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SECURITY

KEY ISSUES & EVENTS

The United States has reduced the number of its troops in Afghanistan to 2,500, as of January 15, 2021, the lowest level since 2001.

Commander of U.S. and Coalition forces in Afghanistan General Austin Scott Miller said on December 16 that the Taliban's continued high level of violence was putting the Afghan peace process at risk.

According to U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, enemy-initiated attacks this quarter (October–December 2020) were “slightly lower” than the high levels of last quarter, but exceeded those of the same period in 2019.

The Afghan Special Security Forces took on more operational responsibility this quarter, conducting the highest number of ground operations in over a year (since April–June 2019).

On November 17, Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller announced another reduction in U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan, from the 4,000–5,000 reached in November, to 2,500 as of January 15, 2021. Acting Secretary Miller said President Donald Trump had made the decision in order to bring the war “to a successful and responsible conclusion” and to either bring service members home or reposition them.⁴⁴

At the new force level, U.S. military leaders say they can continue contributing to the NATO Resolute Support (RS) train, advise, and assist mission, and conducting the unilateral U.S. counterterrorism mission, while protecting U.S. forces and Afghan partners. The order will lead to fewer U.S. bases in the country, and to more advising being done at the corps level of the Afghan security forces and higher, with advising at the lower levels as needed.⁴⁵

Peace negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban continued this quarter amid sustained high levels of insurgent and extremist violence in Afghanistan.⁴⁶ The Taliban's participation in the talks provides them an opportunity to fulfill one commitment in the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement—to discuss the date and modalities of a permanent and

comprehensive cease-fire and complete an agreement over the political future of Afghanistan.⁴⁷ However, several Taliban actions continue to belie other commitments in the agreement, including continued affiliation with terrorist groups, high levels of overall violence, and attacks on major population centers and on U.S. and Coalition personnel.⁴⁸

In an escalated effort to reduce the Taliban's high level of violence over the last several months, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Mark Milley met with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, on December 16. General Milley told the Associated Press, "The most important part of the discussions that I had with both the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan was the need for an immediate reduction in violence. ... Everything else hinges on that."⁴⁹ After these meetings, General Austin Scott Miller, commander of U.S. and Coalition forces in Afghanistan, held a press conference and said, "I've been very consistent that the Taliban must reduce the violence. That's one, because they're the instigators of it, and that'll bring the violence down all around. ... My assessment is that it puts the peace process at risk ... the higher the violence, the higher the risk. And I also believe that it's an opportunity that should not be squandered by Afghans either here in Afghanistan or the Taliban."⁵⁰

The next day, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani again called for an end to hostilities, saying the Afghan people would not allow the release of more Taliban prisoners, one element of the negotiations, until violence decreased. He insisted the Taliban "must stop the bloodshed so we can talk."⁵¹ As this report went to press, there has been no demonstrable progress on moving toward a comprehensive cease-fire.

Data Classified or Not Publicly Releasable

United States Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) continued to classify or otherwise restrict from public release the following types of data due to Afghan government classification guidelines or other restrictions (mostly since October 2017):⁵²

- enemy-initiated attacks and effective enemy-initiated attacks
- Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) casualties, by force element and total
- unit-level Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) authorized and assigned strength
- detailed ANDSF performance assessments
- some Special Mission Wing (SMW) information, including the number of pilots and aircrew, aircraft inventory, the operational readiness (and associated benchmarks) of SMW airframes, and the cost of the SMW's aircraft maintenance being paid by the United States or other countries

U.S. Reconstruction Funding for Security

As of December 31, 2020, the U.S. Congress had appropriated more than \$88.3 billion to help the Afghan government provide security in Afghanistan. This accounts for about 62% of all U.S. reconstruction funding for Afghanistan since FY 2002. Of the \$3.9 billion ASFF appropriation for FY 2019, roughly \$3.6 billion had been obligated as of December 31, 2020; and of the \$3.1 billion recently adjusted ASFF appropriation for FY 2020, roughly \$1.7 billion had been obligated as of December 31, 2020.⁵³

Congress established the ASFF in 2005 to build, equip, train, and sustain the ANDSF, which comprises all forces under the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Ministry of Interior (MOI). A significant portion of ASFF money is used for Afghan Air Force (AAF) aircraft maintenance, and for ANA, AAF, and Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) salaries. The rest of ASFF is used for fuel, ammunition, vehicle, facility and equipment maintenance, and various communications and intelligence infrastructure. For more detailed information about ASFF budget breakdowns, appropriations, obligations, and disbursements, see pages 30–32.⁵⁴

Security-Related Congressional Legislation Passed This Quarter

H.R. 133, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021:

On December 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law H.R. 133, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, which provides funding for the federal government through September 30, 2021. The bill provides \$3.05 billion for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF) for fiscal year (FY) 2021, and rescinds \$1.1 billion from the \$4.2 billion ASFF appropriation for FY 2020. The bill further requires that not less than \$20 million from the ASFF be made available for recruitment and retention of women in the ANDSF, and for recruitment and training of female security personnel.

H.R. 6395, William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021:

On January 1, 2021, the Senate overrode President Trump's December 23, 2020, veto of the conference report (H. Rept. 116-617) to accompany H.R. 6395, the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2021. The House had previously overridden the President's veto on December 28, 2020.

The conference report had authorized \$4 billion for the ASFF in FY 2021, with the goal that at least \$29.1 million, and no less than \$10 million, be used for programs and activities for the recruitment, integration, retention, training, and treatment of women in the ANDSF, and for the recruitment, training, and contracting of female security personnel for future elections.

The conference report limits the availability of funds to reduce the total number of U.S. Armed Forces deployed to Afghanistan below the number deployed on the date the Act was enacted (then roughly 4,000) until the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State and Director of National Intelligence, submits a report on the effect a further reduction of U.S. forces would have on U.S. counterterrorism objectives, on an enduring diplomatic solution in Afghanistan, and on ANDSF capabilities. The report provides that the President can waive the limitation in the interest of national security.

The conference report also requires increased information sharing from the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, on the status of the February 29, 2020, U.S.-Taliban agreement and the extent to which the Taliban are upholding commitments made in that or any subsequent agreement.

Finally, the conference report modifies DOD's semiannual Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan report by requiring reporting on civilian casualties and a district-level stability assessment displaying insurgent versus Afghan government control and influence of districts to include district, population, and territorial control data. In 2018, the DOD stopped producing such an assessment, which SIGAR had reported in its quarterly reports to Congress. Both new sections are to be made publicly available by the Department.

Source: U.S. Congress, H.R. 133, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021; U.S. Congress, H.R. 6395, William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021; AP, "After years fighting them, Milley talks peace with Taliban," 12/17/2020.

ASFF monies are obligated by either Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) or the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. Funds that CSTC-A provides to the Afghan government to manage (on-budget) go directly to the Ministry of Finance, which then transfers them to the MOD and MOI based on submitted funding requests.⁵⁵ While the United States funds most ANA salaries, a significant share of ANP personnel costs is paid by international donors through the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) multidonor Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA).⁵⁶ According to the UNDP, the United States stopped its large donations to LOTFA in 2017, after which DOD provided \$1.04 million in both 2018 and 2020, and State provided \$0.95 million in 2019 and \$4.50 million in 2020.⁵⁷ A discussion of on-budget (Afghan-managed) and off-budget (U.S.-managed) expenditures of ASFF is found on pages 93–94.

Violence Trends

High levels of insurgent and extremist violence continued in Afghanistan this quarter despite renewed calls from U.S. officials for all sides to reduce violence in an effort to advance the ongoing peace process between the Taliban and the Afghan government.⁵⁸ According to USFOR-A, enemy-initiated attacks from October through December 2020 were “slightly lower” than the high levels last quarter, but higher than the same period in 2019.⁵⁹

Following a meeting with the Taliban in Doha on December 16, General Miller said the Taliban's continued high level of violence was putting the peace process at risk.⁶⁰ Key trends in the group's violent activity this quarter include increased attacks in Kabul City; an uptick in targeted assassinations of Afghan government officials, civil-society leaders, and journalists; and intensified efforts of progovernment forces against Taliban strongholds in Helmand and Kandahar Provinces.

USFOR-A data on enemy attacks in Kabul this quarter confirm open-source reporting that violence in Kabul has increased considerably. According to USFOR-A, “enemy attacks in Kabul were higher than during the previous quarter. They were much higher than in the same quarter last year.”⁶¹ The uptick in activity includes attacks by Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan and a U.S.-designated terrorist organization. On January 13, Afghanistan's intelligence service released a statement saying they had foiled an IS-K plot to assassinate U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador Ross Wilson as well as some Afghan officials.⁶² Additionally, on January 17, unidentified gunmen killed Qadria Yasini and Zakia Herawi, two female judges from Afghanistan's supreme court.⁶³

Recent media reports detail accounts of Afghan officials and civilians becoming more anxious about the drawdown of U.S. troops as they see violence escalating in Kabul. According to Andrew Watkins of the International Crisis Group, “The Taliban are not only at the gates of Kabul, but inside the

Clearly, the Taliban use violence as leverage. It is a tool they've used for a long time and it's one they are loath to abandon. We press them pretty hard on violence. You know, we have been pressing them since 1 March 2020.

-General Austin Scott Miller, RS and USFOR-A Commander

Source: RS, response to SIGAR vetting, “Transcript: COMRS, CJCS, US EMB On-Record Interview 16 December 2020,” 1/6/2021.

“Sticky Bomb” Attacks Rise in Kabul City

In recent months, Kabul City has seen a rise in the use of magnetic or small, vehicle-adhering bombs (often called “sticky bombs”) by the Taliban and other extremist groups targeting Afghan government officials, civil-society leaders, and journalists. Though not a new tactic, it is particularly effective in causing terror because attaching a magnetic bomb to a vehicle in a city with often stagnant traffic is a quick, cheap, simple, and relatively unpredictable way for the Taliban to demonstrate their reach into the capital while avoiding mass civilian casualties.

More than 10 government officials—including the deputy governor of Kabul—and their aides have been killed by sticky bombs in recent months, mostly in the capital. According to one unnamed Western diplomat responsible for Afghanistan, “the Taliban are systematically eliminating mid-career, ambitious government officials and other prominent individuals who are clearly against their hardline stance,” but not killing the government’s top leaders, as “they can’t afford to generate large-scale furor, for it would impinge upon the peace process.”

These attacks expose one of the Afghan government’s vulnerabilities as the Taliban seek leverage at the next round of peace talks in Qatar. A Taliban spokesman took responsibility for some of these attacks on government officials, but claimed the group is not targeting journalists or social activists. IS-K has also claimed responsibility for some of the attacks. Retired Afghan general Atiqullah Amarkhel told the *New York Times* that “Kabul is an open city—these Taliban live here and make their bombs here. ... After each one of the magnetic bomb explosions, the government gets more discredited.” Afghanistan’s interior ministry has blamed the Taliban for all the sticky bomb attacks.

Source: NPR, “People in The Afghan Capital Kabul Are Uneasy About U.S. Troop Drawdown,” 12/16/2020; New York Times, “‘Sticky Bombs’ Sow Terror and Chaos in a City on Edge,” 12/16/2020; Reuters, “‘The Fear is Intense’: Afghan ‘Sticky Bombs’, Used by Taliban, On the Rise,” 12/17/2020; Washington Post, “Targeted killings of journalists are on the rise across Afghanistan,” 12/27/2020; New York Times, “Targeted Killings Are Terrorizing Afghans. And No One Is Claiming Them,” 1/2/2021; USFOR-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/15/2021.

city gates.” He added that for security, protection of minority communities, and other reasons, “it’s certainly alarming news.”⁶⁴

The Taliban and IS-K have increased targeted assassinations outside of Kabul as well. Five journalists were killed in the last two months of 2020, as well as a number of civil-society leaders.⁶⁵ For more information, see pages 83–84.

Meanwhile, both U.S. and Afghan forces continue to fend off Taliban offensives, especially in southern Afghanistan. Following recent terrorist and insurgent activity in Helmand Province, General Miller traveled there on December 17 to assess the security situation and meet with provincial leaders. When asked what recent enemy activity was most concerning to him, General Miller said it was “out of the ordinary” Taliban offensives in Helmand and Kandahar Provinces.⁶⁶ Less than two weeks later, the Afghan Ministry of Defense reported killing 15 al-Qaeda operatives alongside senior Taliban facilitators and fighters in Helmand Province.⁶⁷

Regular clashes between the Taliban and ANDSF in Kandahar Province since October have reportedly led to thousands of families fleeing their homes over the last three months, similar to the exodus that occurred in Helmand in early October.⁶⁸ USFOR-A also publicly acknowledged an air strike against armed Taliban fighters attacking an ANDSF checkpoint in Kandahar on December 10.⁶⁹ All told, nearly 200 checkpoints in Kandahar were abandoned to the Taliban by the ANA’s 205th Corps in December.⁷⁰ For more information about ANDSF checkpoints, see page 67–68.

U.S. air strikes increased this quarter as U.S. forces provided defensive support to the ANDSF, USFOR-A told SIGAR. USFOR-A reiterated that



RS and USFOR-A Commander General Austin Scott Miller met with Helmand Province security and provincial leadership in December. (USFOR-A photo)

Peace Problem: Taliban Links to al-Qaeda and Other Terrorists

On October 25, 2020, Afghan security forces killed an Egyptian man known as Husam Abd-al-Ra'uf, alias Abu Muhsin al-Masri. This was significant partly because he was a senior member of al-Qaeda for 20 years who was on the FBI's "Most Wanted Terrorists" list.

His death was also significant because he was in Ghazni Province, about 100 miles south of Kabul, in an area reputed to be under Taliban control near the border with Pakistan. He was not the first al-Qaeda leader to be killed in Taliban-controlled areas.

Such linkages to al-Qaeda may portend a problem for the peace process in Afghanistan. As part of the February 29, 2020, U.S.-Taliban agreement that paved the way for intra-Afghan negotiations, the Taliban agreed that it "will not allow any of its members, other individuals or groups, including al-Qaeda, to use the soil of Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States and its allies." The next day, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo told CBS News that "the Taliban have now made the break" with "their historic ally," al-Qaeda.

Not everyone agrees. Last quarter, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) told DOD Office of Inspector General that al-Qaeda leaders support the U.S.-Taliban agreement because it does not require the Taliban to publicly renounce al-Qaeda and it includes a timeline for U.S. and Coalition forces' withdrawal, the latter accomplishing one of al-Qaeda's main goals. DIA also said al-Qaeda remains willing to abide by any agreements made by the Taliban in order to preserve a guaranteed safe haven in Taliban-controlled areas.

Likewise, a May 2020 report to the UN Security Council from its Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team said, "The senior leadership

of al-Qaeda remains present in Afghanistan, as well as hundreds of armed operatives, al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, and groups of foreign terrorist fighters aligned with the Taliban." The report added that "Relations between the Taliban, especially the Haqqani Network [a State Department-listed terror group], and al-Qaeda remain close, based on friendship, a history of shared struggle, ideological sympathy and intermarriage."

The UN team's report notes that the Taliban and al-Qaeda have had strong historic links, and suggests the threat is growing, as information indicates that "Al-Qaida is quietly gaining strength in Afghanistan while continuing to operate [in 12 provinces] with the Taliban under their protection." The report also cites Afghan officials' judgments that other terrorist groups including Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, Jaish-i-Mohammed, and Lashkare-Tayyiba are operating in eastern Afghanistan "under the umbrella of the Afghan Taliban."

The UN report raises questions whether the Taliban intend to and actually can carry out their anti-terrorism commitment—and, if they try, whether die-hard Taliban members will defect to other movements.

During a congressional hearing in September 2020, senior DOD and State officials testified that the Taliban have made incremental progress toward implementing their counterterrorism commitments, but are not yet fully compliant. Ambassador Khalilzad stated that "with regard to terrorism and al-Qaeda, in this setting, what I can say is the Talibs have taken some steps, based on the commitment they have made, positive steps, but they have some distance still to go ... We are in the middle of the process. The picture is one of progress but it's not completed."

Source: FBI, "Wanted by the FBI: Husam Abd-al-Ra'uf," audio transcript of broadcast spot, 1/8/2020, [fbi.gov/audio-repository/wanted-podcast-husam-abd-al-rauf-010820.mp3/view](https://www.fbi.gov/audio-repository/wanted-podcast-husam-abd-al-rauf-010820.mp3/view); State, Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of America, 2/29/2020; CBS News, "Transcript: Mike Pompeo on 'Face the Nation,'" 3/1/2020; United Nations Security Council, "Letter dated 19 May 2020 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council," transmitting the eleventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, 5/27/2020; DOD OIG, Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress, July 1, 2020–September 30, 2020, 11/2020, p. 17.

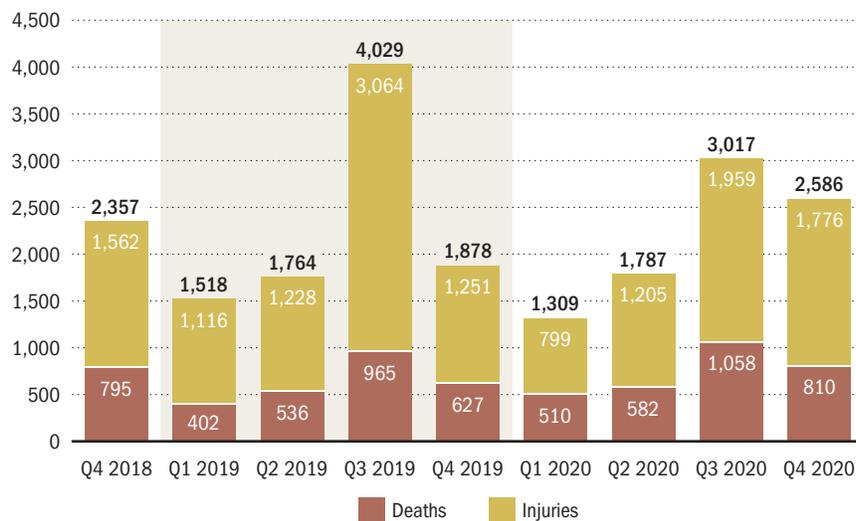
following the U.S.-Taliban agreement's signing in February 2020, U.S. forces have "ceased offensive strikes against the Taliban and conducted almost exclusively defensive strikes in support of Afghan forces."⁷¹ The Taliban made several accusations this quarter that the United States violated the U.S.-Taliban agreement, alleging certain USFOR-A air strikes killed Afghan civilians. USFOR-A denied each allegation and said it was operating in line with the agreement, which stipulates that U.S. forces can defend the ANDSF against Taliban attacks.⁷² USFOR-A also reported no civilian casualties as a result of its air strikes this quarter.⁷³

Civilian Casualties

RS reported 2,586 civilian casualties this quarter (October 1–December 31, 2020), which included 810 deaths and 1,776 injuries. Despite the ongoing violence, this quarter’s casualties decreased by 14% compared to last quarter (July 1–September 30, 2020).⁷⁴ Additionally, civilian casualties in 2020 have decreased by approximately 5% compared to 2019 and 6% compared to 2018.⁷⁵ Despite these modest improvements, this quarter’s civilian casualties remain exceptionally high for the winter months when fighting normally subsides. As seen in Figure 2.28, the number of civilian casualties this quarter was the third highest in the last two years.⁷⁶

FIGURE 2.28

RS-REPORTED CIVILIAN CASUALTIES BY QUARTER



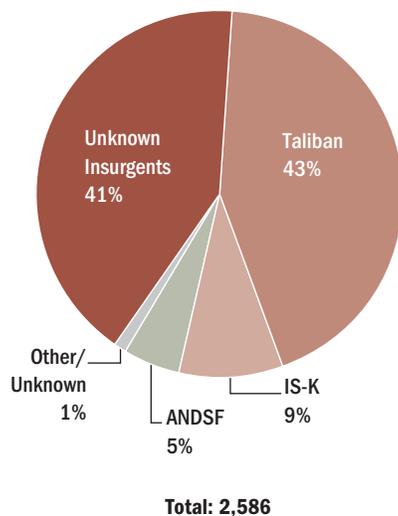
Note: This quarter’s data covers the period from October 1–December 31, 2020. Prior quarterly numbers may change. RS updates data each quarter as civilian casualty investigations are concluded and database numbers are improved. Source: RS, response to SIGAR data call 1/6/2021, 10/21/2020, 1/7/2020, and 10/7/2019; SIGAR, analysis of RS-provided data, 1/2021.

Most of the decrease in civilian casualties compared to last quarter is attributed to fewer ANDSF-caused casualties (142, down by 237), casualties attributed to unspecified parties (36, down by 206), and Taliban-caused casualties (1,119, down by 98). However, this was tempered by IS-K-caused casualties increasing substantially (234, up by 152).⁷⁷

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and other institutions continue to emphasize that ANDSF air strikes account for a disproportionate number of casualties.⁷⁸ Most recently, on January 16, 2021, a nighttime ANDSF air strike appears to have killed 18 civilian members of a single family in southwestern Nimroz Province.⁷⁹ This quarter, the

FIGURE 2.29

RS-REPORTED CIVILIAN CASUALTIES BY PARTY ATTRIBUTION



Note: The data covers the period October 1–December 31, 2020. Casualties include dead and wounded. “Other/unknown” civilian casualties include those caused by undetermined elements, local militia, and/or the Pakistani military. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: RS, response to SIGAR data call, 1/6/2021; SIGAR, analysis of RS-provided data, 1/2021.

number of civilians killed by ANDSF air strikes rose by over 11 percentage points, to 54% of total ANDSF-caused casualties.⁸⁰

Seen in Figure 2.29, RS attributed about 93% of this quarter’s civilian casualties to antigovernment forces (43% to the Taliban, 41% to unknown insurgents, 9% to IS-K, and none to the Haqqani Network), roughly a 10-percentage-point increase since last quarter’s breakdown. Another 5% were attributed to progovernment forces (5% to ANDSF and no incidents attributed to Coalition forces), a decrease of three percentage points since last quarter, and about 1% to other or unknown forces.⁸¹

Improvised-explosive devices continued to account for the majority of civilian casualties this quarter (55%), followed by direct fire (24%), indirect fire (9%), and assassinations (5%). The proportion of casualties caused by improvised-explosive devices (IED) increased by nearly 17 percentage points this quarter. This correlates to the uptick in magnetically attached IEDs or “sticky bomb” attacks, as RS classes most casualties caused by these incidents as IED-caused casualties. Indirect-fire-caused casualties decreased by over eight percentage points, while direct-fire casualties and assassinations remained relatively consistent with last quarter.⁸²

UNAMA had not issued its civilian casualty report covering October–December in time to be included in this report.

UNITED STATES FORCES-AFGHANISTAN

U.S. Forces Reduced to Lowest Level Since 2001

On November 17, Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller announced the latest reduction in U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan—from 4,000–5,000 ordered last quarter and reached in November—to 2,500, reached on January 15, 2021. DOD said this new level is the lowest since 2001.⁸³

Acting Secretary Miller said that President Trump made the decision in order to bring the war “to a successful and responsible conclusion” and to either bring service members home or reposition them elsewhere. He called the decision “consistent with our established plans and strategic objectives, supported by the American people, and does not equate to a change in U.S. policy or objectives.”⁸⁴

Miller also said that American allies and partners abroad, including NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and President Ashraf Ghani, were briefed on the change. Miller reiterated that DOD’s position on the force level in Afghanistan is, “We went in together, we adjust together, and when the time is right, we will leave together,” a sentiment echoed by Secretary General Stoltenberg.⁸⁵ Stoltenberg said on December 1 that more than half of the military personnel supporting the RS mission are now non-U.S. forces

and NATO “will have to take some hard decisions [on force levels] when NATO defense ministers meet next February.”⁸⁶

The 2,500-troop level is not specified in the U.S.-Taliban agreement, in which the United States committed to withdrawing all troops by May 2021 if the Taliban meets its commitments. But Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley said on December 2 that the additional draw-down was “in support” of the agreement. He also said any future changes to the force level “will be up to a new administration.”⁸⁷

Congress recently imposed conditions for further reductions in troop levels in the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), passed on January 1, 2021. The NDAA limits the availability of funds to reduce the total number of U.S. forces deployed to Afghanistan below the number deployed on the date the Act was enacted (roughly 4,000) until the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State and Director of National Intelligence, submits a report on the effect a further reduction of U.S. forces would have on U.S. counterterrorism objectives, on an enduring diplomatic solution in Afghanistan, and on ANDSF capabilities.⁸⁸

However, President Trump reportedly issued a waiver to enable U.S. forces to reduce below the level stipulated in the NDAA. A DOD spokesman said in a statement on January 15, “The President has determined that waiving the limitations of this section with respect to a reduction in the total number of U.S. armed forces deployed to Afghanistan is important to the national security interests of the United States.”⁸⁹

When asked to what extent DOD had finalized the details of the smaller footprint in Afghanistan, General Milley said Acting Secretary of Defense Miller had approved a plan based on the recommendations of General Miller and CENTCOM Commander General Kenneth McKenzie. The plan includes reducing U.S. bases in the country to “a couple of larger bases with several satellite bases that provide the capability to continue our train, advise, assist mission and continue our counterterrorist mission.” He did not discuss exactly which bases would be closing. Additionally, DOD reported that it has 6,346 U.S. contractors remaining in Afghanistan as of January 2021, a decrease of roughly 1,500 since October 2020.⁹⁰

On December 13, General Miller also repeated DOD’s position that the full withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan will be done “in accordance with conditions,” adding that it was “important for the Afghan people to understand that we have discussed this very carefully with the Afghan security forces.”⁹¹

This is the third reduction in the presidentially authorized U.S. troop level since the U.S.-Taliban agreement was signed. Following the United States meeting its commitment in the agreement to reduce force levels to 8,600 ahead of schedule in June 2020, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper announced on August 8 that he would order an additional force reduction to below 5,000 troops by the end of November.⁹²

If we stay, we risk continued fighting and an even longer-term engagement. If we leave, we risk Afghanistan once again becoming a safe haven for international terrorists and the loss of the gains made with such sacrifice.

—NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg

Source: NATO, “Online press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the first day of the meetings of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs,” 12/1/2020.

The Afghan security forces are absolutely essential to the peace process. They have to hold. They have to hold terrain. They have to protect the people. We talk about that routinely. They certainly have our support from an institutional viability standpoint. It is at times a very direct combat support role.

—General Austin Scott Miller,
RS and USFOR-A Commander

Source: RS, response to SIGAR vetting, “Transcript: COMRS, CJCS, US EMB On-Record Interview 16 December 2020,” 1/6/2021.

U.S. Force Reduction Impact on Capabilities and the Train, Advise, and Assist Mission

At a press conference in Kabul on December 16, Generals Miller and Milley continued to assert that the new force level of 2,500 troops is sufficient to protect the U.S. force and its Afghan partners, as well as carry out its training and counterterrorism missions. General Miller said at this number, the United States will retain its ability to train, advise, and assist the Afghan security forces at the ministerial level down to the corps level and will retain “the ability to project to what we refer to as ‘points of need,’ which are lower than the corps level” using expeditionary, fly-to-advise efforts. He also said the ANDSF need the most help “ensuring that the proper flow of those things that field an army or field a police force, which are logistics or classes of supply ... [and] making sure [the ANDSF] know[s] we’re still there from an air support standpoint and able to help and protect them during combat operations.”⁹³

According to General McKenzie on December 10, with fewer troops to advise and assist Afghan forces, “We will have to be very careful and very smart how we pick and choose where we go and where we don’t go. And the margins will be less, but we believe it still will enable us to carry out our core objective” of preventing terrorist groups from attacking the U.S. or other partner countries from Afghanistan.⁹⁴

This is not the first time changes to U.S. force levels in Afghanistan have yielded a modified TAA effort. SIGAR reported in the first year of the Trump Administration that defense officials said the 11,000-troop level in September 2017 was sufficient for the U.S. counterterrorism mission, but insufficient for the U.S. contribution to the TAA mission. Adding roughly 3,000 troops, most of whom would be TAA advisors, was a key part of the administration’s new strategy for Afghanistan. Additionally, expanding the level at which they advised was considered to be vital to the TAA mission and to improving the ANDSF’s capabilities. The change was to move advisors from the corps level and higher, at which they are mainly advising now, lower to the battalion and brigade levels.⁹⁵ Yet, despite a surge to 14,000 troops, a level sustained until October 2019, and the continued—though reduced—U.S. advisor presence since then, the ANDSF still face a number of operational capability, capacity, and institutional challenges” and “require” continued advisory and logistical support.⁹⁶

DOD acknowledges that the latest force level introduces some limitations on force capacity and on the train, advise, and assist mission.⁹⁷ However, USFOR-A insists this quarter that its ability to execute and/or oversee costly and necessary taxpayer-funded contracts to train and sustain the ANDSF, and to provide them hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of equipment and direct-assistance funds has thus far “not been adversely affected by the reduction of force levels.”⁹⁸

U.S. and Coalition Forces' Advising Efforts

Train, Advise, and Assist Efforts During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to continuing COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, U.S. and Coalition personnel may still conduct only limited, mission-essential, face-to-face advising with their Afghan counterparts.⁹⁹ CSTC-A said this quarter that COVID-19 continued to impact their TAA efforts by reducing the number of face-to-face interactions between advisors and Afghan partners, and forcing CSTC-A's MOD and MOI Ministry Advisory Groups (MAG-I and MAG-D) to use videoconferencing, e-mail, text messaging, telephone, and other remote methods to carry out their mission.¹⁰⁰

Pandemic-related restrictions on some CSTC-A and NATO Special Operations Command-Afghanistan (NSOCC-A) advisors to Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) were slightly relaxed in October and November. This allowed them to develop better rapport with Afghan counterparts and complete difficult advisory tasks that required in-person engagement. But restrictions on face-to-face advising were reinstated when cases rose in late November.¹⁰¹

This quarter, CSTC-A's MAG-I increased targeted COVID-19 testing for advisors participating in face-to-face advising. To help maintain COVID-19 mitigation procedures, the MOI created an outdoor, tented meeting area to facilitate in-person TAA. CSTC-A said MOI personnel have also been wearing masks to mitigate the potential exposure to and spread of COVID-19.¹⁰²

While the COVID-19 mitigation strategies have stressed some ANDSF capabilities and reduced advisor contact, CSTC-A and NSOCC-A said they also have the ancillary benefit of requiring MOD and MOI to operate more independently. However, CSTC-A also said this quarter that virtual TAA limits the advisor's ability to discourage corruption and theft of supplies by, for example, being present when supply deliveries are made.¹⁰³

Additionally, contracts requiring in-person training have been delayed but are occurring. For a training course to be conducted, CSTC-A requires social distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE) to be worn by trainers during the entire course. To ensure compliance, ANDSF counterparts are asked for photographic verification. The Afghans are also asked to provide an overview of how the contractor performed.¹⁰⁴

NSOCC-A said this quarter, "there was no long-term substantial impact on ANDSF counterterrorism operational output ... [and] ANASOC and GCPSU remained capable of performing independent, coherent, and well-coordinated operations with support from SMW." They nonetheless acknowledged that "COVID-19 did disrupt our ability to TAA."¹⁰⁵ For more information about the ASSF's operations and performance, see pages 63–64.

To continue providing prompt pandemic-related assistance to the ANDSF, CSTC-A approved the use of ASFF funds for three COVID-19 assistance packages that the MOD will procure for ANA this quarter. The

packages included PPE, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, and medical-grade cleaning supplies for ANA medical facilities. In addition, donations from other countries through the NATO ANA Trust Fund were used to purchase 280,000 influenza vaccinations for the ANDSF. All COVID-19-related supplies and flu vaccinations will be delivered directly to the national supply depots in Kabul and shipped to forward support depots and regional logistics centers for further distribution.¹⁰⁶

Two COVID-19-related Foreign Military Sales (FMS) cases were coordinated by the Defense Logistics Agency for delivery in October 2020, but were delayed due to limited supplies; cases will be tracked until delivery can be made. U.S. military medical facilities have priority for these supplies.¹⁰⁷

CSTC-A is holding weekly TAA sessions with MOI's Office of the Surgeon General and MOD's Office of the Medical Commander to discuss preventive measures for COVID-19. Recent issues addressed include the use of COVID-specific clinics, inventory management of PPE, and patient education to avoid the spread of the virus. The ministries are analyzing COVID-19 reports and data to pinpoint highly affected areas for more targeted PPE distribution. CSTC-A staff visited the medical supply depots from September to early November and completed inventory checks of COVID-19 supplies to ensure they were adequate to protect the ANDSF through the second wave of the virus. The only challenge CSTC-A reported for this process this quarter was the potential for corruption within the distribution system. CSTC-A says it will continue to verify supplies and distribution on future site visits.¹⁰⁸

U.S. and Coalition Forces Casualties and Insider Attacks

From October 7, 2001, through January 16, 2021, 1,909 U.S. military personnel were killed in action in Afghanistan. Another 534 personnel died as a result of non-hostile causes. A total of 20,722 military personnel have been wounded in action.¹⁰⁹

USFOR-A reported no insider attacks, nor casualties resulting from insider attacks, among U.S. and Coalition forces this quarter. Earlier, an insider attack on February 8, 2020, killed two U.S. military personnel and wounded seven. Five insider attacks in 2019 killed two U.S. personnel and wounded six.¹¹⁰

AFGHAN NATIONAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES

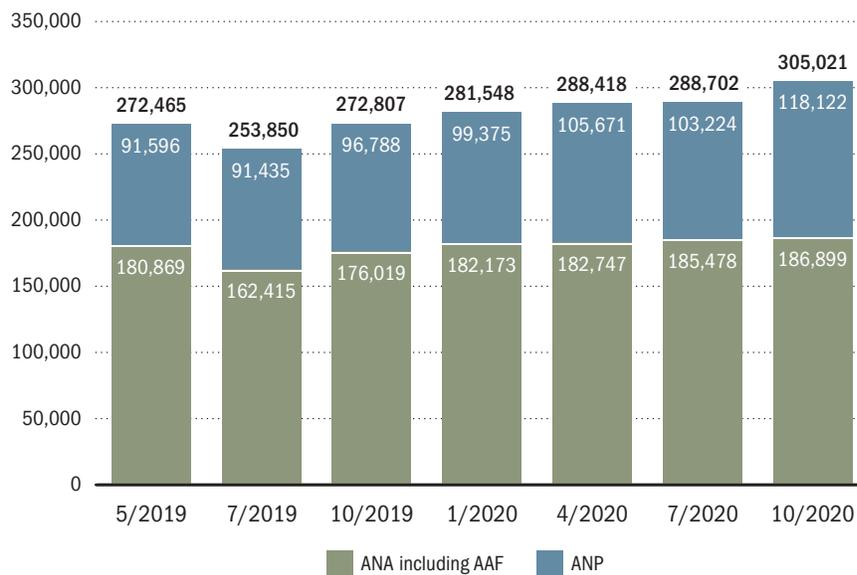
ANDSF Strength

This quarter, the ANDSF continued to report its highest strength since it began using the Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS) in July 2019. APPS leverages biometric enrollment and Afghan self-reporting for more

accurate accounting compared to the prior system that relied only on self-reporting.¹¹¹

As of October 29, 2020, CSTC-A reported 305,021 ANDSF personnel (186,899 MOD and 118,122 MOI) biometrically enrolled and eligible for pay in APPS. There are an additional 8,152 civilians (4,684 MOI and 3,468 MOD). Figure 2.30 shows that ANDSF total strength reflects a 6% increase, 16,319 personnel, since last quarter (data as of July 25). This can mainly be attributed to an increase of nearly 15,000 MOI personnel as a result of the dissolution of the Afghan Local Police (ALP) and the transfer of some of its personnel to the rolls of other MOI elements, increased recruiting, low attrition, and efforts to get ANP and ALP personnel enrolled in APPS. Before the force was dissolved, ALP strength figures had long been reported separately from MOI strength figures.¹¹²

FIGURE 2.30
REPORTED ANDSF ASSIGNED STRENGTH FROM APPS



Note: This quarter's data is as of October 29, 2020. The "as of" date of the data each quarter is between the 25th and 31st of the indicated month. ANA = Afghan National Army; AAF = Afghan Air Force; ANP = Afghan National Police; ANDSF = Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. No civilians are included in the strength numbers.

Source: CSTC-A response to SIGAR data call, 12/16/2020, 9/22/2020, 6/18/2020, 3/17/2020, 12/19/2019, and 9/18/2019; SIGAR, analysis of CSTC-A-provided data, 12/2020.

These ANDSF strength figures include 5,956 female personnel enrolled in APPS as of December 18, 2020. This reflects a slight increase of 97 female personnel (roughly 2%) since July 25. The majority of ANDSF women continue to serve in the ANP (3,629 personnel), with the other 1,433 in the ANA, 286 in the ASSF, 168 in the AAF, and 440 MOD and MOI civilians.¹¹³

ANDSF Authorized Strength Reduced

CSTC-A reported this quarter that the authorized (goal) strength of MOD forces has been adjusted downward to 208,000; it had been roughly 227,000 for many years. Because MOD forces have been able to maintain an end strength in the low- to mid-180,000 range, this keeps the MOD in the high 80% range of its authorized strength, so they will not have to continue trying to recruit to a much higher authorized strength as in the past.¹¹⁴

The new authorized strength for MOI forces is 136,000, up from 124,626 level of June 2019 partly to provide space for some ALP personnel to transfer to the regular ANP's rolls. Responding to a SIGAR question as to whether the ANDSF is manned and can be sustained at adequate levels, CSTC-A said both MOD and MOI forces are manned at sustainable levels given current attrition and recruitment trends. CSTC-A also said this slightly smaller force size will meet the Afghan government's security needs. CSTC-A previously told a SIGAR fact-finding team that it was not realistic for the ANDSF to recruit to the previously authorized force numbers as they had historically been unable to meet their strength targets.¹¹⁵

Afghan Personnel and Pay System

CSTC-A reported this quarter that it continues its efforts to transition to the Afghan government some of the roles and responsibilities for management of the Afghan Personnel and Pay System (APPS), which accounts for and manages ANDSF payroll. DOD clarified this quarter that the full transition of APPS ownership, management, and sustainment will be accomplished when U.S. funding is no longer being used to pay Afghan salaries. CSTC-A developed APPS to reduce opportunities for corruption and fraud—such as fake personnel records corrupt actors used to pocket salaries for “ghost” police—and to create better accountability, transparency, and auditability in ANDSF payroll processes. The United States initially spent \$35.8 million on the development contract for APPS in 2016. An additional \$14.4 million has been spent since 2019, when another sustainment contract for the system began. This brings the total amount spent on APPS to \$50.2 million as of January 2021.¹¹⁶

SIGAR has been tracking MOD and MOI's progress on CSTC-A-mandated goals the ministries must meet in order to begin transitioning key aspects of APPS sustainment and management to the Afghan government. CSTC-A said because the transition is contingent on several factors, a specific timeline for achieving it has not been determined. So far, factors for transition include:¹¹⁷

- establishment of an Afghan APPS Program Management Office (PMO), which will first require the ministries to create and approve authorized positions in APPS for personnel assigned to the office

- an Afghan government budget for an APPS sustainment contract using Afghan funds (APPS sustainment is expected to cost roughly \$9.6 million per year)
- full MOI implementation of APPS to inform pay, as the MOD does
- advancement in APPS proficiency, with training provided to each of the ministries in the areas of user functions, help desk, and “train the trainers”

Last quarter, CSTC-A told SIGAR that MOD had authorized and was working to staff a five-person APPS PMO. This quarter, MOD’s APPS PMO office reached “initial operating capability”—which involves the office reviewing all APPS system changes—with three of five staff members hired. Additionally, the officer in charge conducts the fortnightly planning team meeting, during which CSTC-A HRM recently worked with the MOD APPS Program Manager to define roles and responsibilities required to support transition efforts. MOD’s APPS PMO also completed its first train-the-trainer, 70-day course on October 31. Recently, APPS developer Netlinks made available training courses that will enable MOD to develop subject-matter experts to lead internal training. Additional courses and help-desk training classes began in November. Coalition advisors for MOD continue to provide training, with subject-matter experts providing “over the shoulder” support to APPS operators.¹¹⁸

Separately, the incentive-pay results from MOD’s Pay and Compensation Board were updated in APPS. This involved a number of updates, from simplifying pay incentive categories to improvements in hazard pay for each district. MOD gave positive feedback about a change to the process that managed killed-in-action (KIA) updates in APPS, which now allows ANA corps to more efficiently remove KIA personnel records from the system.¹¹⁹

Though MOD has been using personnel data in APPS to inform its payroll since October 2019, MOI still does not. CSTC-A told SIGAR this quarter that MOI is scheduled to begin using APPS to inform payroll beginning February 19, 2021.¹²⁰ CSTC-A said MOI is also still waiting for approval to create 25 new civilian positions to establish its APPS PMO. CSTC-A’s MAG-I provided a memo to the Minister of Interior explaining the importance of approval to facilitate the creation of and hiring for the APPS PMO. MOI personnel also completed additional train-the-trainer and help-desk training courses in November.¹²¹

CSTC-A says until MOD and MOI accomplish their APPS transition goals, CSTC-A’s APPS PMO will oversee the system. The current APPS sustainment contract ends April 30, 2021, but a follow-on ASFF-funded contract is pending solicitation and award, and could run up to five more years. Meanwhile, the U.S. government will maintain **configuration control** of APPS, as it has since APPS was established, to maintain transparency until the system is fully transitioned.¹²² CSTC-A said this quarter it will continue

ONGOING SIGAR AUDIT

SIGAR is completing an audit of the Department of Defense’s efforts to ensure the accuracy of APPS records and the accountability for funds provided to the MOD. This audit will determine the extent to which DOD, since the beginning of FY 2019, has ensured: (1) the accuracy and completeness of data used in APPS; and (2) the funds it provides to the Afghan government to pay MOD salaries are disbursed to intended recipients.

Configuration control: applying technical and administrative direction and surveillance to: (1) identify and document the functional and physical characteristics of the software, (2) control changes to those characteristics, and (3) record and report changes to processing and implementation status

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 10/11/2020.

to provide oversight and management of on-budget funds used for programs like APPS “through an enduring comptroller and engagements section.”¹²³

CSTC-A Reports Closing DOD OIG Recommendation on Biometric Record Number Vulnerability in APPS

An August 2019 Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DOD OIG) audit found that MOD and MOI were not using APPS as intended to generate payroll data (as of April 2019), with the overall finding that CSTC-A had paid \$26.2 million for a system that “does not accomplish [its] stated objective of reducing the risk of inaccurate personnel records or fraudulent payments through the use of automated controls.”

DOD OIG said APPS failed to reduce the risk of inaccurate records and fraudulent payments because there was no link between the two systems to validate the authenticity of the biometric number recorded in APPS. This quarter, CSTC-A told SIGAR that its Human Resource Management Program Management Office (HRM PMO) completed the final outstanding recommendation from the audit: to develop an auditable process that could be implemented on a regular schedule to ensure personnel records have an authentic biometric identification number validated in the Afghan Automated Biometric Information System (AABIS).

CSTC-A said in August 2020 they had begun a process of 100% monthly validation of APPS biometrically enrolled personnel with the information in the AABIS allowing for the recurring identification and correction of records with missing biometric information, and of records containing the same biometric information as other records. CSTC-A undertakes this process by comparing a file with all biometric records in AABIS with all properly enrolled and slotted ANDSF personnel in APPS to ensure the APPS personnel are “biometrically verified.” Biometrically verified personnel are those who have a matching biometric Transaction Control Number (TCN) listed in both the AABIS and APPS. Personnel who have no valid TCN in APPS, or who have a TCN in APPS that has no corresponding TCN in AABIS, are considered to be not biometrically verified. CSTC-A acknowledges this process minimizes errors but is not entirely error-proof.

To date, there is no automated link between APPS and AABIS. However, an early effort is underway to create an Application Program Interface (API) between APPS and AABIS. CSTC-A said APPS is already API capable, but AABIS will also require this change before the interface between the two systems is complete.

Source: DOD OIG, Audit of the Planning for and Implementation of the Afghan Personnel and Pay System, 8/15/2019, i; CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/16/2020 and response to SIGAR vetting, 1/6/2021 and 1/15/2021.

ANDSF Attrition – Some Data Classified

USFOR-A continued to classify detailed ANDSF attrition information this quarter because the Afghan government classifies it.¹²⁴ SIGAR’s questions about ANDSF attrition can be found in Appendix E.

This quarter, CSTC-A reported that overall MOD attrition was in line with normal levels (a monthly average of roughly 2% this quarter), and that MOI’s was slightly elevated at 4%. CSTC-A said that to reduce attrition the MOD implemented recently approved pay incentives from the July 20, 2020, Pay and Compensation Board. These incentives include a raise in base pay, updated district-level hazard pay, and simplified and improved incentives for special skills across the MOD. The simplification of incentive pay decreases the number of incentive categories, easing implementation and tracking mechanisms to ensure soldiers receive appropriate pay. The MOD is also reviewing reenlistment bonus programs to increase reenlistments.¹²⁵

MOI’s efforts to reduce attrition are focused on meeting the basic needs of police personnel (food, pay, etc.). MOI is also working on maintaining and improving facilities to help with morale, security, and the survivability

of its police force. Priority areas include addressing salary payments and logistics issues. CSTC-A said MOI's Director of Security and Deputy Minister of Support meet weekly with the provincial police chiefs to address these challenges.¹²⁶

ANDSF Casualties

USFOR-A continues to classify all ANDSF casualty data because the Afghan government classifies it.¹²⁷ SIGAR's questions about ANDSF casualties can be found in Appendix E.

ANDSF Insider Attacks

USFOR-A reported 23 insider attacks targeting the ANDSF this quarter that resulted in 82 personnel killed and 22 wounded.¹²⁸ This reflects a 41% decrease in insider attacks against the ANDSF compared to the same period in 2019. This quarter also saw a 30% decrease in total deaths caused by insider attacks and a 40% decrease in wounded compared to the previous year. However, USFOR-A noted that individual insider attacks were slightly more fatal this quarter compared to the same period in 2019.¹²⁹

Afghan Special Security Forces

The Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) are the ANDSF's primary offensive forces. The ASSF include a number of elements, such as the ANA Special Operations Corps (ANASOC), the General Command Police Special Units (GCPSU), and the Special Mission Wing (SMW). SIGAR tracks ASSF operations data because DOD has said the ASSF's growing size and capabilities are important both for the ANDSF's overall performance and for the United States to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its small-footprint military campaign in Afghanistan.¹³⁰

DOD reported in June 2020 that ASSF elements have nearly doubled in size since that reform goal was laid out in President Ashraf Ghani's 2017 four-year ANDSF Road Map for developing the force.¹³¹ Though they have a mainly offense-centered mission, NSOCC-A said the ASSF are currently operating under the authority of Joint Order 125, which adjusts the force's operational design to be in an **active-defense** posture, disrupt enemy attacks on checkpoints, and reduce ANDSF and civilian casualties.¹³²

ASSF Operations

NSOCC-A reported that the ASSF conducted the highest number of ground operations this quarter (October–December 2020) in more than a year (since April–June 2019). NSOCC-A attributed this to more ASSF operational responsibility due to the COVID-19-related decline in U.S.- and Coalition-partnered and -enabled ASSF operations, and U.S. commitments in the U.S.-Taliban agreement to conduct only defensive strikes against the Taliban.¹³³ Though this appears to be a positive development, it is difficult to

Active defense: Includes the ANDSF: (1) patrolling forward from checkpoints, (2) conducting limited offensive actions and counterattacks within the vicinity of checkpoints, and (3) consolidating checkpoints.

Source: NSOCC-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/15/2021.

SECURITY

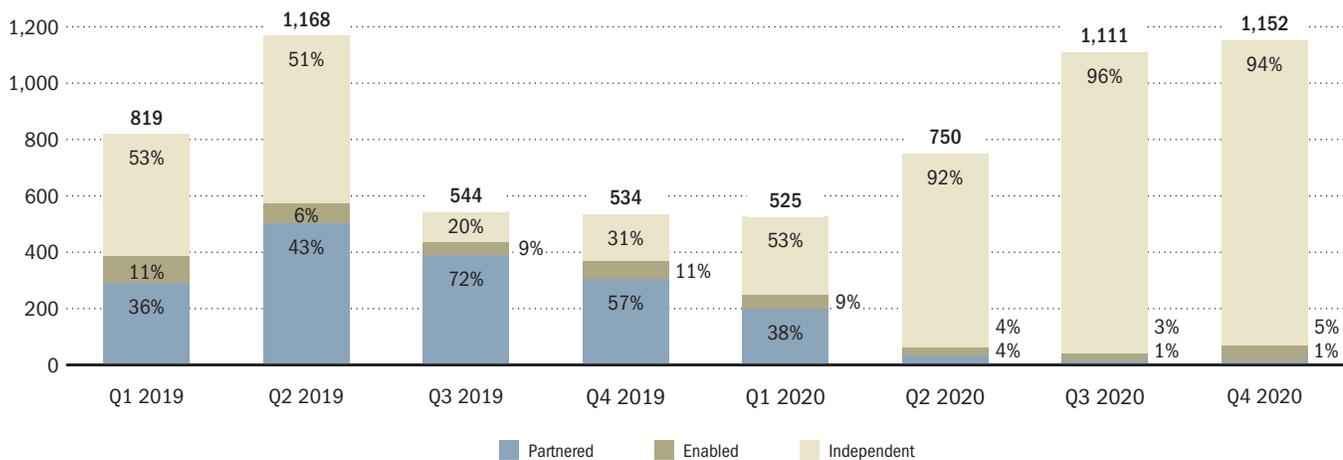
characterize operational successes (as a quantitative increase does not necessarily indicate a qualitative increase) because many of the details of ASSF operations remain classified.

The 1,152 ASSF ground operations conducted this quarter were nearly double the number the ASSF conducted during the same period last year (587), and reflect a 4% increase compared to last quarter (July–September 2020). November saw the highest number of operations (393) during the quarter compared to October (384) and September (375). As seen in Figure 2.31, the ASSF conducted 94% of its operations this quarter independent of U.S. and Coalition advisor support or accompaniment. The number of independent ASSF operations this quarter are the second highest they have been since January 2019, when SIGAR began obtaining complete records.¹³⁴

Except for aircraft maintenance, daily operations are conducted independent of advisors, as in-person TAA restrictions have remained in place.¹³⁵ Overall, NSOCC-A said this quarter, “there was no long-term substantial impact on ANDSF counterterrorism operational output ... [and] ANASOC and GCPSU remained capable of performing independent, coherent, and well-coordinated operations with support from SMW.”¹³⁶

FIGURE 2.31

ASSF GROUND OPERATIONS BY QUARTER



Note: Partnered = operations conducted by ASSF in which U.S./Coalition forces accompany ASSF to the target; Enabled = operations planned and executed by ASSF in which U.S./Coalition forces supply intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, or other support but do not accompany ASSF to the target; Independent = operations planned and executed by ASSF without any U.S./Coalition assistance. Percentages may sum to more than 100% due to rounding.

Source: NSOCC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 1/5/2021; SIGAR, analysis of NSOCC-A-provided data, 1/2021.

ANA Territorial Force

The Afghan National Army Territorial Force (ANA-TF) is the newest ANDSF force element. It is responsible for holding terrain in permissive (less violent) security environments. Falling directly under the command of the regular ANA corps, the ANA-TF is designed to be a lightly armed local security force that is more accountable to the central government than local forces like the ALP. DOD says that some of the ANA-TF companies may replace conventional ANA companies, where authorized positions exist, in areas where conditions are appropriate for the units to thrive. Following a final Afghan peace deal, DOD assesses that the ANA-TF or a similar force may serve as a vehicle to reintegrate insurgent fighters.¹³⁷

The locations of the ANA-TF's operational and planned *tolays* (companies, with a strength of up to 121 soldiers) are intended to deny the Taliban freedom of maneuver, and keep the Taliban away from urban areas and key lines of communication and transportation.¹³⁸ These tolays are currently providing local security in their areas of responsibility, so that the regular ANA forces are freed to conduct other operations.¹³⁹

This quarter CSTC-A reported continued progress on the ANA-TF's expansion and the transition of some ALP personnel into its ranks. As of December 13, there were 126 operational ANA-TF tolays, with one more in training. This is an increase of 26 operational tolays since September 18. CSTC-A said 21 of these tolays were established to support the ALP to ANA-TF transition. ANA-TF tolays are serving under six ANA corps and 11th Capital Division in 32 of 34 provinces. The 215th Corps, responsible for Helmand and Nimroz Provinces, still does not have ANA-TF presence.¹⁴⁰

Last quarter, CTSC-A told SIGAR it endorsed the authorization of an additional 81 ANA-TF tolays for a total of 186 in order to support up to 10,851 ALP members transitioning to the ANA-TF.¹⁴¹ This quarter, the 81 additional tolays were approved and established. The 21 new tolays established in support of the ALP transition are part of the 81 tolays that will come from MOI over to MOD. The next 26 tolays to support the transition were expected to be operational no later than December 21, 2020. CSTC-A said this did occur, except for those tolays located in Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Helmand Provinces, where deployments have been placed on a temporary hold until at latest February 2021 due to the security situation. The final 24 tolays established will be located in **contested areas**. This is expected to be complete in early 2021.¹⁴²

CSTC-A also reported improvements to ANA-TF management by MOD and the corps. CSTC-A said their recent TAA efforts at the national and corps level have focused on addressing shortcomings in oversight, ownership, and support to the ANA-TF. CSTC-A said they have seen improvement over the last quarter with MOD holding weekly working groups focused on the ALP transition to the ANA-TF and wider ANA-TF challenges, including

Contested Areas: For the purposes of establishing the ANA-TF, contested areas are districts in which progovernment and antigovernment forces have limited freedom of movement and access into the district, but the area also has an ANDSF presence that an ANA-TF tolay can align with, as well as support from tribal and ANDSF leaders. To fill the security vacuum created by the ALP dissolution, ANDSF leaders decided on locations of new ANA-TF tolays to ensure continuation of a local security mechanism with increased oversight, integration, and support from the ANA.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/6/2021.

increased oversight and management from the MOD, and evidence of increased tactical support to individual tolays.¹⁴³

This quarter, CSTC-A saw some examples of increased incorporation of the ANA-TF into joint operations with the larger ANA force. ANA-TF has reportedly remained aligned with their principal tasks of holding terrain and providing local security, and CSTC-A believes the increased integration of the tolays has increased their effectiveness.¹⁴⁴

However, CSTC-A also said the increased ANA-TF effectiveness has not yet led to relieving the ANA from manning checkpoints because the ANA generally mistrusts the ALP, even though they now serve in ANA-TF tolays under the command of conventional ANA leadership. CSTC-A believes that confidence in the new ANA-TF companies will increase after they attend Basic Warrior Training (the basic-training course for all MOD personnel), where they will be more thoroughly integrated into ANA culture.¹⁴⁵

CSTC-A reiterated this quarter that the ANA-TF's shortcomings are the same as those of the regular ANA corps, but that the ANA-TF continue to suffer few casualties from Taliban and insurgent attacks and overall contribute to corps-led local security initiatives.¹⁴⁶

Ministry Performance Assessments – Most Data Classified

USFOR-A continued to classify most information about MOD and MOI performance because it is classified by the Afghan government.¹⁴⁷ SIGAR's questions about the ministries' performance can be found in Appendix E of this report.

CoreIMS Implementation Improves

In 2010, CSTC-A began limited use of the Core Inventory Management System (CoreIMS), then a laptop-based, off-the-shelf software package at a CSTC-A-managed warehouse to manually track inventory. Since then, CoreIMS has evolved into a network-accessible system of record to manage and track equipment, weapons, and vehicles provided to the Afghan government by DOD.¹⁴⁸

Although CoreIMS is being used as a logistics automation system, DOD said the ANDSF has not yet been able to fully implement CoreIMS across the force. For example, the ANDSF are able to use CoreIMS at all national warehouses and regional depots, but not at all local sites, due to lack of technical capacity, and internet connectivity, among other reasons. However, DOD reported modest progress in expanding CoreIMS and its modules at some ANDSF local sites.¹⁴⁹

CSTC-A said advisors look at several “measures of effectiveness” for MOD and MOI use of CoreIMS.¹⁵⁰

- completion of equipment inventories (10% monthly and 100% annual)
- inventory accuracy
- number of sites actively using CoreIMS

- number of sites actively using the Property Book Management (PBM) and Military Maintenance Management (M3) modules (PBM allows for a much closer tracking of assets below the kandak level, even to individuals. M3 allows the visibility and oversight of repairable assets.)

A CSTC-A update this quarter showed increases in the number of sites active in CoreIMS, PBM, and M3. As of December 2, 124 of 191 possible ANDSF sites are active in CoreIMS, a 25-site increase since September 18. This includes 83 ANA sites and 41 ANP sites. In June, DOD reported CoreIMS being used at only 78 of 191 possible sites. MOI and MOD are implementing CoreIMS at provincial headquarters and brigades with independent plans to implement the system and begin training at all sites by December 2020. As of January 6, 2021, training had commenced in all but four ANP and nine ANA sites where security concerns delayed the process.¹⁵¹

CSTC-A said inventories for the PBM module have also increased at many sites, from the ANA corps down to the battalion and special-forces unit level. Last quarter the ANP was not utilizing PBM, but this quarter implemented it at one national organization, one regional logistics center, and two provincial headquarters. Additionally, MOI is using M3 at one organization.¹⁵² CSTC-A acknowledges that the ANDSF is far from full independent use of CoreIMS and is not scheduled to achieve this until 2024. The ANDSF will continue to contract out technical maintenance of the system, which the United States will likely fund for at least the next several years.¹⁵³

Checkpoint Reduction

RS has long identified the need for an orderly reduction or elimination of the most vulnerable (minimally manned or unsupportable) **checkpoints**, as well as to consolidate personnel into **patrol bases** (the new standard fighting structures for the ANA).¹⁵⁴

In November 2019, the Afghan government in coordination with CSTC-A estimated that the ANDSF had over 10,000 checkpoints nationwide, with an average of 10–20 personnel at each checkpoint.¹⁵⁵ Coalition TAA efforts in 2020 helped the ANA develop its Checkpoint Reduction and Base Development Plan (CPRBD) for this year.¹⁵⁶

However, some checkpoints were not eliminated by plan, but abandoned to the Taliban. Nearly 200 checkpoints manned by the ANA's 205th Corps in Kandahar Province were abandoned to the Taliban during December 2020.¹⁵⁷ According to Kandahar provincial leaders and security personnel, the ANDSF and the Taliban have clashed regularly in Kandahar Province since October, and the recent checkpoint abandonment let government weapons and ammunition fall in Taliban hands.¹⁵⁸ Following the retreat, CSTC-A said that representatives from the MOI, NDS, and the MOD general staff were debriefed by the Kandahar governor, soldiers and commanders

Checkpoints: nonpermanent positions manned by or housing 10–20 soldiers or police without logistics support or officer leadership.

Patrol bases: a fortified platoon or company position with towers, concertina wire, and other reinforcements, with a limited logistical capability for the care and feeding of soldiers assigned to the position. The construction of patrol bases is now ordered by MOD to be the standard field fortification for the ANA.

Source: CSTC-A, response to DOD OIG data call, 4/7/2020.

from the 205th Corps, and provincial and district chiefs of police. A lack of ANDSF cooperation, 205th Corps personnel shortfalls, adversarial relationships between the 205th Corps soldiers and Kandahar citizens, and the lack of adequate fuel and personnel reserves for 205th Corps checkpoints contributed to the collapse.¹⁵⁹

CSTC-A reported that all of “the issues are concerns that MOD senior leaders [are addressing] and continue to improve.”¹⁶⁰

In total, CSTC-A estimated that there are now under 6,000 checkpoints in the country.¹⁶¹ ANDSF still had approximately one-third of its total force or 95,000 personnel (29,000 ANA and 66,000 ANP) manning checkpoints as of December 2020.¹⁶² CSTC-A noted that effort is still required to reduce checkpoints across the country. Recent planning conferences should also help reduce some checkpoints as the ANP refocuses their efforts in population centers.¹⁶³

Ground-Vehicle Maintenance

DOD contractors provide maintenance services for ANDSF ground vehicles and train ANDSF technicians under the 2018 National Maintenance Strategy-Ground Vehicle Support (NMS-GVS) contract. The contractors also develop ANA and ANP maintenance capacity through a workshare plan intended to have the ANA and ANP performing 90% and 65%, respectively, of their maintenance by the end of the five-year contract in 2023.¹⁶⁴ CSTC-A has said the final objective of the NMS-GVS workshare is to ensure sufficient ANDSF maintenance capacity.¹⁶⁵ As of October 2020, the United States has obligated \$787.5 million for ANA and ANP training, mentoring, and contract logistics-support services through the NMS-GVS contract.¹⁶⁶

CSTC-A continued to report this quarter that the ANDSF are falling well below their benchmarks for the share of the maintenance work orders they, versus contractors, are supposed to perform. According to CSTC-A, the ANA filled on average just under 20% of maintenance work orders from October through December 2020, roughly the same as last quarter. Their goal for the period was to complete 80% of maintenance work orders. Similarly, the ANP filled on average slightly more than 12% of maintenance work orders during this same time period, a slight improvement from last quarter but also well below its 35% goal.¹⁶⁷

When asked the reason for this, CSTC-A told SIGAR that the pandemic and increased attacks have prevented the ANDSF from expanding its share of maintenance work. ANDSF mechanics have been moved to checkpoints to conduct combat operations because they are trained riflemen. The force has begun rotating mechanics in and out of checkpoints to continue repairing equipment. CSTC-A added that while benchmarks and timelines have not been adjusted, NMS-GVS has largely shifted to only a training and mentoring role, except in major cities—Kabul, Kandahar, Mazar-e Sharif, and Herat—where they must still perform maintenance.¹⁶⁸

AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY

As of December 31, 2020, the United States had obligated and disbursed nearly \$47.5 billion of ASFF appropriated from FY 2005 through FY 2018 to build, train, equip, and sustain the ANA, AAF, and parts of the Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF). These force elements constituted the ANA budget activity group (BAG) for reporting purposes through the FY 2018 appropriation.¹⁶⁹ For a detailed breakdown of ASFF appropriations, obligations, and disbursements, for the ANA and AAF in FY 2019 and 2020, see page 32.

ANA Sustainment Funding

As of December 31, 2020, the United States had obligated \$23.6 billion and disbursed \$23.5 billion from FY 2005 through FY 2018 ASFF appropriations for ANA, AAF, and some ASSF sustainment. These costs include salary and incentive pay, fuel, transportation services, and equipment-maintenance costs, including aircraft, and other expenses.¹⁷⁰

For Afghan FY 1399 (December 2019–December 2020), CSTC-A planned to provide the Afghan government the equivalent of up to \$725.3 million to support MOD force elements. Of this amount, approximately \$636.7 million (88%) was slated for salaries.¹⁷¹

As of November 30, 2020, CSTC-A had provided the Afghan government the equivalent of \$727 million to support the MOD for FY 1399. Almost all of these funds (90%) paid for salaries.¹⁷²

ANA Equipment and Transportation

As of December 31, 2020, the United States had obligated and disbursed approximately \$13.6 billion from FY 2005 through FY 2018 ASFF appropriations for ANA, AAF, and some ASSF equipment and transportation costs.¹⁷³

Although CSTC-A has moved away from procuring major equipment and systems like High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs, commonly known as “Humvees”), items already procured are still being delivered to the ANA.¹⁷⁴

On the following page, table 2.7 lists the highest-cost items of equipment provided to the ANA this quarter (August 1 to October 31, 2020), which included 217 HMMWVs (valued at about \$51.8 million), 324 units of rocket ammunition (valued at nearly \$9.7 million), and nearly 2.5 million .50 caliber ammunition cartridges (valued at over \$7.1 million). DOD said last quarter that as part of the revised HMMWV strategy implemented in 2017, about 1,600 excess U.S. Army armored HMMWVs have been refurbished for transfer to the ANDSF in addition to procurement of about 6,000 new HMMWVs from 2015 through 2018. The refurbished vehicles cost about \$80,000 less than new vehicles. CSTC-A reported that more deliveries are pending. All ongoing and any remaining deliveries of HMMWVs since a pause in 2019 have been of refurbished HMMWVs.¹⁷⁵

SIGAR AUDIT

A SIGAR audit report issued this quarter focused on the extent to which DOD, since the beginning of FY 2017, conducted required routine and enhanced post-delivery end-use monitoring of defense articles (such as HMMWVs, aircraft, and other types of equipment) provided to the ANDSF, reported and investigated potential end-use violations in Afghanistan, and took steps to ensure corrective actions occurred, when applicable. SIGAR found that DOD did not meet enhanced end-use monitoring requirements to account for all sensitive defense articles transferred to the Afghan government. The requirements are designed to minimize national-security risks by preventing the diversion or misuse of defense articles that incorporate sensitive technology. For more information about SIGAR’s findings, see page 5.

TABLE 2.7

MAJOR EQUIPMENT ITEMS PROVIDED TO THE ANA				
Equipment Type	Equipment Description	Units Issued in Quarter	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Vehicle	M1151 HMMWV (utility truck)	217	\$238,500	\$51,754,500
Ammunition	2.75 in. rocket guidance section	324	29,863	9,675,612
Ammunition	.50 caliber cartridge	2,416,000	3	7,731,200
Ammunition	2.75 in. rockets	3,264	1,906	6,221,151
Ammunition	60 mm high-explosive mortar cartridge	5,600	313	1,752,800
Parts	MX-15 turret air surveillance imaging system	2	865,800	1,731,600
Parts	Vehicle engine analyzer	198	7,248	1,435,104
Parts	Vehicle hydraulic transmission	208	14,604	1,401,400
Ammunition	40 mm cartridge	23,400	55	1,296,126
Ammunition	7.62 mm cartridge	1,792,000	0.63	1,128,960
Total				\$84,128,453

Note: The above list reflects only the 10 highest-value equipment provided to the ANA this quarter (August 1–October 31, 2020). The “unit costs” listed reflect the average costs paid for items procured under multiple Foreign Military Sales cases. Unit costs are rounded to the nearest dollar except for items valued under \$1.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/16/2020.

ANA Infrastructure

The United States obligated and disbursed roughly \$6 billion of ASFF appropriations from FY 2005 through FY 2018 for ANA, AAF, and some ASSF infrastructure projects as of December 31, 2020.¹⁷⁶

As of December 5, 2020, CSTC-A was managing nine ongoing, DOD-funded ANA infrastructure projects costing roughly \$33.4 million in total. CSTC-A awarded no new projects this quarter, and completed five projects that cost nearly \$24.7 million.¹⁷⁷

Of the ongoing projects, the costliest include an electrical-grid connection project for the ANA in Baghlan Province (costing about \$9.5 million), a new School of Excellence for the ANASOC’s Camp Commando (roughly \$7 million), and one phase of an SMW facilities expansion plan for its Hamid Karzai International Airport airbase in Kabul (\$5.6 million).¹⁷⁸

The costliest completed projects this quarter were a \$10.7 million electrical-grid connection project for the ANA and ANP in Kunduz Province, a \$5.9 million morgue and visitor facility for the Kabul National Military Hospital, and a \$4.6 million electrical-grid connection project for the ANDSF’s Central Supply Depot in Kabul.¹⁷⁹

Four of the ongoing infrastructure projects for MOD elements are slated for completion after May 2021, at which time U.S. forces, depending on conditions, may leave Afghanistan.¹⁸⁰

Regarding how CSTC-A would continue to oversee construction projects after a potential U.S. withdrawal, CSTC-A said:



Around 1,000 soldiers graduated from Basic Warrior Training at the Regional Military Training Center in Mazar-e Sharif in November. (RS photo)

We are keenly aware of the need to provide proper oversight of projects and protect taxpayer dollars. Therefore, in order to meet our fiscal oversight responsibilities CSTC-A and USACE have established construction verification and quality assurance contracts with local national engineers. These contractors conduct regular and reoccurring site visits and provide detailed photographic and written reports back to us. This allows CSTC-A and USACE to effectively oversee construction completion regardless of U.S. or Coalition troop levels.¹⁸¹

SIGAR asked CSTC-A if projects completed since the beginning of this calendar year were being used for their intended purposes and how CSTC-A was tracking this. CSTC-A said, “When projects are completed, they are transferred or turned over to the host nation. When possible, the RS requirement owners that requested the projects on behalf of MOD or MOI confirm that projects are being used as intended.” For projects for which CSTC-A is the requirement owner, they said “our Combined Joint Engineers (CJ-ENG) is the requirement owner for three completed electrical-grid projects, and they confirm that these projects are being used for their intended purposes.”¹⁸²

CSTC-A reported that the estimated annual facilities-sustainment costs funded by the United States for all ANA facility-sustainment requirements continues to be \$108.8 million. Of this, \$74.7 million is provided directly to the Afghan government and \$34.1 million is spent by CSTC-A for the Afghan government.¹⁸³ CSTC-A said it is reducing the budgeted amount of ASFF

that will be provided as a direct contribution for infrastructure costs programmed for FY 2021 by 10%.¹⁸⁴

ANA Training and Operations

As of December 31, 2020, the United States had obligated and disbursed approximately \$4.3 billion of ASFF appropriations from FY 2005 through FY 2018 for ANA, AAF, some ASSF, and MOD training and operations.¹⁸⁵

According to CSTC-A, ASFF funds currently pay for a number of high-cost, mission-critical training programs for MOD force elements. The costliest is a roughly \$110 million training program for the ASSF, supporting the NSOCC-A-partnered units as they further develop critical operational and institutionalized special operations training and build sufficient capacity within the ASSF. This is followed by a nearly \$80 million contract to train AAF and SMW aircraft maintainers, and a roughly \$50 million program to train Mi-17, PC-12, and UH-60 aircraft technicians and instructor pilots, and provide flight simulator maintenance.¹⁸⁶

Shown in Table 2.8, just the 10 most costly U.S.-funded contracts to train ANA, AAF, and ANASOC personnel could total roughly \$430 million by the time the current contracts' terms end. The majority of these contracts (six of 10) are scheduled to run into the late summer or early fall of 2021.¹⁸⁷ CSTC-A has said they intend to continue contract oversight should U.S. forces execute their planned withdrawal in or before May 2021. CSTC-A said this is being considered as USFOR-A is conducting its prudent planning for future force levels under several different scenarios, and that final policy guidance for future force levels will be forthcoming, determined by conditions on the ground, and aligned with NATO planning guidance.¹⁸⁸

AFGHAN AIR FORCE

U.S. Funding

As of November 27, 2020, the United States had appropriated approximately \$8.3 billion for ASFF to build and develop the AAF and fund its combat operations from FY 2010 to FY 2020, about \$200 million less than the amount reported last quarter.¹⁸⁹ The change reflects a decrease in the appropriated funding for the AAF for FY 2020 (down from \$1.3 billion to \$1.1 billion). This puts FY 2020's funding level closer to FY 2019's roughly (\$996 million), and slightly lower than levels from FY 2017 and FY 2018.¹⁹⁰

As in most previous years, sustainment remains the costliest funding category for the AAF (55% of FY 2020 authorized funds), followed by training (32%), equipment and aircraft (12%), and infrastructure (1%). AAF sustainment costs primarily include contractor-provided maintenance, major and

TABLE 2.8

TRAINING CONTRACTS FOR MOD ELEMENTS	
Contract	Total Case/Contract Value
ASSF Training Program	\$108,000,000
AAF Aviation Maintenance Development Center	79,000,000
ASSF Training Support Services	51,000,000
National Maintenance Strategy-Ground Vehicle Services (ANA/AAF/ASSF)	39,000,000
Initial Entry Rotary Wing and Initial Entry Fixed Wing Outside Continental United States AAF Pilot Training	39,000,000
A-29 Pilot & Maintainer Training (AAF)	34,000,000
C-208 Contractor Logistics Support and Maintenance Training (AAF)	28,000,000
Initial Entry Rotary Wing and Initial Entry Fixed Wing Outside Continental United States AAF Pilot Training	27,000,000
A-29 Lead-In High Power Turbo Propeller Pilot Training (AAF)	12,000,000
AAF English Language Training	11,000,000

Note: The above list reflects only the 10 highest-value training contracts supporting MOD force elements. ASSF = Afghan Special Security Forces, AAF = Afghan Air Force, ANA = Afghan National Army. Total case/contract values have been rounded.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/16/2021; OUSD-P, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/22/2021.

minor repairs, and procurement of parts and supplies for the AAF's in-country inventory of seven air platforms: UH-60, MD-530, and Mi-17 helicopters; A-29, C-208, and AC-208 fixed-wing aircraft; and C-130 transport aircraft.¹⁹¹

The United States has obligated about \$6 billion of ASFF for the AAF (including roughly \$2.5 billion for the SMW) from FY 2010 to FY 2020, as of November 30, 2020.¹⁹² U.S. funds can be obligated for up to two years; \$904.3 million in FY 2019 funds have been obligated (of the \$996 million authorized) and \$192 million in FY 2020 funds have been obligated (of the roughly \$1.1 billion authorized).¹⁹³

AAF Inventory and Status

As of January 1, 2021, the AAF had 136 available aircraft and 162 aircraft in its inventory. The changes to these figures this quarter are due to TAAC-Air reporting errors last quarter that DOD caught after publication and has now corrected.¹⁹⁴ See Table 2.9 on the following page, for more details about the AAF's inventory and aircrew.

AAF Operations and Readiness

The AAF's flight hours this quarter (October–December 2020) increased by about 4% compared to the same period last year, but decreased compared to last quarter.¹⁹⁵ Four of seven AAF airframes flew over their recommended flight hours this quarter, and the readiness of five of seven airframes decreased this quarter compared to last quarter (July–September 2020).¹⁹⁶ Two airframes, the MD-530 and A-29, failed to meet their readiness benchmarks; the other five airframes met their targeted readiness benchmarks this quarter, one fewer than last quarter.¹⁹⁷

TABLE 2.9

AAF AVIATION SUMMARY AS OF JANUARY 1, 2021					
AIRCRAFT	Authorized	Total Inventory	Usable / In-Country	Authorized Aircrews	Assigned Aircrews
Fixed Wing					
A-29	26	24	17	38	21
AC-208	10	10	10	15	13
C-208	24	23	21	28	31
C-130	4	4	2	5	3
Rotary Wing					
Mi-17	0	13	12	—	—
MD-530	60	47	38	58	33
UH-60	43	41	36	49	27
Total	167	162	136	193	128

Note: These figures do not include the aircraft for the Special Mission Wing, which are classified. As of January 2021, six A-29s are still en route to Afghanistan from Moody Air Force Base. The AAF is phasing out its Russian-made Mi-17s. FY 2022 is the last year DOD will seek sustainment funding for the Mi-17s. Some will remain in the fleet to provide operational capability until the UH-60 capability matures and the transition to CH-47s is completed. TAAC-Air did not provide data for Mi-17 aircrews because it does not provide train, advise, and assist support for the AAF's Mi-17s. Changes to total and usable MD-530 numbers this quarter are due to two combat losses and aircraft in repair due to battle damage.

Source: TAAC-Air, response to SIGAR vetting, 1/16/2021; SIGAR, analysis of TAAC-Air-provided data, 1/2021.

AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE

As of December 31, 2020, the United States had obligated nearly \$21.7 billion and disbursed nearly \$21.5 billion of ASFF funds from FY 2005 through FY 2018 appropriations to build, train, equip, and sustain the ANP and the GCPSU. These force elements constituted the ANP budget activity group (BAG) for reporting purposes through FY 2018 appropriation.¹⁹⁸ For a detailed breakdown of ASFF appropriations, obligations, and disbursements, for the ANP in FY 2019 and 2020, see page 32.

ANP Sustainment Funding

As of December 31, 2020, the United States had obligated and disbursed approximately \$9.6 billion of ASFF from FY 2005 through FY 2018 appropriations for ANP sustainment costs. Unlike the practice for the ANA, a significant share of ANP personnel costs (including ANP salaries) is paid by international donors through the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) multidonor Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA).¹⁹⁹

To support the MOI, CSTC-A planned to provide up to \$146.6 million in FY 1399. Of these funds, approximately \$54 million (37%) was for salaries, with the remaining funds for purchase of goods, services, or assets.²⁰⁰ As of November 30, 2020, CSTC-A had provided the equivalent of \$63 million directly to the MOI and an additional \$1.04 million to the LOTFA for UNDP-administered support of the MOI.²⁰¹

TABLE 2.10

MAJOR EQUIPMENT PROVIDED TO THE ANP				
Equipment Type	Equipment Description	Units Issued in Quarter	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Ammunition	60 mm high-explosive mortar round	14,400	\$313	\$4,507,200
Parts	Transmission, hydraulic, vehicular	390	7,007	2,732,730
Ammunition	5.56 mm cartridge	6,042,960	.35	2,115,036
Weapons	Pistol, M9 9 mm	2,313	630	1,457,537
Ammunition	Practice grenades, 1.3G	10,000	141	1,410,000
Weapons	M2A1 .50 cal machine-gun	92	14,808	1,362,371
Ammunition	7.62 mm cartridge	1,464,000	1	1,098,000
Uniform	Gloves, men/women	25,525	29	733,844
Uniform	Shirts, various sizes	20,900	32	668,382
Ammunition	Blank cartridge, 1.4S M200	424,000	.36	152,640
Total Cost of Equipment				\$16,237,740

Note: The above list reflects only the 10 highest-value equipment provided to the ANP this quarter (August 1–October 31, 2020). The “unit costs” listed reflect the average costs paid for items procured under multiple Foreign Military Sales cases. Unit costs are rounded to the nearest dollar except for items valued under \$1.

Source: CSTC-A, response to SIGAR data call, 12/16/2020.

ANP Equipment and Transportation

As of December 31, 2020, the United States had obligated and disbursed approximately \$4.8 billion of ASFF from FY 2005 through FY 2018 appropriations for ANP equipment and transportation costs.²⁰²

Although CSTC-A has moved away from new procurements of major equipment and systems, items already procured are still being delivered to the ANP.²⁰³ Table 2.10 lists the highest-cost items of equipment provided to the ANP this quarter (August 1, 2020, through October 31, 2020). Of these items, the costliest was the delivery of 14,400 units of 60 mm high-explosive mortar rounds (\$4.5 million total).²⁰⁴

ANP Infrastructure

The United States had obligated and disbursed approximately \$3.2 billion of ASFF appropriations from FY 2005 through FY 2018 for ANP and some GCPSU infrastructure projects as of December 31, 2020.²⁰⁵

As of December 13, 2020, CSTC-A was managing three ongoing, DOD-funded ANP infrastructure projects. These projects are the joint NATF- and ASFF-funded closed-circuit television surveillance system in Kabul (\$19 million of this funded by ASFF), the ASFF-funded GCPSU project at Kabul Garrison Command (\$2.6 million), and the recent ASFF-funded Kabul Security Forces Checkpoints (\$300,000) project that was awarded on October 1, 2020.²⁰⁶ CSTC-A also reported that no projects were completed, cancelled, or terminated this quarter.²⁰⁷



Afghan Interior Minister Mohammad Massoud Andarabi spoke at an event connecting the police with religious leaders in January. (MOI photo)

CSTC-A continued to report this quarter that the estimated annual facilities-sustainment costs funded by the United States for all ANP facility and electrical-generator requirements will be \$68.8 million. Of this, \$42.4 million will be provided directly to the Afghan government and \$26.4 million will be spent by CSTC-A for the Afghan government.²⁰⁸

ANP Training and Operations

As of December 31, 2020, the United States had obligated \$4 billion and disbursed \$3.9 billion of ASFF appropriations from FY 2005 through FY 2018 for ANP and some GCPSU training and operations.²⁰⁹

This quarter, CTSC-A provided SIGAR an update on current U.S.-funded ANP training contracts. According to CSTC-A, ASFF funds currently pay for two training contracts for the ANP.

One is a \$14 million contract to train the ANP to maintain its ground vehicles, which will continue until August 31, 2021, with the option to continue services beyond that date if CSTC-A desires.²¹⁰ The other is a contract to support training MOI women in occupational skills as part of the Gender Occupational Opportunity Development Program; the roughly \$1 million contract runs until May 1, 2021.²¹¹

According to DOD, the MOI continued to focus on the ANP's future role in a stabilized security environment. This includes an evidence-based assessment intended to understand how the ANP should be structured and equipped in a stable environment. This is part of a continuing plan to transition the ANP away from its current organization as a paramilitary security force and toward a more traditional police force focusing on "community

policing” and the rule of law. DOD noted, however, that “The security environment during the reporting period did not allow the MOI to transition from its focus as a paramilitary security focus to a force focused on ‘community policing.’”²¹²

Efforts in that direction include reducing the numbers of the most dangerous checkpoints and reevaluating the training pipeline and training curriculum for police personnel. Specifically, MOI reviewed the curriculum of initial entry police training to better align with a civil law-enforcement mission. Nonetheless, MOI continues to lack institutional training that reinforces civil law enforcement. Furthermore, beyond early training, the ANP also lacks an institutionalized leadership-development program at the district and local levels.²¹³

REMOVING UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE

Afghanistan is riddled with land mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) such as live shells and bombs, according to the United Nations (UN).²¹⁴ Although contamination includes legacy mines laid before 2001, most casualties today are caused by mines and other ERW that have accumulated since 2002.²¹⁵ In recent years, casualties have been reported from ordnance exploding in areas formerly used as firing ranges by Coalition forces. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) also has documented a direct correlation between civilian casualties and ERW in areas following heavy fighting.²¹⁶ According to UN reporting from March 2020, approximately 2.5 million Afghans live within one kilometer of areas contaminated with explosive hazards that are in need of immediate clearance.²¹⁷ From April 2019 through March 2020, the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) reported an average of 130 civilian casualties per month from ERW.²¹⁸

State’s 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 allocated \$420 million in weapons-destruction and humanitarian mine-action assistance to Afghanistan (an additional \$11.6 million was obligated between 1997 and 2001 before the start of the U.S. reconstruction effort). As of September 30, 2020, PM/WRA had released \$20 million in FY 2019 funds.²¹⁹

State directly funds seven Afghan nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), four international NGOs, and one Afghan government organization to help clear areas in Afghanistan contaminated by ERW and conventional weapons (e.g., unexploded mortar rounds), which insurgents can use to construct roadside bombs and other improvised explosive devices (IEDs).²²⁰

From 1997 through September 30, 2020, State-funded implementing partners have cleared approximately 299.1 square kilometers of land (115 square miles) and removed or destroyed over eight million landmines and

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other ERW such as unexploded ordnance (UXO), abandoned ordnance (AO), stockpiled munitions, and homemade explosives. Table 2.11 shows conventional-weapons destruction figures, FY 2010–2020.²²¹

The estimated total area of contaminated land continues to fluctuate: clearance activities reduce the extent of hazardous areas, but ongoing surveys find new contaminated land. On July 1, 2020, there were 701 square kilometers (271 square miles) of contaminated minefields and battlefields. As of September 30, 2020, the total known contaminated area was 843.5 square kilometers (326 square miles) in 4,132 hazard areas. PM/WRA defines a minefield as the area contaminated by landmines; a contaminated area can include both landmines and other ERW.²²²

In 2012, the Afghan government was granted an extension until 2023 to fulfill its obligations under the Ottawa Treaty to achieve mine-free status. Given the magnitude of the problem and inadequate financial support, the country is not expected to achieve this objective. According to State, the drawdown of Coalition forces in 2014 coincided with a reduction in international donor funds to MAPA.²²³ In June 2018, MAPA transitioned to Afghan national ownership within the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination.²²⁴

From a peak of \$113 million in 2010, MAPA's budget for the year ending March 2020 was \$45.3 million. The Afghan government is expected to request another 10-year extension to meet its treaty obligations. However, according to the State Department, the extension request cannot be initiated or acknowledged sooner than 18 months before April 2023—the end date of the current extension.²²⁵

TABLE 2.11

DEMINEING PROGRAM PERFORMANCE METRICS, FISCAL YEARS 2010–2020					
Fiscal Year	Minefields Cleared (m ²)	AT/AP Destroyed	UXO Destroyed	SAA Destroyed	Estimated Contaminated Area Remaining (m ²) ^a
2010	39,337,557	13,879	663,162	1,602,267	650,662,000
2011	31,644,360	10,504	345,029	2,393,725	602,000,000
2012	46,783,527	11,830	344,363	1,058,760	550,000,000
2013	25,059,918	6,431	203,024	275,697	521,000,000
2014	22,071,212	12,397	287,331	346,484	511,600,000
2015	12,101,386	2,134	33,078	88,798	570,800,000
2016	27,856,346	6,493	6,289	91,563	607,600,000
2017	31,897,313	6,646	37,632	88,261	547,000,000
2018	25,233,844	5,299	30,924	158,850	558,700,000
2019	13,104,094	3,102	26,791	162,727	657,693,033
2020	23,966,967	2,879	7,197	85,250	843,517,435
Total	299,056,524	81,594	1,984,820	6,352,382	

Note: AT/AP = antitank/antipersonnel ordnance. UXO = unexploded ordnance. SAA = small-arms ammunition.

There are about 4,047 square meters (m²) to an acre.

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

Source: PM/WRA, response to SIGAR data call, 1/11/2021.

CONFLICT MITIGATION ASSISTANCE FOR CIVILIANS

USAID's Conflict Mitigation Assistance for Civilians (COMAC) is a \$40 million, five-year, nationwide program that began in March 2018. It supports Afghan civilians and their families who have suffered losses from military operations against the Taliban or from insurgent attacks. COMAC provides assistance to Afghan civilians and their dependent family members who have experienced loss due to:²²⁶

- military operations involving the U.S., Coalition, or ANDSF against insurgents, criminals, terrorists, or illegal armed groups
- landmines, improvised explosive devices (IED), unexploded ordnance, suicide attacks, public mass shootings, or other insurgent or terrorist actions
- cross-border shelling or cross-border fighting

COMAC provides in-kind goods sufficient to support families affected by conflict for 60 days. Additional assistance includes referrals for health care and livelihood service providers, and economic reintegration for families impacted by loss or injury.²²⁷ From October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2020, COMAC provided 9,540 immediate assistance packages and 2,452 tailored assistance packages for a total program expense of \$1.9 million. The provinces receiving the most assistance included Nangarhar (\$217,983), Faryab (\$142,584), and Kandahar (\$135,883), while the provinces receiving the least assistance included Bamyan (\$956), Nuristan (\$320), and Nimroz (\$303).²²⁸

As of October 30, 2020, USAID has obligated \$26.4 million for this program.²²⁹