate positions and promotion tracks.¹³⁸

Five Strategic Goals of the Minister of Interior Affairs

Goal 1: Strengthen public order and security and prevent and combat destructive and riotous activities

Goal 2: Enforce the rule of law and the fight against crimes including narcotics and corruption

Goal 3: Strengthen strategic management and communications systems through institutional development, respect human rights and gender, and implement structural reforms

Goal 4: Improve professionalism and civilianization in the Ministry of Interior, provide quality security services to the public, and strengthen public trust toward the police

Goal 5: Improve the quality and effectiveness of infrastructure, resources, and support services to the MOI

Source: USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 11/26/2016.

HELMAND'S EMBATTLED 215TH CORPS

Since the United States and its Coalition partners officially handed over security responsibility to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) in January 2015, the Afghan National Army's (ANA) 215th "Maiwand" Corps has been responsible for protecting Helmand Province. Helmand has also been the focal point of the Taliban's campaign against the ANDSF.¹³⁹

Helmand has strategic importance as one of the two principal opium-producing regions in Afghanistan. The commander of Resolute Support (RS) and U.S. forces in Afghanistan, General John W. Nicholson Jr., has characterized the Taliban as a "narco-insurgency" which depends on opium trafficking for 60% of its funding.¹⁴⁰ Northern Helmand is also home to the Kajaki Dam, which helps provide power to the southern provinces.¹⁴¹ Helmand borders Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces, as well as Pakistani Baluchistan, from which the Taliban funnels supplies and fighters across the southern desert into the Helmand River Valley.¹⁴²

In Helmand, the 215th Corps has faced "some of the heaviest fighting in Afghanistan."¹⁴³ Brigadier General Charles Cleveland, the RS deputy chief of staff for communications, described their difficulties as the greatest of any ANA Corps in the past year.¹⁴⁴

Helmand was the scene of intense fighting well before the handover to the ANDSF. The security of Helmand was a UK responsibility from 2006 to 2009, when British forces struggled to contain a strengthening Taliban insurgency. By 2009, the Taliban had nearly complete control of the province and "essentially encircled" the capital of Lashkar Gah.¹⁴⁵ In mid-2009, U.S. Marines were sent to Helmand as reinforcements, but Taliban forces in the province complicated efforts to keep districts clear of insurgents and maintain security.¹⁴⁶ Intense fighting continued in the province through 2011, requiring the first deployment of American battle tanks in Afghanistan to counter the pervasive threat of IEDs.¹⁴⁷ Between October 2010 and March 2011, U.S. Marines in Sangin District sustained the heaviest losses of any Coalition battalion during the Afghanistan campaign.¹⁴⁸

The Marines fought off insurgent offensives alongside the 215th Corps throughout 2011 and 2012, enabling them to build up that corps, pacify much of the region, and improve socioeconomic conditions for locals. During the Marines' drawdown from 2012 through 2014, in preparation for Afghan forces taking responsibility for the province's security, Taliban fighting ramped up. However, as the Marines departed Helmand, the last Marine commander there believed the Afghans could handle the fight on their own.¹⁴⁹ The Marines handed off advising of the 215th Corps to U.S. Army's Task Force (TF) Forge—which started as a seven-man advisory team in 2015 but now includes 600 soldiers, civilians and contractors¹⁵⁰

The pattern of Taliban operations in Helmand has changed noticeably since the handover to the Afghans. Traditionally, winter brought a temporary break in fighting as both insurgent and ANDSF forces regrouped. However both this winter and winter 2015–2016 saw sustained Taliban campaigns in Helmand.¹⁵¹ Helmand's winters are milder than most of Afghanistan and do not force the suspension of combat operations.¹⁵²

The 215th has been particularly bedeviled by poor leadership and corruption. In December 2015, Mohammad Moein Faqir was appointed commanding general of the 215th as part of an effort to address "incompetence, corruption and ineffectiveness," which resulted in the replacement of many commanders and staff officers.¹⁵³ This restructuring followed allegations by local provincial officials accusing the corps leadership of permitting "ghost" troops to proliferate the rolls to such an extent that more than half the paper strength of some *kandaks* (battalions) did not exist in reality.¹⁵⁴ In January 2016, an RS spokesperson hailed Faqir as "personally invested in turning around" the 215th and restoring its fighting capability.¹⁵⁵

But in a significant crackdown on corruption by the Afghan government, General Faqir was relieved of command in October 2016, then arrested in March 2017 on



A U.S. Task Force Forge officer oversees winter campaign training of the ANA's 215th Corps at the Regional Military Training Center in Helmand Province. (NATO photo by Kay M. Nissen)

charges of neglect of duty and theft of supplies and food meant for his soldiers. Theft of supplies, such as fuel purchased by the U.S. government for Afghan military vehicles, has been an ongoing concern and the subject of many SIGAR inquiries.¹⁵⁶

Brigadier General Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai, former commander of the 2nd Brigade, 201st “Selab” Corps in Kunar Province, assumed command of the 215th in October 2016.¹⁵⁷ Under Ahmadzai’s command, the 215th succeeded in driving back the October Taliban offensive against Lashkar Gah, albeit with heavy casualties.¹⁵⁸ During this phase, General Ahmadzai began pulling back 215th units from other districts to Lashkar Gah, abandoning indefensible outlying areas.¹⁵⁹

Media reports have continued to describe Lashkar Gah as “surrounded” and “practically besieged” by Taliban forces for more than a year,¹⁶⁰ although DOD has at times disputed such characterizations.¹⁶¹ During the 2016 fall campaign, Lashkar Gah was one of four provincial capitals targeted in coordinated Taliban offensives.¹⁶² On October 13, this offensive compelled the 215th to pull out of Chah-e-Anjir on the outskirts of the city in order to concentrate their remaining forces to defend the city proper; the ANA reportedly sustained severe casualties in the withdrawal.¹⁶³ Afghan commandos and U.S. airstrikes were deployed to support the 215th and, by October 16, the ANA had retaken control of the capital.¹⁶⁴ DOD reported in December 2016 that a

lack of coordination between the 215th Corps and the neighboring 205th Corps (in Kandahar) and overreliance on Afghan special forces has hindered the 215th Corps’ operational effectiveness.¹⁶⁵

In late March 2017, the 215th withdrew from Sangin’s district center. Sangin has long been of strategic interest in the fight for Helmand; U.S., British, and Afghan forces have suffered significant casualties there.¹⁶⁶ Media reports at the time—citing local Afghan government and military officials—characterized the withdrawal as a strategic loss due to the Taliban overrunning the district center. However, RS and the Afghan MOD maintained that Sangin did not fall and that the ANDSF still control the district. They characterized the withdrawal as a planned repositioning that included the destruction of any buildings or equipment left behind to prevent their use by the Taliban.¹⁶⁷

In comments provided to SIGAR, RS said “The perceived fall of the Sangin District Center to insurgents is an inaccurate and false narrative perpetrated by Taliban propaganda. The failure of [Afghan government] officials in Helmand Province to proactively articulate to the local and international media that ANDSF were repositioning to the newly designated district center directly contributed [to] insurgent propaganda.” According to RS, the decision to reposition forces two kilometers south of the original position was planned by senior provincial leaders based on several factors, most notably that by late 2016 the local population had been displaced from the central part of Sangin “severely limiting access of the populace to district governance.” RS characterized the withdrawal as “a public information failure” which gave the impression “of military withdrawal and insurgent success” rather than “the repositioning of the district government to serve its citizens.” RS also noted that an Afghan kandak of 700 personnel is expected to take up operations in Sangin in late April 2017.¹⁶⁸

Force regeneration of the 215th is again the “center-piece” of this winter’s campaign in order to improve the corps’ operational readiness.¹⁶⁹ According to CSTC-A, as of January 2017, the 215th’s operational readiness rate was the lowest in the ANA at 33%—the only corps below 50% readiness. As the corps taking the brunt of insurgent offensives, the 215th was projected to reach

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHT



Former 215th Corps Commander General Moein Faqir, before his March 2017 arrest on corruption charges. (U.S. Army photo by Specialist Nikayla Shodeen)



Current 215th Corps Commander General Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai in his office at the corps' headquarters in Helmand Province. (NATO photo by Kay M. Nissen)

50%–60% readiness in time for the spring campaign.¹⁷⁰ In February 2017, CSTC-A also reported that the 215th Corps' operational readiness is hindered by logistical difficulties, including insufficient warehouse workers and mechanics.¹⁷¹ TF Forge explained that an underperforming supply depot commander had exacerbated these problems but was replaced in February 2017, producing a “steady improvement in logistical matters.”¹⁷²

According to USFOR-A, General Ahmadzai has been personally participating in the regeneration effort, a level of engagement described as “fundamentally different” from previous corps commanders and a positive sign.¹⁷³ TF Forge also noted that despite the enemy's continued offensives in the winter months, General Ahmadzai has been committed to maintaining the force-regeneration effort while also fighting the enemy with forces already in the field. Additionally, General Ahmadzai is reportedly in the process of implementing a merit-based leader-selection process to address the recurring problems with leadership and corruption in the corps.¹⁷⁴

TF Forge has done much in the last year to bolster the 215th Corps. According to DOD, when resetting the force during the first half of 2016 to gear up for

the spring and summer insurgent offensives, six kandaks were withdrawn from the frontlines to re-train and re-equip.¹⁷⁵ U.S. forces have consistently provided advice and assistance to the 215th on operational priorities, including the effective use of attack helicopters, improving equipment readiness, and enhancing ANA-ANP coordination.¹⁷⁶ In addition to advisory assistance, TF Forge can provide battlefield support to the 215th in extreme circumstances, as it did during the August 2015 operation to retake Musa Qala district center, and again in the October 2016 defense of Lashkar Gah.¹⁷⁷

In the next few months, TF Forge will be rotating out and replaced by Task Force Southwest, comprised primarily of 300 U.S. Marines that will continue TF Forge's mission supporting the 215th's operational advising and force regeneration. The U.S. military hopes that drawing on the Marines' considerable experience in Helmand will prove a turning point for the 215th Corps. As Major General Richard Kaiser, commander of CSTC-A, said in February, TF Southwest's “operational history [in Helmand] will surely be a force multiplier to the success of the overall mission.”¹⁷⁸

ANDSF ELEMENTS DEMONSTRATED MODEST IMPROVEMENTS OVER WINTER MONTHS

According to USFOR-A, the ANDSF are generally performing better than at the same point last year, especially in the areas of addressing corruption, use of the ASSF, operational planning for the 2017 campaign, and operational focus. The ANP's development continues to lag behind the ANA in areas such as operational reporting and unit-level situational awareness.¹⁷⁹

With the exception of Afghan special operations and aviation units, and during periods when tactical units return to base for re-equipping and retraining with U.S. advisor assistance, USFOR-A says U.S. advisors have little or no direct contact with ANDSF units below ANA corps- and ANP zone-headquarters levels. General Nicholson noted in his Senate testimony in February that an increase in troops and expanded authorities would better enable U.S. forces in Afghanistan to provide critical advising and operational support to the ANDSF below the corps level.¹⁸⁰ On a case-specific basis, RS currently deploys expeditionary advisory teams, conducts battle-field visits, and participates in a key leader engagement, to advise at lower, unit-level echelons for a limited period of time. For more information on how ANA and American unit terminology compares see Table 3.7. In addition to USFOR-A observations and TAA activities, advisors rely on data provided by the Afghan ministries to evaluate the operational readiness and effectiveness of the ANDSF. The consistency, comprehensiveness, and credibility of this data varies and cannot be verified by U.S. officials.¹⁸¹

USFOR-A said the ANDSF headquarter (HQ) elements demonstrated mixed results across the area of operations due to.¹⁸²

- **Training:** Some corps and zone leaders are meeting expectations while others show little progress. There are units that performed poorly last quarter that have since made significant improvement. Units that have weak training programs cite high operational demand to explain their shortfall.
- **Reporting:** The quality of ANP reporting in zone and MOI HQs is considered to be poor. Zone HQs rarely have acceptable knowledge of their subordinate units' status.
- **Corruption:** Some significant, positive steps against corruption have been demonstrated at the ANDSF HQ level. ANDSF HQ leadership have been speaking out against corruption. Many leaders have been prosecuted on corruption charges in both the ANA and ANP. However, corruption remains the most significant obstacle to ANDSF progress.
- **Overuse of the ASSF:** Overuse of the ASSF remains a major problem. As of early 2017, the ASSF conducted 80% of all the ANA's offensive operations.¹⁸³ This quarter, USFOR-A reports that ANDSF HQs have dramatically improved in the use of ASSF, with RS and senior ANDSF leadership making proper use of the ASSF a priority, and ASSF misuse becoming mostly regionally isolated. While there are still notable repeat offenders, the vast majority of ASSF misuse has significantly decreased.

TABLE 3.7

COMPARISON OF U.S. AND AFGHAN ARMY TERMINOLOGY		
United States	Afghan	Afghan Size
Corps	Corps	14,000-22,000
Division	Division*	8,500
Brigade	Brigade	4,000
Battalion	Kandak	670
Company	Tolay	80

Note: *The ANA has one independent division, the 111th Capital Division.

Source: ISAF/SFA, RS Security Force Assistance Guide 3.1, pp. 44, A-5, 7/1/2014; CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 1/13/2016; Global Security, "Afghan National Army (ANA) - Order of Battle," accessed 4/13/2017.

- **Operational Planning:** ANDSF have also demonstrated capacity improvement in their ability to plan campaigns and major operations. While planning across the forces is not yet at an acceptable standard, RS advisors have noticed progress in the planning for the upcoming campaign as compared to last season's efforts. The ANDSF are better able to identify main and supporting efforts and resources that should be allocated to support them. ANDSF staff are more focused on the plan than on airing grievances.
- **Conduct of Operations:** As Afghanistan was in the winter season during this reporting period, the ANDSF have not been challenged as they were the prior quarter. The ANDSF have demonstrated an ability to remain focused on important operational objectives. The training the ANDSF conducted over the winter should yield significant improvements in the upcoming fighting season.

According to USFOR-A, as part of force-generation efforts over the winter campaign, the ANA successfully executed an operational readiness cycle, which is a plan that allows forces to rotate out, refit, retrain, or take leave, before returning to the fight.¹⁸⁴ The ANP focused on small unit and individual training. While all ANA corps succeeded in achieving their first operational readiness cycle, some did so more easily than others. **Collective training** was attempted by all corps, with mixed levels of success, and RS will continue to provide TAA support to the corps' staff to help them achieve their collective training requirements during the 2017 operational campaign.¹⁸⁵

Collective training: refers to training units together. It typically follows a sequence of individual skills, collective skills, collective drills and actions, and a final collective validation event that combines all of the previous training components.

Corps' and units' situational reporting to MOD and MOI Headquarters continues to be a challenge across the ANDSF but more so in the ANP, according to USFOR-A. Proper reporting procedures are not enforced by commanders and maintaining consistent awareness of units' status is challenging. To improve the accountability of personnel and prevent payments to "ghost soldiers," the MOD is conducting personnel asset inventories for all ANA corps and ensuring all soldiers are enrolled in the Afghan Human Resources Information Management System (AHRIMS), an electronic system that helps counter corruption in the personnel reporting system.¹⁸⁶ For a more complete update about AHRIMS implementation, see page 100 of this section.

USFOR-A reported that the ANDSF demonstrated improvements in their planning capabilities throughout the winter campaign's planning efforts. While they received advice and guidance from RS, the ANDSF led the planning for the upcoming seasonal campaign. Afghan commanders clearly designated main and supporting efforts and allocated resources and enablers to weight them appropriately, with RS taking an observational role.¹⁸⁷

USFOR-A has previously reported that the ANDSF lack a system to plan for risks to force and mission and, as a result, rely heavily on U.S. forces

Source: USFOR-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 4/11/2017.



A noncommissioned officer of the ANA instructs soldiers in early March before redeploying on security operations in Helmand Province. (NATO photo by Kay M. Nissen)

to prevent strategic failure. This quarter, USFOR-A said that RS advisors to MOD and MOI are working with their Afghan counterparts to ensure that risks are considered during planning efforts. However, while the ANDSF did include risk information in their campaign briefs, there was not a notable emphasis on the topic. RS advisors continue to emphasize the importance of identifying and mitigating risks in planning engagements with their counterparts.¹⁸⁸

Ministries of Defense and Interior Progress Toward Fiscal Year 2017 Projections

The RS Essential Function directorates and the Gender Advisor Office use the Essential Function Program of Actions and Milestones (POAM) to assess the essential function capabilities of the offices in the MOD and MOI.¹⁸⁹ The milestones are assessed using a five-tier rating system.¹⁹⁰ The five ratings reflect the degree to which Afghan systems are in place, functioning, and being used effectively. The highest rating, “sustainable,” indicates an Afghan ministry can perform a specific function without Coalition advising or involvement.¹⁹¹ Milestone assessments are combined to determine the overall assessment of a department. Department assessments are then combined to determine the overall assessment of the ministry.¹⁹²

As of February 23, 2017, out of 44 MOD POAM categories, four received the highest, “sustaining capability” rating, 12 were “fully effective,” and 15 were “partially effective.”¹⁹³ Out of 31 MOI POAM categories, two received a “sustaining capability” rating, six were “fully effective,” and 14 were “partially effective.”¹⁹⁴ MOD and MOI are both performing best in the area of

sustainment. MOD is also performing well in intelligence and MOI in strategic communications. Both MOD and MOI are struggling with transparency and oversight.¹⁹⁵

By the end of 2017, the MOD is projected to achieve 10 at the highest, “sustaining capability” rating, 19 “fully effective,” and 13 “partially effective.”¹⁹⁶ The MOI is estimated to achieve three at the “sustaining capability” rating, 18 “fully effective,” and six “partially effective.”¹⁹⁷ Overall these projections show an increase in expectations compared to projections from last quarter.

Several U.S. officials continue to cite poor leadership in the ANDSF, including at ministry-headquarters level, as a key shortfall responsible for a range of issues plaguing the Afghan forces, from corruption to heightened casualties.¹⁹⁸ To address poor leadership, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has replaced many high-level ANDSF leaders, including most recently Deputy Interior Minister General Abdul Rahman Rahman. General Rahman was replaced by Major General Tariq Shah Bahrami, formerly the head of an elite police unit and director of information collection and coordination in the Afghan National Security Council.¹⁹⁹ President Ghani also appointed the prominent former intelligence chief Amrullah Saleh as the head of the Afghan government’s new security forces reform effort as well as the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption, both duties tasked with battling corruption and nepotism amongst senior Afghan government leaders.²⁰⁰

President Ghani’s efforts followed several incidents of corruption among high-level security-sector leaders. Most notably this quarter, Moein Faqir, the general in command of Helmand Province’s beleaguered 215th Corps who had been responsible for fighting corruption, was charged and jailed for corruption related to food and fuel theft.²⁰¹ For more information on General Faqir and the 215th Corps, please see the Quarterly Highlight on page 92.

ANDSF Strength

As of January 20, 2017, ANDSF assigned force strength was 324,437 (not including civilians), according to USFOR-A.²⁰² As reflected in Table 3.8, both the ANA and the ANP saw an increase in force strength. The ANA is now at 90.6% and the ANP is at 95.1% of authorized end strength, not including civilian personnel. This represents an increase of roughly four percentage points for the ANA and one point for the ANP since last quarter.²⁰³

The January 2017 ANDSF assigned-strength number without civilians reflects an increase of 3,581 personnel since last quarter, and an increase of 987 from the same period last year.²⁰⁴

Compared to last quarter, the ANA (including Afghan Air Force and civilians) increased by 2,761 personnel and the ANP increased by 1,468 personnel, as shown in Table 3.9.²⁰⁵

SECURITY

TABLE 3.8

ANDSF ASSIGNED FORCE STRENGTH, JANUARY 2017						
ANDSF Component	Approved End-Strength Goal	Target Date	Assigned as of November 2016	% of Goal	Difference Between Current Assigned Strength and Goals	Difference (%)
ANA including AAF	188,060	December 2014	170,440	90.6%	(17,620)	(9.4%)
ANA Civilians including AAF Civilians	8,474	-	7,271	85.8%	(1,203)	(14.2%)
ANA + AAF Total	196,534		177,711	90.4%	(18,823)	(9.6%)
Afghan National Police*	161,977	February 2013	153,997	95.1%	(7,980)	(4.9%)
ANDSF Total with Civilians	358,511		331,708	92.5%	(26,803)	(7.5%)

Note: ANDSF = Afghan National Defense and Security Forces; ANA = Afghan National Army; AAF = Afghan Air Force.
 *NISTA (Not In Service for Training), generally students, are now included in the above "ANP" and "Total ANDSF" figures. This quarter, there were 4,940 NISTA. Standby personnel, generally reservists, are not included.

Source: DOD, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, 12/2012, p. 56; USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 1/20/2017.

TABLE 3.9

ANDSF ASSIGNED FORCE STRENGTH, FEBRUARY 2014–JANUARY 2017				
	2/2014	5/2014	8/2014	11/2014^b
ANA including AAF	184,839	177,489	171,601	169,203
ANP	153,269	152,123	153,317	156,439
Total ANDSF	338,108	329,612	324,918	325,642
	2/2015	5/2015	7/2015^a	10/2015^a
ANA including AAF	174,120	176,762	176,420	178,125
ANP	154,685	155,182	148,296	146,026
Total ANDSF	328,805	331,944	324,716	324,151
	1/2016	4+5 2016^c	7/2016	11/2016
ANA including AAF	179,511	171,428	176,058	174,950
ANP	146,304	148,167	148,480	147,635
Total ANDSF ^d	325,815	319,595	324,538	322,585
	1/2017			
ANA including AAF	177,711			
ANP ^e	153,997			
Total ANDSF ^f	331,708			

Note: ANA = Afghan National Army; AAF = Afghan Air Force; ANP = Afghan National Police; ANDSF = Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. ANA and AAF numbers include civilians except for the May 2016 numbers; available data for ANP do not indicate whether civilians are included.

^aTotal "ANA including AAF" numbers for July 2015 and October 2015 are not fully supported by the detailed numbers in the USFOR-A response to SIGAR data call; Trainee, Transient, Holdee, and Students (TTHS) may represent all or part of the unreconciled portion.

^bReported November 2014 ANP number appears to double-count some Afghan Uniformed Police; actual number may be 151,272.

^cANA data as of 5/20/2016; ANP data as of 4/19/2016.

^dNISTA (Not In Service for Training), generally students, are now included in the above "ANP" and "Total ANDSF" figures (as of 1/2017). This quarter, there were 4,940 NISTA. Prior figures do not include them. None of the figures include Standby personnel, who are generally reservists.

Source: CSTC-A response to SIGAR data calls, 3/31/2014, 7/1/2014, and 10/6/2014; RSM, response to SIGAR request for clarification, 3/14/2015; USFOR-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 4/10/2015, 7/12/2015, 1/29/2016, 4/12/2016, 10/9/2016, and 10/11/2016; USFOR-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/28/2014, 3/24/2015, 6/29/2015, 9/11/2015, 12/14/2015, 3/4/2016, 6/3/2016, 8/30/2016, 11/20/2016, and 1/20/2017.

ANDSF Casualties

From January 1, 2017, through February 24, 2017, according to figures USFOR-A obtained from operational reporting, 807 ANDSF personnel were killed and 1,328 were wounded. Among these, 12 ANDSF service members were reported killed and eight wounded during 12 insider attacks.²⁰⁶ These figures are similar to those of the same period last year.²⁰⁷

DOD has previously reported that the majority of ANDSF casualties are the result of direct-fire attacks, with IED explosions and mine strikes accounting for much lower levels of casualties.²⁰⁸ USFOR-A emphasized that these ANDSF casualty figures may differ from the official figures of the Afghan government or its ministries.²⁰⁹

AHRIMS and APPS

The ANDSF are in the process of implementing and streamlining several systems to accurately manage, pay, and track their personnel—an effort that could greatly improve protection for the U.S. funds that pay most of the ANDSF's expenses.

The Afghan Human Resource Information Management system (AHRIMS) contains data that includes the name, rank, education level, identification-card number, and current position of ANDSF personnel. AHRIMS also contains all the approved positions within the MOD and the MOI along with information such as unit, location, and duty title. The Afghan Personnel Pay System (APPS) is under development; when implemented, it will integrate AHRIMS data with compensation and payroll data to process authorizations, record unit-level time and attendance data, and calculate payroll amounts.²¹⁰

In addition, the Afghan Automated Biometric Identification System (AABIS) and the ANDSF Identification Card System (ID) support the effort to link biometric records of personnel with APPS for payment of personnel. The aim is for APPS, AABIS, and ID to contain unique biometric-registration numbers: only those ANDSF members registered in AABIS will be issued an ID, and only those members registered with a linked ID will be authorized to have an APPS record for payment. The APPS will be interoperable with AABIS and ID card systems to eliminate the error-prone manual process of inputting 40-digit biometric numbers into the ID system.

CSTC-A is overseeing this process to ensure interoperability so that biometrically linked ID cards can be issued to all ANDSF personnel and that APPS can generate payroll information and bank-account information for accounted-for personnel. According to CSTC-A, this structure will dramatically reduce the potential for nonexistent personnel to be entered into APPS, although it will not completely eliminate the risk of paying for such “ghost” personnel. Routine checks will still be required to determine that personnel are properly accounted for and are still actively serving in the ANDSF.²¹¹

USFOR-A reported last quarter that there were two ongoing efforts to ensure that accurate personnel data exist in AHRIMS to migrate into APPS:

slotting, matching a person to an authorized position; and data cleansing, correcting and completing key personnel data.²¹² A Personnel Asset Inventory (PAI) was also initiated to correct the employment status of personnel retired, separated, or killed in action.²¹³

This quarter, CSTC-A reported that the MOD's PAI is ongoing, but did not indicate a possible completion date.²¹⁴ USFOR-A also said that because the MOI has identified critical fields needing to be complete within AHRIMS, its PAI process is ongoing to ensure those fields are completed and verified. As of March 8, 2017, MOI has currently completed this for approximately 70,000 ANP (around 45% of the force) and 8,400 ALP (just under 30% of the force). USFOR-A estimates that the MOI PAI will be completed on or before July 30, 2017, at which point integration of AHRIMS data to APPS can commence.²¹⁵ In vetting comments, USFOR-A projected that the transition from to APPS for both the MOI and MOD would occur before the end of 2017.²¹⁶

“Ghost” Personnel

In January 2017, U.S. media outlets reported that 30,000 ghost personnel have been identified within the ANA. As a result, U.S. officials confirmed that as of January 1, 2017, ANDSF salaries will be paid only to those MOD and MOI personnel who are correctly registered in AHRIMS.²¹⁷ SIGAR requested more detailed information this quarter from U.S. officials in order to clarify the current situation involving ghost personnel and what actions have been taken by the U.S. and Afghan governments to address the issue.

USFOR-A reported that their Afghan partners are “very serious about resolving this issue” and as of March 1, 2017, MOD and MOI had properly enrolled and accounted for roughly an additional 16,000 personnel in AHRIMS in the preceding two months. USFOR-A emphasized that “a thorough and deliberate process to validate all Afghan soldiers and police is ongoing and is expected to last through late summer 2017.”²¹⁸

In vetting comments, USFOR-A assessed that a significant number of reported ghost personnel are better categorized as “unverified” personnel because often these personnel are present for duty, but have not completed proper enrollment into AHRIMS and are therefore unaccounted for in the system. USFOR-A noted that efforts to increase enrollment in AHRIMS prior to the introduction of APPS, completion of the PAI process, and continued enforcement by CSTC-A, will help resolve this problem and better identify the number of actual ghost personnel.²¹⁹

USFOR-A also confirmed that the U.S. will continue to disburse funds only to those ANDSF personnel they are confident are properly accounted for.²²⁰ Accordingly, when CSTC-A withheld funds for those personnel not accounted for in AHRIMS, funding decreased because the MOD and MOI could not prove the stated number of personnel on hand. USFOR-A reported that there has been approximately \$15 million in cost avoidance for January and February 2017 alone, but that this amount will continue to



The 209th Corps' biometric enrollment process under way in Mazar-e Sharif in January. (SIGAR photo)

change as the MOD and MOI increase the validation of the remaining soldiers and police through the ongoing PAI process.²²¹

At this time, USFOR-A said that it could not provide valid information for the corps-level incidence of suspected ANDSF ghost personnel, which SIGAR requested in order to determine the areas of Afghanistan with the highest concentration of suspected ghosts.²²²

In mid-March, the ANA's 215th Corps and the ASSF raided a Taliban-run jail in southern Helmand Province, freeing at least 32 ALP personnel.

Source: Khaama Press, "32 ALP soldiers rescued from Taliban jail by Afghan Special Forces in Helmand," 3/13/2017.

Afghan Local Police

Afghan Local Police members, known as "guardians," are usually local citizens selected by village elders or local leaders to protect their communities against insurgent attack, guard facilities, and conduct local counterinsurgency missions.²²³ While the ANP is paid via the UN Development Programme's multilateral Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), the ALP is paid with U.S. ASFF funding provided directly to the Afghan government.²²⁴ The ALP is overseen by the MOI, but it is not counted as part of the ANDSF's authorized end strength.²²⁵

As of February 27, 2017, the NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan (NSOCC-A) reported that according to the ALP Staff Directorate, the ALP has 28,724 guardians, 24,537 of whom are trained, 3,167 remain untrained, and 1,020 are currently in training.²²⁶ These figures indicate an increase of 1,101 ALP personnel since November 2016, an improvement from the 954-person force reduction incurred from late August to late November. It is also an improvement in the gap between trained and untrained personnel, with an additional 672 ALP guardians trained since last quarter, another 819 currently in training, and a total decrease of 390 reported untrained personnel.²²⁷ According to NSOCC-A, MOI directs untrained personnel to attend training at the provincial training centers during the winter season, and increases training at the regional training centers in the spring (for ease of access during the fighting season).²²⁸

Consistent with advising the Afghan security forces at the ANA corps and ANP zone-headquarters level, NSOCC-A advises the ALP at the ALP staff-directorate level in Kabul and does not track ALP retention, attrition, or losses.²²⁹ However, the Afghan government reported that 100 ALP guardians were killed in action from November 2016 through January 2017, and 443 were wounded in the past four months from October 2016 through January 2017.²³⁰

Based upon the recent agreement between CSTC-A and MOI to stop funding guardians not enrolled in AHRIMS, NSOCC-A reported a reduction in their estimated U.S. funding for the ALP from \$93 million last quarter to \$85.4 million this quarter. NSOCC-A notes that they suspect the loss of funding for the first quarter of 2017 will incentivize the MOI to account for those ALP not registered in AHRIMS to get back U.S. funding. As such, NSOCC-A estimates that U.S. funding for the ALP in FY 2017 will be

between \$85.4 million (with no additional ALP accounted for in AHRIMS) and \$91.1 million (with additional ALP accounted for in AHRIMS).²³¹

This quarter, NSOCC-A reported continuing efforts to enroll ALP personnel in the AHRIMS in order to transition ALP salary payments to an electronic funds transfer (EFT) process and to inventory materiel. These processes are expected to help track and train ALP personnel.²³² As of February 27, 2017, there are 22,145 ALP biometrically enrolled (77% of the force), 23,244 ALP enrolled in EFT (81%), and 20,250 ALP (70%) had been slotted in AHRIMS, marking modest progress since last quarter. NSOCC-A remarked that the progress made on these goals significantly contributes to the elimination of ALP ghost personnel.²³³

The MOI's 1395 (2016) Bilateral Financial Commitment letter laid out clear goals for the completion of ALP registration for biometric IDs (100% of the ALP), EFT salary payments (90% of the ALP), and slotting ALP personnel in AHRIMS (95% of ALP) by December 20, 2016.²³⁴ The percentages indicate that the ALP still have not reached these goals. However, NSOCC-A continues to recommend no penalties, based on the efforts of the ALP Staff Directorate and the Deputy, Deputy Minister for Security to complete the requirements. CSTC-A concurred with their recommendation. As with the ANA and ANP, CSTC-A will fund salaries only for ALP guardians who are actively slotted in AHRIMS (20,250 guardians). NSOCC-A says that CSTC-A will review validated numbers every three months and provide updated funding based on validated AHRIMS personnel numbers.²³⁵ In vetting comments, NSOCC-A noted that meeting the MOI Bilateral Financial Commitment letter's goals is particularly difficult for the ALP because they are traditionally located in very rural areas. According to NSOCC-A, there are currently 17 districts that do not have the infrastructure needed to complete AHRIMS enrollment, and 30 ALP personnel have been shot and killed while traveling to PAI locations in order to enroll in AHRIMS.²³⁶

NSOCC-A reported that there are currently no updates to the ALP district assessments. As of February 27, 2017, the ALP Staff Directorate has conducted 138 of 179 district assessments. They added that the security situation in the remaining districts did not allow the ALP Staff Directorate to complete the assessments by December 20, 2016, as anticipated. However, the MOI is conducting assessments in ANP Zone 303, and NSOCC-A is awaiting the results.²³⁷

NSOCC-A also provided an update on the status of the ALP's equipment inventory process. As of February 26, 2017, 163 of 179 districts have been inventoried and provincial-level consolidated, manual (non-electronic) inventories were created from the compiled ALP district inventories. The ALP Staff Directorate is creating a schedule of due dates for inventories by district to begin the next round of inventories for Afghan fiscal year (FY) 1396 in order to continue the progress.²³⁸

AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated \$41.8 billion and disbursed \$41.2 billion of ASFF funds to build, train, equip, and sustain the ANA.²³⁹

ANA Strength

As of January 20, 2017, the overall assigned strength of the ANA, including the AAF but not including civilians, was 170,440 personnel.²⁴⁰ Marking a turn for the first time in a year, ANA strength including Afghan Air Force increased by 2,113 personnel when compared to last quarter, as shown in Table 3.9 on page 99 of this section.²⁴¹ When ANA and AAF civilians are included, the ANA military strength increased by 2,761, an improvement from last quarter's decrease of 902 personnel.²⁴² According to USFOR-A, potential ghost personnel have not been subtracted from these strength figures because the number of ghosts is still being calculated. Ghosts are estimated using the AHRIMS (personnel management) and APPS (payment) systems, both still undergoing improvements, while a different system calculates manpower—these systems have not been reconciled.²⁴³ For more information on AHRIMS, APPS, and ghost personnel, please see pages 100–102.

ANA assigned military personnel are at 90.6% of the authorized end strength, more than a four-point increase from last quarter. The number of ANA and AAF civilians is 7,971 this quarter, or 94% of authorized civilian strength.²⁴⁴

According to USFOR-A, the overall ANA monthly attrition rate (including the AAF) for the last quarter was:

- November 2016: 2.6%
- December 2016: 2.4%
- January 2017: 2.9%

The 2.6% average attrition for this quarter was slightly lower (0.2 percentage points) than last quarter.²⁴⁵ Corps-level attrition figures are classified and will be reported in the classified annex of this report.

According to DOD, attrition remains a larger problem for the ANA than for the ANP, in part because ANA soldiers enlist for limited lengths of duty and have more widespread deployments across the country, while police view their careers as longer-term endeavors.²⁴⁶

The ANA does not allow soldiers to serve in their home areas in order to decrease the potential for local influence. DOD observed that the policy has resulted in increased transportation costs and obstacles for soldiers attempting to take leave, contributing to soldiers going absent without leave. However, the ANP historically suffers significantly more casualties than the ANA.²⁴⁷ DOD has also noted that the Coalition is no longer encouraging pay incentives or salary to address retention, as they have not been shown to be effective.²⁴⁸

ANA Sustainment

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated \$18.6 billion and disbursed \$18.1 billion of ASFF for ANA sustainment.²⁴⁹ The majority of ASFF sustainment funding is for salaries and incentive payments, but other uses include procuring items such as fuel, ammunition, organizational clothing and individual equipment, aviation sustainment, and vehicle maintenance.²⁵⁰

CSTC-A reported the total amount expended for all payroll and non-payroll sustainment requirements in Afghan FY 1395 (2016) was \$927.3 million through December 20, 2016, a \$51.2 million increase from Afghan FY 1394 (2015).²⁵¹ Aside from salaries and incentives, the largest uses of sustainment funding were for fuel (\$154.1 million), energy operating equipment such as generators (\$21.9 million), and building sustainment (\$10.7 million).²⁵²

CSTC-A reported that the funding required for ANA base salaries, bonuses, and incentives will average \$531.5 million annually over the next five years.²⁵³ In vetting comments, DOD noted that these forecasted numbers are for planning purposes only and are not definitive indicators of future DOD support, which will depend on Afghan progress toward reconciliation, reducing corruption, security conditions, and other factors.²⁵⁴

Of the \$674.8 million spent on ANA sustainment in FY 1395 through December 20, 2016, \$254.7 million was spent on salaries and \$420.1 million on incentive pay for ANA officers, noncommissioned officers and soldiers, civilians, and contractors.²⁵⁵ Funding for ANA salaries decreased slightly in FY 2016 (by roughly \$20 million), while incentive pay increased by about \$63 million.²⁵⁶

ANA Equipment and Transportation

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated \$13.4 billion and disbursed \$13.3 billion of ASFF for ANA equipment and transportation.²⁵⁷ Most of these funds were used to purchase vehicles, aircraft, ammunition, communication equipment, weapons, and other related equipment.²⁵⁸ Approximately 48% of U.S. funding in this category this quarter was for vehicles and related parts, as shown in Table 3.10 on the next page.²⁵⁹

The total cost of equipment and related services procured for the ANA increased by over \$77.3 million since last quarter and by over \$329 million in the last year.²⁶⁰ The vast majority of the increase in the last quarter was from an additional \$58.6 million in aircraft and related equipment procurements, followed by \$48 million in ammunition, and \$19.5 million for vehicles and related equipment procurements.²⁶¹ These figures do not include the November 2016 DOD request for \$814.5 million for UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters for the Afghan Air Force, as Congress has yet to approve it.²⁶²

In terms of equipment and transportation services that have already been fielded to the ANA, the largest increase in funds since last quarter was spent on weapons (\$135 million), followed by ammunition (\$73 million), and

TABLE 3.10

COST OF U.S.-FUNDED ANA EQUIPMENT, AS OF FEBRUARY 27, 2017			
Type of Equipment	Procured	Remaining to be Procured	Procured and Fielded to the ANA
Vehicles	\$7,380,483,741	\$24,352,619	\$6,707,279,043
Aircraft	2,536,573,797	378,386,745	1,526,849,750
Ammunition	2,517,218,609	64,706,697	2,340,083,230
Communications	887,716,065	83,548,368	673,422,562
Other	891,923,871	18,438,982	844,254,917
Weapons	648,352,822	17,394,846	680,518,830
C-IEDs	455,211,247	1,845,520	354,803,671
Transportation Services	71,442,600	0	68,997,343
Total	\$15,388,922,752	\$588,673,777	\$13,196,209,346

Note: C-IED = Counter-improvised-explosive devices. Equipment category amounts include the cost of related spare parts. Procured and Fielded to the ANA = Title transfer of equipment is initially from the applicable U.S. Military Department/Defense Agency to CSTC-A; title to the equipment is later transferred to the MOD/ANA.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 2/27/2017.

transportation services (\$55.5 million).²⁶³ The biggest decrease was in communications equipment (-\$72 million).²⁶⁴

Equipment Operational Readiness

Despite having begun equipment-regeneration efforts during this year's winter campaign, the equipment operational readiness (OR) rates for the ANA declined or stayed the same this quarter in all but one of the ANA's six corps.²⁶⁵ CSTC-A calculates these OR rates by determining the ratio of fully mission-capable equipment against total authorization. However, some equipment categorized as non-mission-capable may still be serviceable for use at a static location or checkpoint.²⁶⁶

As of January 20, 2017, CSTC-A reported the ANA's corps-level equipment OR rates at 62% for the 201st, 61% for the 203rd, 58% for the 205th, 80% for the 207th, 54% for the 209th, and 33% for the 215th.²⁶⁷ The equipment OR rates for this quarter show an average 1.2-point decline across all ANA corps when compared to October 2016.²⁶⁸ For the first time this quarter, CSTC-A also reported the equipment OR rates for the Afghan National Army Special Operations Command (78%) and the ANA's 111th Capital Division, which covers Kabul Province (91%).²⁶⁹

The ANA corps with the best equipment OR rates are the 207th (80%), which covers western Afghanistan around the relatively stable Herat Province, followed by the 201st Corps (62%), in charge of the Panjshir Valley, Nuristan, Laghman, and Kapisa Provinces just north of Kabul.²⁷⁰ The 215th Corps in Helmand Province, where much of the fighting in southern Afghanistan is concentrated, continued to have the lowest equipment OR rate, 33% this quarter, followed by 54% for the 209th Corps, which covers the majority of northern Afghanistan's provinces.²⁷¹

CSTC-A remarked that continued fighting in the south has interfered with equipment maintenance activities, keeping OR rates relatively low and static, particularly for the 215th Corps.²⁷² They noted that additional maintenance enablers have been deployed to the “main effort corps” that shoulder most of the fighting burden (including the 215th, 209th, and 205th) in a push to increase their OR rates to 50–60% by the end of the winter campaign in preparation for the spring fighting season. They also expect all remaining corps to attain above 60% for OR rates in the same time period.²⁷³

Core Information Management System

The Core Information Management System (CoreIMS) is part of the solution to address the Afghan supply-chain logistical capability gap. Since 2012, efforts have been under way to develop and implement an automated system within both ministries to replace their paper-based process for keeping track of equipment.

CoreIMS is an inventory-management system that is being enhanced to better track basic items like vehicles, weapons, night-vision devices, and repair parts. The system will help allocate material and analyze usage to predict future item and budget requirements, while reducing opportunities for fraud.²⁷⁴ The Web-based CoreIMS is available at MOD and MOI national logistic locations, forward-support depots, and regional logistic centers.²⁷⁵ The goal for the system is to improve Afghan sustainment processes by providing managers and decision makers with the current status of assets.²⁷⁶ In addition, CSTC-A has provided advanced CoreIMS training for Afghan logistic specialists to train, mentor, and assist other ANA and ANP personnel in logistics operations and CoreIMS functionality.²⁷⁷

As of March 1, 2017, CSTC-A reports that the CoreIMS software is fully implemented and functional at both national and regional levels. CoreIMS is also expanding to better ensure accurate military materiel inventories and equipment maintenance tracking.²⁷⁸

CSTC-A's main focus in completing CoreIMS implementation is reconciling the ANDSF's physical inventory with CoreIMS inventory, as well as tracking requested parts, completed orders, and time to fulfill a supply request.²⁷⁹ Using this data, CoreIMS will provide a predictive-analysis capability to identify parts for re-order, eventually accounting for serial-numbered items and their maintenance records.²⁸⁰

To do this, CSTC-A has integrated CoreIMS with the Security Cooperation Information Portal (SCIP), a U.S. database of the sale and provision of U.S. military materials, services, and training to foreign countries and international organizations. CSTC-A emphasized that this process would save the time and resources of ANDSF procurement personnel, decrease human error, and significantly improve order and asset visibility.²⁸¹

The SCIP integration process is another process that allows for the recording of materiel transferred between ANDSF warehouses and depots,

creating a notice for the receiving site to expect the materiel. CSTC-A believes that SCIP integration of weapons and ammunition data into a “virtual depot” on CoreIMS while leveraging the ability to transfer weapons and ammunition to Afghanistan’s national storage depots will provide 100% visibility of weapons and ammunition being provided to the ANA and ANP.²⁸²

This quarter, CSTC-A reports that both the CoreIMS-SCIP integration and the Transfer Functionality are also completely implemented. They said the implementation of the two processes allows CSTC-A to have accurate data on materiel transferred to the ANDSF so distribution and time involved can be tracked down to the regional level.²⁸³

CSTC-A notes that while the ANA and ANP are both using this functionality, there are still challenges with the transfer and receipt processes within the depots. The inefficiencies are being reflected in the CoreIMS data; CSTC-A is working with the CoreIMS contractor to improve the system’s functionality and with the MOD and MOI to improve their receipt processes.²⁸⁴

ANA Infrastructure

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated \$5.9 billion and disbursed \$5.8 billion of ASFF for ANA infrastructure projects.²⁸⁵

As of February 28, 2017, the United States had completed 392 infrastructure projects valued at \$5.2 billion, with another 26 ongoing projects valued at \$144.9 million, according to CSTC-A.²⁸⁶

Two projects valued at \$718,603 were completed this quarter, including the 209th Corps Regional Logistics Supply Command at Mazar-e Sharif (\$687,358) and the 207th Corps Regional Logistics Supply Command at Herat (\$31,245).²⁸⁷

The largest ongoing ANA infrastructure projects are the same as last quarter: the second phase of the Marshal Fahim National Defense University (MFNDU) in Kabul (with an estimated cost of \$72.5 million) to be completed in December 2017, a Northern Electrical Interconnect (NEI) substation project in Balkh Province (\$27.7 million) to be completed in February 2019, and an NEI substation in Kunduz (\$9.5 million) to be completed in May 2018.²⁸⁸

Three contracts with a total value of \$2.4 million were awarded this quarter. They were a \$1.5 million **Women’s Participation Program** project building facilities for women’s use at the new Hamid Karzai International Airport’s AAF base, a \$828,284 taxiway repair for A-29 Super Tucano aircraft at the AAF base in Mazar-e Sharif, and security upgrades to MFNDU’s Kabul campus.²⁸⁹

An additional 24 infrastructure projects valued at a total of \$488 million are currently in the planning phase: seven Kabul National Military Hospital projects (\$321 million), four Afghan Electrical Interconnect projects (\$26.8 million), five ANASOC projects (\$16.8 million), and five AAF projects (\$5.3 million). The remaining projects, valued at around \$118 million, comprise other ANA sustainment projects supporting the new MOD headquarters and other security facilities.²⁹⁰

Women’s Participation Program: An initiative that seeks to advance and promote women’s participation in Afghan security institutions. The program promotes safe and secure facilities, proper equipment, training, and opportunities for women to increase female membership within the ANDSF.

Source: OSD-P response to SIGAR vetting, 4/15/2016.

CSTC-A reported that several infrastructure-related train, advise, and assist (TAA) activities are ongoing. CSTC-A's MOD infrastructure advisors remain engaged in engineering TAA for Kabul's Construction and Property Management Department (CPMD) headquarters, which was established to provide engineering and facility maintenance for the MOD. The CSTC-A advisors work with CPMD leadership and ANA facility engineers to increase their capabilities and capacity to operate, maintain, and sustain infrastructure.²⁹¹

CSTC-A also continued the facility-maintenance training program, which trains ANDSF facility personnel in essential trades and skills for operating and maintaining power plants, HVAC systems, water treatment plants, and waste-water treatment plants, (as well as for performing quality control for such work). Training was offered at multiple ANA and ANP locations in Kabul and at regional headquarters. During the last quarter, 371 students were trained in classes including topics such as basic HVAC (133 students), basic waste-water treatment plant operations (72 students), and basic water-treatment-plant operations (41 students).²⁹²

ANA and MOD Training and Operations

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated and disbursed \$3.9 billion of ASFF for ANA, AAF, and MOD training and operations.²⁹³

The largest MOD training projects are multiyear contracts that include an \$80.9 million project to train AAF pilots, another \$41.8 million project for out-of-country training for AAF pilots, and a \$65.3 million project to train Afghan special forces. There are two additional training programs for the ANA that cost \$18.3 million each.²⁹⁴

Afghan Air Force

As of January 20, 2017, the overall assigned strength of the AAF including civilians was 8,389 personnel. This reflects a 477-person increase since last quarter, and a 1,253-person increase from the same reporting period last year.²⁹⁵

As of February 28, 2017, the United States has appropriated approximately \$5.2 billion to support and develop the AAF since FY 2010, with roughly \$1.3 billion of it requested in FY 2017.²⁹⁶ CSTC-A notes that the FY 2017 figure includes DOD's recent request to Congress for \$814.5 million to fund the Afghan Aviation Transition Plan (AATP), which will replace the AAF's aging, Russian-made Mi-17 fleet with refurbished, U.S.-made UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters procured from U.S. Army stocks.²⁹⁷ As the AATP is a large new investment in Afghanistan's aviation future, the FY 2017 funding requested is about 2.4 times the average amount requested in the seven prior years of U.S. funding requests for the AAF.²⁹⁸

Since FY 2010, just over \$3.2 billion has been obligated for the AAF, with roughly \$231 million of FY 2017 funds obligated as of February 28, 2017.²⁹⁹

The majority of the funding obligated since FY 2010 has been designated for sustainment items, which account for 47.9% of obligated funds, followed by equipment and aircraft at 35.6%, a percentage that will increase substantially if the funding request for the AATP is approved and those funds are obligated.³⁰⁰

The AAF's current inventory of aircraft includes:³⁰¹

- 4 Mi-35 helicopters
- 46 Mi-17 helicopters (18 unusable)
- 26 MD-530 helicopters (one less since last quarter)
- 24 C-208 utility airplanes
- 4 C-130 transport airplanes (two unusable)
- 19 A-29 light attack airplanes (12 are currently in Afghanistan and seven are in the United States supporting AAF pilot training)

As of April 11, 2017, 18 Mi-17s and two C-130 are undergoing overhaul or heavy repair. One MD-530 was lost since last quarter after crashing due to a mechanical failure. It was destroyed to prevent its falling into insurgent possession. One A-29 crashed in the United States in March.³⁰² In vetting comments, DOD noted that they do not fund any of the costs for the Mi-35 helicopters; under current sanctions, they fund only sustainment for the Mi-17 variant. Sanctions notwithstanding, DOD would not fund the cost of the Mi-35s because the A-29s were intended to replace them.³⁰³

The eight A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft are the newest addition to the AAF fleet and have already proven to be valuable assets, with USFOR-A characterizing their impact as being “immediate . . . at both the tactical and strategic levels.”³⁰⁴ Over the next two years, the AAF will receive seven more A-29s once their pilots complete their training at Moody AFB in the United States and operational weapons testing and cockpit upgrades are completed. According to USFOR-A, four additional A-29s were delivered to Afghanistan in March, bringing the total in theater to 12.³⁰⁵

Last quarter, General Nicholson said that the AAF are now conducting most of the ANA escort and resupply missions that U.S. or Coalition forces once performed exclusively.³⁰⁶ He continued his praise for the AAF in his February testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, hailing the force as a “critical” offensive advantage against the Taliban and noted their “rapidly gaining capability.” According to General Nicholson, the AAF's first ground-attack aircraft entered the fight in April; he also cited the progress made integrating intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance assets into their new targeting processes.³⁰⁷

AAF Operational Readiness Rates Exceeding Goals

Given the increasing U.S. and Afghan emphasis on investing in the AAF, SIGAR asked USFOR-A to provide information regarding the AAF's operations, flight hours, mission capability rate, recommended utilization



AAF pilots fly A-29 Super Tucanos over Afghanistan during a late-March training mission in preparation for the upcoming spring campaign. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jordan Castelan)

rates, and mission-capability achievement benchmarks for each of its active airframes.

According to USFOR-A, the AAF flew 6,143 sorties from November 2016 through February 21, 2017, 47% of which (2,892) were flown in December 2016.³⁰⁸

USFOR-A reports that from late November to late February, all but one of its airframes are above their operational readiness goals: the C-208's OR is at 87.4% against an 80% goal, the C-130's OR is at 62.8% against a 50% goal, and the A-29's OR is at 84.5% against an 80% goal.³⁰⁹ USFOR-A noted that the MD-530's OR is calculated differently from the other airframes in AAF inventory and is, therefore, not comparable.³¹⁰

Based on USFOR-A's assessment, the only AAF airframe that faces strain and overutilization is the Mi-17, which is reported at only 57.4% OR against a 70% goal over the same period. This is not surprising, as the AAF's Mi-17s flew the most missions by far in the last four months—3,281 sorties—which account for 53.4% of the total number of sorties flown by all airframes during that period.³¹¹ Senior DOD officials have lobbied Congress to approve funding for the AATP to steadily replace the Mi-17s with recently refurbished UH-60s and thereby improve the AAF's overall operational readiness and reduce capability gaps.³¹²

Personnel Capability

SIGAR asked USFOR-A to provide information regarding how many fully mission-qualified crew members the AAF has on each of its airframes, and

what qualifies them as fully mission qualified or certified mission ready (CMR). USFOR-A responded:³¹³

- **C-130: eight total pilots (five mission pilots and three instructor pilots), five flight engineers, and eight loadmasters are CMR.** C-130 pilots, flight engineers, and loadmasters are trained on an U.S. Air Force formal academic course. Upon completion of the course, they undergo a formal flight evaluation on all mission areas. After a successful flight evaluation, they must complete the C-130 Local Area Orientation (LAO), which consists of five flights and three ground training (GT) sessions. The LAO is approximately 25 hours of training. After this, the Afghans certify the crew members into their position.
- **C-208: 42 total pilots (31 mission pilots and 11 instructor pilots) are CMR.** Most C-208 pilots receive their initial aircraft training during Afghan Undergraduate Flight Training, in either the Czech Republic or UAE by contractor-led instruction. They then undergo LAO training (similar to C-130) once they arrive at their unit, either in Kabul, Kandahar, or Shindand. The LAO consists of four GTs, two simulators, and six flights which covers the airlift mission and additional aircraft training. The LAO is approximately 56 hours of training. After LAO and instrument procedures training is complete, they take a flight evaluation and are awarded CMR status and certificates from their Afghan squadron commander.
- **A-29: 12 total pilots (10 mission pilots and two instructor pilots) are CMR.** AAF A-29 pilots are trained in the United States at Moody AFB. They arrive in Afghanistan as either a flight lead or a wingman depending on their demonstrated skill set. Once arriving in theater, the A-29 pilots will go through a 14–16 ride LAO and a CMR checkout, which consists of academics, simulator instruction, and four phases of flight training. CMR certification is currently done by U.S. advisors, but USFOR-A reports that it will assess the new AAF instructor pilots' ability to conduct CMR certification throughout 2017.
- **MD-530: 36 total pilots (31 mission pilots and five instructor pilots) are CMR.** The MD-530 mission-ready checkout begins with one week of local area and aircraft academics introducing the pilot to the MD-530, as the training they receive out of country is on the MD-500. This is followed by two phases of proficiency-based flight training. The AAF pilot performs co-pilot duties during all phases of training. Because the flight training is proficiency based, the length of the program can be from three to five weeks in total in Kabul. After approximately one year of co-pilot duties, AAF pilots may be recommended to become mission pilots, which takes approximately an additional five to six weeks.
- **Mi-17: 68 total pilots (33 pilots and 35 instructor pilots), 27 flight engineers, and 54 crew chiefs are CMR.** USFOR-A reported that AAF personnel training on Mi-17s (Russian-made) go through an entirely organic Afghan mission-ready training process, due to U.S.

sanctions on Russia. The exception to this is training on night vision goggles, for which Coalition advisors train AAF pilots through a course similar to Coalition pilots.

- **Mi-35: 10 pilots are CMR.** USFOR-A reported that AAF personnel training on Mi-35s (Russian-made) go through an entirely organic Afghan mission-ready training process, due to U.S. sanctions on Russia. They also noted that the Afghans have sought to keep Mi-35s in their inventory even though DOD intended the A-29s to be a replacement for them, with the pilots expected to transition to other platforms. The Mi-35s are not in the Plan of Record that DOD and international donors agree to fund. Given current sanctions on Russia, DOD can fund sustainment of Mi-17 helicopters, but not Mi-35s.³¹⁴

The Special Mission Wing

The Special Missions Wing (SMW) is the aviation branch of the MOD's Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) that provides aviation support to Afghanistan's counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and special operations forces.³¹⁵ Two SMW squadrons are located in Kabul, one in Kandahar Airfield, and one in Mazar-e Sharif, providing the ASSF with operational reach across Afghanistan.³¹⁶ The night-vision-capable SMW provides all the Afghan special forces' helicopter support.³¹⁷

The two main funding sources for the SMW are the ASFF and the DOD–Counternarcotics fund.³¹⁸ From FY 2010 to February 18, 2017, just over \$2.2 billion has been obligated for the SMW from both funds. The vast majority of the funding obligated since FY 2010 has been designated for sustainment items (46.1%) and equipment and aircraft (45.8%).³¹⁹

This quarter, USFOR-A reported that the SMW's leadership focused on collective training and crew growth during this winter's campaign in order to be prepared for the spring fighting season. According to USFOR-A, as of mid-February, one platoon's collective training course graduated in mid-December and a second course commenced in early January 2017. The second iteration graduated in early March 2017. By training more key crew members, USFOR-A noted that the SMW has increased qualified Mi-17 crews by 40% in the last quarter and is on track to increase the current state by another 14% by April 2017. In vetting comments, DOD reported that the SMW reached 24 night-vision-goggle-qualified Mi-17 crews, which was the goal of the winter campaign.³²⁰

SIGAR will report on the details of the SMW budget, inventory, manpower, and capabilities in a classified annex to this report.

AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated \$20.3 billion and disbursed \$19.9 billion of ASFF funds to build, train, equip, and sustain the ANP.³²¹

ANP Strength

As of January 20, 2017, the overall assigned end strength of the ANP, including the Afghan Uniform Police (AUP), Afghan Border Police (ABP), Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), and MOI Headquarters and Institutional Support (MOI HQ & IS), was 153,997, according to USFOR-A.³²² This is an increase of 1,468 ANP personnel since last quarter. The ANP are currently at 95.1% of their authorized end strength.³²³ Despite recent gains, from late June 2016 through late January 2017, the ANP suffered a loss of 1,492 personnel.³²⁴

Patrol personnel represent the largest component of the ANP this quarter with 70,180 members; noncommissioned officers numbered 51,166, while officer ranks stood at 27,761. The largest increase occurred within the non-commissioned officer ranks (565 new personnel) and the smallest increase within the smallest component of the ANP (426 new officers).³²⁵

ANP attrition stayed relatively stable since the last reporting period. According to USFOR-A, the overall ANP monthly attrition rate for the quarter was:³²⁶

- November 2016: 2.1%
- December 2016: 1.9%
- January 2017: 2.2%

ANP Sustainment

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated \$8.9 billion and disbursed \$8.6 billion of ASFF for ANP sustainment.³²⁷ This includes ASFF contributions to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), which pays for ANP salaries, the largest use of sustainment funding.³²⁸ Other uses include electricity, organizational clothing and individual equipment, and vehicle fuel.³²⁹

According to CSTC-A, as of December 20, 2016, \$676.7 million in U.S. and donor contributions was provided for ANP sustainment for Afghan FY 1395. Of that amount, \$458.1 million was expended on ANP payroll and incentives.³³⁰ Of the payroll amount, \$333 million represents the U.S. on-budget (through ASFF) contribution and \$114.4 million represents the U.S. contribution to LOTFA for ANP salaries and the United Nations Development Programme management fee.³³¹

In addition to LOTFA, CSTC-A has provided \$51.7 million for ANP salaries and incentives (a \$7.9 million increase from the \$43.8 million reported last quarter).³³²

CSTC-A reported that aside from salaries, the majority of ASFF ANP sustainment funding for Afghan FY 1395 (nearly \$120.6 million) has been used for vehicle fuel, which comprises 55% of expenditures.³³³

ANP Equipment and Transportation

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated and disbursed \$4.5 billion of ASFF for ANP equipment and transportation.³³⁴ Most of these funds

SIGAR AUDIT

SIGAR released an audit this quarter entitled *Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: DOD Needs to Improve Management and Oversight of Uniforms and Equipment* that reviewed DOD's procurement, maintenance, and oversight of organizational clothing and individual-equipment purchases for the ANDSF. For more information, see pp. 23-28 of Section 2.

were procured to purchase vehicles, ammunition, weapons, and communication equipment, as shown in Table 3.11, with approximately 67% going to purchase vehicles and vehicle-related equipment.³³⁵

TABLE 3.11

COST OF U.S.-FUNDED ANP EQUIPMENT, AS OF FEBRUARY 27, 2017			
Type of Equipment	Procured	Remaining to be Procured	Procured and Fielded to the ANP
Weapons	\$309,982,254	\$1,627,691	\$297,900,418
Vehicles ^a	3,582,760,677	3,635,133	3,261,663,140
Communications	249,464,891	13,307,558	231,735,671
Ammunition	751,411,579	30,275,643	493,617,941
Transportation Services	78,181,320	0	73,035,507
C-IEDs	131,840,216	374,271	118,457,042
Other	243,198,496	11,166,890	129,044,281
Total	\$5,346,839,433	\$60,387,186	\$4,605,454,000

Note: C-IED = Counter-improvised explosive devices. Procured and Fielded to the ANP = Title transfer of equipment is initially from the applicable U.S. Military Department/Defense Agency to CSTC-A; title to the equipment is later transferred to the MOI/ANP

^a Vehicle costs include vehicles and parts.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 2/27/17.

The net increase of the cost of equipment from last quarter was over \$11 million, of which the vast majority was for ammunition.³³⁶

Last quarter, NSOCC-A reported that the General Command of Police Special Unit (GCPSU), a major directorate in the MOI that oversees all MOI special police units as well as serving as a rapid-response force, failed to submit a serial-numbered equipment inventory as required by the MOI. NSOCC-A recommended that CSTC-A impose a penalty and withhold up to 5% of GCPSU's annual operation and maintenance budget, but following discussions between MOI and CSTC-A in November 2016, no penalty had been imposed on GCPSU for its lack of equipment accountability.³³⁷

In an update this quarter, NSOCC-A reported that GCPSU submitted their updated inventory to Coalition special operations advisors on January 30, 2017, and that no penalty was imposed. NSOCC-A said GCPSU submits updated inventory amendments to them monthly.³³⁸

ANP Infrastructure

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated \$3.2 billion and disbursed \$3.1 billion of ASFF for ANP infrastructure.³³⁹ According to CSTC-A, as of February 28, 2017, the United States had completed 744 infrastructure projects valued at \$3.6 billion, with another 22 ongoing projects valued at roughly \$74.8 million.³⁴⁰ There are 10 infrastructure projects in the planning phase worth \$107.2 million, the majority of which are Women's Participation Projects (WPP) projects.³⁴¹

SECURITY



Women's barracks, day care, and training centers, like these at the Police Headquarters in Jalalabad, are under construction at many ANA and ANP bases throughout Afghanistan. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Photo)

The largest ongoing ANP infrastructure project this quarter is the installation of an information-technology server at the MOI Headquarters Network Operations Center in Kabul (with an estimated cost of \$34 million).³⁴² This is followed by two WPP projects: compounds for women at the Regional Training Center in Jalalabad (\$7.8 million) and compounds for women at the Kabul Police Academy (\$6.7 million).³⁴³

The two infrastructure projects completed this quarter were an IT connectivity project at MOI headquarters in Kabul (\$1.9 million) and a WPP project for women's facilities at the Pamir Provincial Headquarters in Mazar-e Sharif (\$409,872).³⁴⁴

CSTC-A acknowledged this quarter that its advisors face difficulties in conducting post-award oversight, which they recognized as a vulnerability. They reported that their strategy intends to leverage a spectrum of overlapping and corroborating tools to provide construction oversight for ASFF-funded MOI on-budget construction, which include:³⁴⁵

- direct inspection of projects constructed on those MOI facilities which that secure Coalition-forces presence
- Coalition-forces patrols for site inspections
- Persistent Threat Detection System balloon (surveillance blimp) imagery of contractor daily operations and progress
- direct inspection, measurement, and time-stamped photographing by the command's Afghan engineer subject-matter experts
- sequential satellite-imagery analysis
- intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance imagery capture and analysis
- dedicated Coalition forces overflight imagery capture and analysis
- contractor quality-control-program measurement and time-stamped photograph reporting

SIGAR SPECIAL PROJECT

SIGAR issued an inquiry letter this quarter asking DOD for more information about its ongoing and planned infrastructure development projects in Afghanistan following the call for donor countries to invest more in Afghanistan's infrastructure in the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) for 2017-2021. For more information, please see pp. 46-47 of Section 2.

- MOI facility-engineer site inspection, measurement, and time-stamped photograph reporting

ANP Training and Operations

As of March 31, 2017, the United States had obligated and disbursed \$3.7 billion of ASFF for ANP and MOI training and operations.³⁴⁶

As of January 19, 2017, only 2.6% of ANP personnel (not including ALP) were untrained (3,934 untrained out of 149,057 active ANP personnel), which indicates that the ANP is below the 5% untrained-personnel threshold mandated by the MOI's 1395 Bilateral Financial Commitment Letter.³⁴⁷

The MOI's largest ongoing training contracts include an \$11.7 million project to develop the ANP's human intelligence-gathering capacity, and a \$10.8 million contract for training MOI advisors and mentors. According to DOD, FY 2016 training funds were used mainly for the AAF, ASSF and MOD training and advisors.³⁴⁸

This quarter, CSTC-A reported a number of updates on training activities related to infrastructure. CSTC-A's infrastructure branch for the MOI consists of seven advisors who meet with MOI Facilities Department (FD) personnel at least twice a week to discuss issues and advise on solutions for all aspects of facility engineering and program management including budget planning, contract reviews, project planning and development. Training and advising often occurs more frequently, with CSTC-A advisors often calling several of their key FD counterparts to discuss procurement and other related topics.³⁴⁹

In order to assist the MOI FD with meeting their daily operation requirements, CSTC-A has contracted Afghan subject matter experts (SMEs) with technical skills matched to these requirements who train MOI facility engineers and complete other technical tasks. SMEs assist MOI FD daily operations by developing requirements, writing the statement of work for contracts, and executing oversight. There are 18 engineer SMEs working at MOI FD; one is working at CSTC-A as an SME program local-national officer and a Women's Participation Program manager.

Of the 70 total SMEs hired for use throughout Afghanistan, 58 are at MOI FD. Of those 58, there are 36 located within the provinces and six at the MOI's "pillars," which include the Afghan Uniform Police, the Afghan National Civil Order Police, the Afghan Border Police, and the Afghan Anti-Crime Police.³⁵⁰

CSTC-A reports that they are actively executing a program to train ANDSF facility engineers and public-works personnel in trades and skills needed to operate and maintain power plants, plumbing systems, water treatment plants, and waste-water treatment plants, as well as to perform quality control over this work. The training program is conducted with an emphasis on hands-on, on-the-job training.³⁵¹

WOMEN COMPRISE 1.4% OF ANDSF PERSONNEL

This quarter, the RS Headquarters Gender Affairs Office reported 4,388 women serving in the ANDSF, a decrease of 18 personnel since last quarter.³⁵² USFOR-A attributes the decrease to retirement and instances of absence without leave within the ANP, which was the only force to suffer female personnel attrition this quarter.³⁵³ The overall percentage of women in the ANDSF remains at 1.4%; the ANP has the highest percentage of women, 2%.³⁵⁴

Of the 4,388 women, 3,112 were in the ANP, 1,065 were in the ANA, 139 were in the ASSF, and 72 were in the AAF. Of the women in the ANP, ANA, and AAF, 1,266 were officers, 1,637 were noncommissioned officers, 1,246 were enlisted, and 239 were cadets.³⁵⁵

USFOR-A reported this quarter on how the U.S. is spending the \$10 million required by the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act to promote the security of Afghan women. According to USFOR-A, the funds are being used to renovate facilities for women to provide additional safety measures, such as security cameras, securing existing facilities as appropriate with cipher locks on women's restrooms, and training women in courses such as self-defense, workplace violence, and sexual harassment in the workplace. USFOR-A notes that both male and female ANDSF personnel are trained in these courses.³⁵⁶

On March 8, the first permanent facilities created as part of the Women's Participation Program were opened, new barracks and a daycare facility for female ANA personnel, at Camp Shaheen in Mazar-e Sharif. However, issues have been raised recently regarding ANDSF facilities for women. This quarter, the CSTC-A audit division issued a draft audit report on the MOI's utilization of gender facilities for women. CSTC-A inspected 18 gender-designated facilities and determined at least half were not used primarily by women. Consequently, CSTC-A questioned the effectiveness of the MOI's gender program.³⁵⁷ For more information about this audit, see page 131 of this section.

The RS Gender Office is also assessing the process of assigning women to ANDSF positions to best ensure seamless integration. Currently, women are assigned to ANDSF positions coded for women. The Gender Office is working to better understand which positions are open to women so that women can be recruited for those specific positions. According to RS, a clear understanding of who can be assigned to a position is necessary to recruit, properly train and allow for promotions of women in the ANA. This quarter, 88 additional positions for women were created in the ANA.³⁵⁸

ANDSF MEDICAL AND HEALTHCARE

The total cost of ANDSF medical equipment fielded this quarter was approximately \$7 million, with \$27.7 million projected for medical equipment procurement for Afghan fiscal year 1396 (2017).³⁵⁹

As of February 28, 2017, there were 917 physicians (a 92-person decrease from last quarter) and 2,893 other medical staff (a 159-person increase) within the ANDSF healthcare system; 351 physician positions (27.7% of those required) and 480 other medical positions (14.2%) are vacant, according to CSTC-A.³⁶⁰

CSTC-A reported that the renovation of the ANP Hospital (ANPH) has proceeded more slowly than expected as the Afghan government continues to investigate procurement irregularities from the previous contract. The Office of the Surgeon General (OTSG) has used the lull to identify medical equipping and outfitting requirements before the project restarts. Based on OTSG-generated requirements, the Coalition has funded a \$3.7 million medical equipment package.³⁶¹

The OTSG has also been working to establish 20-bed hospitals in each police zone. Currently there are three operational zone hospitals, including one in Jalalabad that recently became operational. While other zone hospitals are being established, the OTSG plans to surge medical providers from the ANPH to those zones where major security operations are under way. In addition, the OTSG has prioritized the distribution of combat lifesaver bags, first aid kits, and medic bags to the provinces ahead of expected security operations planned for the spring and summer.³⁶²

According to CSTC-A, Coalition advisors traveled with ANA Medical Command officials to the ANA military hospitals at various locations with the goal of determining the educational needs of the healthcare providers including gaps in training, and improving lines of communication, collaboration and knowledge sharing between Kabul National Military Hospital (KNMH) and the regions.³⁶³ In vetting comments, CSTC-A clarified that KNMH is the same as Sardar Daud Khan Hospital, the facility where the suspected Islamic State-Khorasan attack occurred in early March.³⁶⁴

CSTC-A noted that the hospital assessments found that ANA physicians are providing better-than-expected care. Afghan doctors have been receiving specialized training in countries such as India, Turkey, Germany, and the United States. CSTC-A reported that nursing staff had some deficiencies, including a lack of basic infection-control standards such as hand washing and wearing personal protective equipment. They that these issues are being addressed by local coalition advisors and Afghan educators.³⁶⁵

MOD and Coalition advisors worked to address what CSTC-A has characterized are the “unacceptably high” killed-in-action (KIA) rates of ANDSF personnel. CSTC-A noted that while the reasons for high mortality rates can be somewhat explained by deficiencies in the medical evacuation process (due to limited availability of air assets to bring wounded personnel from the battlefield to medical facilities), improvements in point-of-injury care have been shown to significantly improve survivability for combat casualties. For this reason, CSTC-A advisors accompanied ANA medical officials to conduct refresher training courses on combat casualty care and trauma

management for medics and nurses.³⁶⁶ In addition, CSTC-A reported that the ANA has begun tracking more closely the statistics for various types of casualties and forwarding that information to the KNMH. A monthly report is now published as well as a yearly summary of injuries by type, care provided, and patient outcomes.³⁶⁷

REMOVING UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE

The Department of State's (State) Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) manages the conventional-weapons destruction program in Afghanistan. Since FY 2002, State has provided \$345.7 million in weapons-destruction and humanitarian mine-action assistance to Afghanistan. PM/WRA has two-year funding and has obligated approximately \$17.3 million of FY 2016 funds.³⁶⁸

State directly funds six Afghan nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), three international NGOs, and one U.S. government contractor. These funds enable clearing areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war (ERW) and support clearing conventional weapons used by insurgents to construct roadside bombs and other improvised-explosive devices. As of December 31, 2016, State-funded implementing partners have cleared approximately 210 million square meters of land (approximately 81 square miles) and removed or destroyed approximately 7.8 million landmines and other ERW such as unexploded ordnance (UXO), abandoned ordnance (AO), stockpiled munitions, and homemade explosives since 2002 (see Table 3.12).³⁶⁹ In addition, survey and clearance are still needed on 59 firing ranges belonging to ISAF/NATO covering an area of 127.5 square kilometers (49.2 square miles). From December 2012 to June 2016, 47 hazards and a total area of 1,205.5 square kilometers (465.4 square miles) were cleared on ISAF/NATO firing ranges.³⁷⁰

The estimated total area of contaminated land continues to fluctuate as clearance activities reduce hazardous areas, while ongoing survey activities find new contaminated land. At the beginning of this quarter, there were 607 square kilometers (234.4 square miles) of contaminated minefields and battlefields. During the quarter, nine square kilometers (3.5 square miles) were cleared, bringing the known contaminated area to 598 square kilometers (231.9 square miles) by the end of the quarter. PM/WRA defines a minefield as the area contaminated by landmines, whereas a contaminated area can include both landmines and other ERW.³⁷¹

USAID, in partnership with the UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA), provides services for victims and survivors of mines and ERW, as well as for civilians affected by conflict and persons with disabilities, through the Afghan Civilian Assistance Program (ACAP). The goal of this project is to mitigate the short-term and long-term impact of conflict on civilians, including victims of mines and ERW.³⁷²

TABLE 3.12

CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS DESTRUCTION PROGRAM METRICS, FISCAL YEARS 2010–2017						
Fiscal Year	Minefields Cleared (m ²)	AT/AP Destroyed	UXO Destroyed	SAA Destroyed	Fragments Cleared	Estimated Contaminated Area Remaining (m ²)*
2010	39,337,557	13,879	663,162	1,602,267	4,339,235	650,662,000
2011	31,644,360	10,504	345,029	2,393,725	21,966,347	602,000,000
2012	46,783,527	11,830	344,363	1,058,760	22,912,702	550,000,000
2013	25,059,918	6,431	203,024	275,697	10,148,683	521,000,000
2014	22,071,212	12,397	287,331	346,484	9,415,712	511,600,000
2015	12,101,386	2,134	33,078	88,798	4,062,478	570,800,000
2016	27,856,346	6,493	6,289	91,563	9,616,485	607,600,000
2017	4,813,771	1,307	842	6,975	613,577	598,300,000
Total	209,668,077	64,975	1,883,118	5,864,269	83,075,219	598,300,000

Note: AT/AP = anti-tank/anti-personnel ordnance. UXO = unexploded ordnance. SAA = small arms ammunition. Fragments are reported because their clearance requires the same care as for other objects until their nature is determined. There are about 4,047 square meters (m²) to an acre.

* Total area of contaminated land fluctuates as clearance activities reduce hazardous areas while ongoing survey identifies and adds new contaminated land in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.

Source: PM/WRA, response to SIGAR data call, 3/28/2017.

UNMACA draws on its wider network under the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), which consists of 50 international and national organizations, to access beneficiaries and communities. One of those organizations, the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA), collects casualty data on mine/ERW victims to help prioritize its clearance activities. The \$30.2 million ACAP program has expended \$19.6 million to date and is planned to conclude in February 2018.³⁷³ According to USAID, ACAP funding allows MACCA to expand its victim-assistance activities beyond service provision and data collection to include immediate assistance for individual survivors and their families.³⁷⁴

The number of deminers working in MAPA total around 9,700, of which 99% are Afghan nationals. The high number of individuals involved with demining makes Afghanistan one of the world's largest mine action programs, with the most coverage on the ground. Less than 1% of all security-related incidents targeted the demining community since 2009.³⁷⁵

Between October and December 2016, MAPA reported that 1,771 civilian victims received assistance and disability support services. The total number of beneficiaries since 2007 is 426,192.³⁷⁶ From January to December 2016, the UN and mine action partners have provided risk education regarding mines and ERW to over 466,000 returnees from Pakistan.³⁷⁷