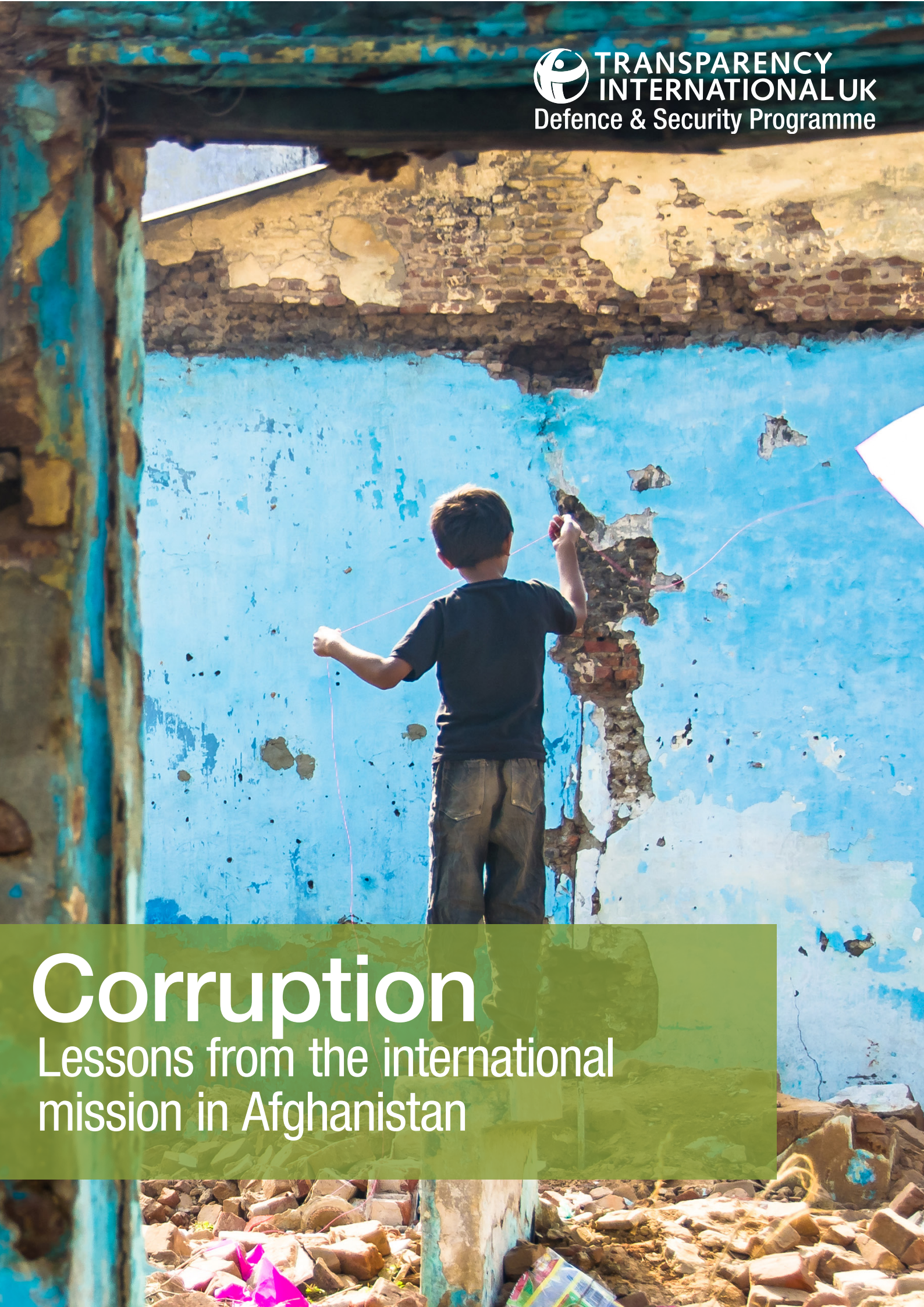

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL UK
Defence & Security Programme

Corruption

Lessons from the international mission in Afghanistan

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We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all of our 75 interviewees, who have taken significant time and effort to give us their candid views on both what went wrong and how the international community can do better in the future. Some of the interviewees, many still in official positions, have preferred to remain anonymous and are not named here.

Alphabetically: Matthieu Aikins, Nematullah Bizhan, Donald Bowser, Lord Browne of Ladyton, William Byrd, Matt Cann, Marc Caron, Rudra Chaudhuri, Sarah Chayes, Heather Coyne, Jacqueline Davies, David Evans, Karl Eikenberry, Steve Foster, Seema Ghani, Antonio Giustozzi, Ricardo Grassi, Kenneth Guest, Kamal Hossain, Karen Hussmann, Maurits Jochems, Suleman Kakar, Kari Kay Kietzer, Ian Kippen, Tim Kirk, Drago Kos, Frank Ledwidge, Clare Lockhart, Lord Malloch-Brown, Mike Martin, Phil Mason, H.R. McMaster, Lucy Morgan Edwards, Mette Lindorf Nielsen, M.Y. Osmani, Kevin Petit, David Petraeus, Thomas Ruttig, Nazir Saheed, Paul Schulte, Mark Sedra, Sanjar Sohail, Yama Torabi, Jim Wasserstrom, Jason Waters, Jerome Watson, Andrew Wilder and Slawomir Woyciechowski.

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Abbreviations

ACTF	Anti-Corruption Task-Force
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
CPN	Criminal Patronage Network
DfID	UK Department for International Development
EU	European Union
EUPOL	European Police Mission in Afghanistan
HOOAC	High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption
IC	International community
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
LOTFA	Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan
MCFT	Major Crimes Task-Force
MEC	Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoI	Ministry of Interior
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RFP	Request for proposal
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
TACC	Transparency, Accountability, Counter-Corruption
TI-DSP	Transparency International UK Defence and Security Programme
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

Briefing for policy makers

Lessons from Afghanistan.

This framework proposes what policy makers and planners can do to address the threat that corruption poses to future missions.

Briefing for policy makers

Achieving stability and security is a top priority for any intervention by the international community in an unstable or war-torn country. Corruption is potentially fatal to long-term stability, security and development, and therefore countering it also needs to be considered a priority objective.

The principal message from this study is that policy makers and military and security professionals should address the corruption threat from the very start of a mission and integrate anti-corruption into the mission mandate. This is a requirement that is fully supported by representatives of the EU External Action Service in their comments on our findings.

Our research was designed to establish why it took so long for corruption to be identified as a serious threat to the success of the mission in Afghanistan. The results have led us to propose a practical five-point framework.

Internationally, the serious impact that corruption can have on security is being increasingly recognised. For example, in February 2014, the then-UK Secretary of State for Defence Philip Hammond told the Munich Security Conference: "Challenging institutional corruption… is not just a moral imperative… it is a practical imperative."[1] US Vice President Joe Biden signalled a change in the US approach in April 2014 when he told Ukrainian leaders that they had to "fight the cancer of corruption" that had weakened their defences.[2] Following the Westgate attacks in Kenya in September 2013, John Githongo, former Kenyan Permanent Secretary for Governance, said: "Corruption – systemic graft – is at the heart of the state's inability to respond to insecurity in general."[3]

1. SUMMARY OF THE ANALYSIS

The UK-based Transparency International Defence and Security Programme (TI-DSP) has been engaged in Afghanistan since 2009. The TI-DSP team has worked with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and with Afghan civil society by training military and police officers to recognise the symptoms of corruption and how to tackle them, reviewing the effects of corruption in-country, and co-ordinating the activities of different groups. Our strong engagement in Afghanistan means that we are also part of the analysis when it comes to lessons to be drawn from the international mission. TI-DSP is actively involved in corruption prevention work in a range of other countries where instability and the threat of conflict are prevalent.

Our objective was to establish why it took so long for corruption to be understood as a threat to mission success in Afghanistan and, from that, to develop guidance that can help the international policy making, military, and security communities to prepare better for corruption threats in planning for future missions and assistance. The output is framed principally in the form of a proposed framework for action, together with some specific proposals.

To meet the objectives of the research, we undertook detailed interviews with 65 experienced members of the international community (IC) who were involved in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014. We also interviewed 10 Afghan nationals who were very familiar with activities of the IC and their impact, and we drew on our own experience of the country.

The interview questions covered how the IC approached corruption threats and risks in Afghanistan, and why it took a long time for a proactive approach to develop. These questions led us to look back at the policy history, where we examined the priorities of the main stakeholders in the IC. Given that the bulk of international assistance was directed towards the building of the Afghan army and the Afghan police, we were particularly interested in the extent to which integrity-building programmes and anti-corruption measures were part of these efforts and what they achieved. The interviews generated over 600 pages of transcripts.

Based on the interviews, we identified nine reasons why the IC was slow to develop a response to the danger from corruption threats. These were:

1. **A lack of appreciation of the nature of corruption threats, plus a decision to use corrupt actors without an appreciation of the implications at the beginning of the mission**
2. **A sense of complacency within the IC towards the extent and impact of those threats**
3. **The political dilemmas faced throughout the campaign**
4. **The primacy of security considerations**
5. **The perverse spending incentives that prioritise "burn rate" over outcomes**
6. **The limited development and mobilisation of anti-corruption tools**
7. **A disconnect between research and policy on corruption risks**
8. **Countermoves by the host government**
9. **The weakness of local civil society**

The importance of international institutions, such as the UN, the EU and NATO, in setting the context for the IC's approach to corruption was evident to all of our interviewees. In particular, they highlighted that the essential signal of a clear intent on their part to limit corruption was lacking. This was seen to send the wrong message, leading to low expectations of the IC, and also limiting the perceived ability of those international institutions subsequently to show leadership in this area.

Nevertheless, they were also identified as being the bodies that should be taking the lead in ensuring a unified approach on corruption. Unhealthy competition and imbalances between the civilian and military communities, as well as between various international institutions, were cited as having severely damaged the effectiveness of anti-corruption work. In its comments on this report, the EU External Action Service highlighted concerns that key non-military institution-building issues had been dominated by military actors, undermining their own efforts to incorporate anti-corruption, financial management, sustainability and Afghan ownership.

The international military and security community needs better training and support on how to recognise corruption threats to the mission. This should be built in to doctrine, exercise planning, and pre-deployment training, in both nations and in international missions. Some nations are starting to take such measures, as is NATO, but they are not yet institutionalised or achieving a critical mass. The need for specialist task-forces capable of addressing harder questions such as understanding the spread of criminal networks and illicit funds flows was also recognised by many interviewees.

The implications for the huge investment in re-establishing and training the national military force of the host nation were very clear, but guidance and training on how to build transparency, accountability and counter-corruption measures are currently underdeveloped. The need for a full-time transparency and counter-corruption group to be set up within host nation forces was also identified, as well as in "back office" functions such as procurement, personnel practices and disciplinary or inspector general mechanisms.

In relation to the police, there was a common view that re-establishing a national police force, and especially one with a focus on transparency, accountability and counter-corruption, was something that the IC had not yet mastered and merits further research and development.

2. A POLICY AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The results of the research led us to propose a five-point framework by which policy makers – both civilian and military – might be guided in setting the parameters for future interventions.

This policy framework is of direct relevance to:

- International institutions engaged in missions
- Security policy makers
- Military and defence ministries in national governments
- National and international development organisations
- Others involved in stabilisation operations

Four elements of this framework (Sections 2-5) come to the fore only once a mission has arisen. These require the case-by-case assessment of corruption threats and the adoption of measures in specific mission mandates. However, Section 1 is actionable even in the absence of an international mission. It speaks to the immediate need for the IC to equip its staff better to recognise and confront corruption threats, so that policy makers and others are better prepared once a mission becomes imminent.

1. Equip policy makers and implementers

a. Better equip international policy makers
There is an immediate need for training, doctrine and guidance on how to recognise the range and potential importance of corruption threats.

This should address dilemmas such as how to deal with corrupt actors when there is no choice, how to spend money safely and cleanly, and how to improve counter-corruption controls in fragile environments.

Transparency, Accountability and Counter-Corruption (TACC) should be recognised as a formal discipline and corruption-limiting tools such as dual-key controls on spending, the use of joint national-international monitoring committees or the establishment of anti-corruption agencies should be developed.

b. Better equip international military and police and rule of law personnel
Those delivering a mission need training on how to recognise and deal with the impact of corruption in the field. There is a real appetite for such training, with some interviewees suggesting that the impact of corruption should form part of formal military and police planning processes, including stress tests, ahead of a proposed operation.

Material to support such competence development is already beginning to emerge in NATO, the US and some other countries and organisations. TI-DSP has made a first attempt to provide guidance with its recent handbook, "Corruption Threats & International Missions: Practical guidance for leaders." For more information, see www.ti-defence.org.

c. Build host nation capability
Integrity-building and corruption prevention need to be built into the fabric of training for the national military, security, and rule of law actors.

There are more, and different, challenges in providing appropriate training for the police and the rule of law actors in post-conflict environments. This subject merits urgent further study.

d. Articulate the contents of the counter-corruption toolbox
Along with increasing expertise, policy makers need explicit guidance on what is in the counter-corruption toolbox, the relative merits and demerits of each component, and how each one can be scaled up when required.

For those involved in stabilisation operations, we recommend that they develop a formal toolkit of measures for recognising, analysing, mitigating and monitoring corruption issues on operations. The toolkit should include measures that can be applied at large scale in the re-establishment of national military, police and rule of law capabilities.

2. Be explicit about the threats from corruption from the outset

a. Include a requirement to tackle corruption in the mandate
An understanding of the corruption threats, and an appreciation that TACC measures are necessary, should be core to the design of missions and included in the mandate.

Settlements designed at an early stage with state-building and "clean" institutions as primary goals are more durable than those where corruption is put to one side. Counter-corruption considerations need to be factored into the negotiating process and the design of international missions on the basis of a clear understanding of the extent of corruption and how, as well as through whom, it operates.

The same approach – of explicitly including attention to corruption threats – might similarly be taken with smaller technical assistance missions.

The Arusha Agreement, signed in 2000 to end the civil war in Burundi, provides a practical illustration of the importance of counter-corruption considerations in securing a durable settlement. The Agreement outlined a wide range of explicit and detailed anti-corruption principles targeted at many sectors of society including public administration, health, justice and the economy. International donor assistance helped fund anti-corruption programmes and build capacity to fight corruption. The Agreement's relative success in delivering 'clean' institutions and services is largely attributable to the fact that reform measures were targeted from the Office of the President of Burundi down to the grassroots of society.

b. Integrate corruption threats into the mission risk assessment
The range of possible corruption threats needs to be part of the risk analysis for the whole mission. This might include:

- An appreciation of the political dynamics and the characteristics of individuals in the host nation
- Assessing the likely impact of corruption on citizens and international staff
- Bringing together military, police and civilian perspectives on corruption threats
- Developing model responses to corruption challenges that the first wave of troops and international staff could face

c. Assess the scale of the corruption There will be corruption issues in every country; when a country is in conflict or experiencing major insecurity, these problems are likely to be more serious. In Afghanistan, corruption ceased to be an aberration of the system and became the system. This made it much more difficult to control the problem. An early focus is needed on how to prevent this from happening.

d. Develop a strong political strategy on corruption
A clear and unequivocal political commitment to addressing corruption is essential to raise awareness of the issue and equip those involved at all levels to deal with it.

3. Develop a common, sophisticated and civil-owned approach

All those involved in a mission need to follow a common policy that runs across all chains of command – political, military and developmental. Bottom lines should be set that should not be crossed during the intervention. The consistent application of a common approach to TACC across the different national institutions and ministries, for example, is critical to success.

The approach needs to be sophisticated. Elements of the host nation are likely to be invested in corruption, patronage and criminal activity, and may therefore seek actively to undermine the international effort.

4. Spend less, disclose more

a. Spend less
Sums of money which greatly exceed a country's ability to absorb them will, inexorably, lead to the difference fuelling corruption. Spending less, but more effectively, is part of the answer. The starting point for addressing these problems is the requirement to address corruption threats and risks in the intervention mandate (See 1. above). Once included in the mandate, policy makers can test all support and spending proposals against the requirement to limit risk.

b. Accountability through outcome, not "burn-rate"
A higher standard of accountability by IC funding agencies is overdue. All the agencies involved, whether international or national, need to make use of existing international forums to develop a set of requirements for verification of aid and support outcomes that are more rigorous than most that exist today. This standard should also apply to military assistance projects. We encourage the international development arms of national governments to develop such a standard.

c. **Spend transparently**
Making all contracts public as a matter of mission policy can be a powerful mitigator of conditions that might otherwise allow corruption to proliferate.

d. **Ensure transparency at donor level** Greater transparency over the allocation and disbursement of funds and equipment should be required. Currently, the flow of funds is not clearly mapped, with donor countries using a multitude of bilateral and multilateral programmes and working through different government departments to channel funds to recipients. Accounting for how much is used is a significant challenge.

e. **Encourage transparency at the national level of all defence and security spending**
Greater transparency in the defence and security sectors is an important element of reducing corruption risks in fragile environments. This might include publicly available and detailed defence and police budgets; an explicit, transparent, merit-based system of recruitment and promotion; and the full availability of personnel numbers and salary information.

5. Strengthen oversight

a. **Maintain the highest standards within the mission**
Setting a good example is essential to the credibility and sustainability of the mission. It is almost impossible to restore the reputation of the IC once local expectations have been disappointed. This may require dedicated TACC staff and leadership at all levels of the mission.

b. **Establish strong independent oversight**
The use of external and independent bodies can greatly increase the effectiveness of corruption monitoring. Experience from Afghanistan and elsewhere points to the diversity of forms of external oversight available and this has already found partial expression in a number of good examples cited in the “Good Practice” section below. There is also a clear and well-established need to strengthen the role of civil society and the national media.

c. **Create information and feedback channels**
Donors need to develop processes to measure the extent to which assistance is being misused or diverted. Their own intelligence and information-gathering channels need to be appropriately calibrated to alert policy makers should they detect cause for concern.

3. GOOD PRACTICE

There were a number of good anti-corruption initiatives developed in Afghanistan that may have application elsewhere. We recommend incorporating some of these good practices into anti-corruption doctrine and training. Three initiatives stood out from our analysis of the Afghanistan mission.

1. **A joint national-international, independent committee of experts to monitor and evaluate national progress on anti-corruption initiatives**
   The Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (the MEC) was created in 2010 after the need for independent monitoring and evaluation of anti-corruption efforts in Afghanistan was identified at the London and Kabul international conferences. Originally set up as a corrective to the perceived failures of the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption (HOOAC), it quickly gained authority as an independent and credible voice. MEC independently monitors and evaluates national and international efforts to fight corruption in Afghanistan. It reports to the president, parliament, public, and IC. The Committee consists of six senior anti-corruption experts – three internationals and three Afghans – selected through a nomination process implemented by the international community and the Afghan government. The Chairmanship of the Committee alternates between an Afghan and an international appointee on a six-month basis. The Committee is supported by a strong secretariat.

   MEC's terms of reference include the following mandates:

   - to develop anti-corruption recommendations and benchmarks;
   - to monitor and evaluate the government and international community efforts to fight corruption;
   - to report to the president, parliament, public and IC.

   Every six months, MEC submits a report of its assessments and findings of the agreed-upon benchmarks to the president, parliament, and people of Afghanistan through the media. More information on the MEC can be found at http://www.mec.af

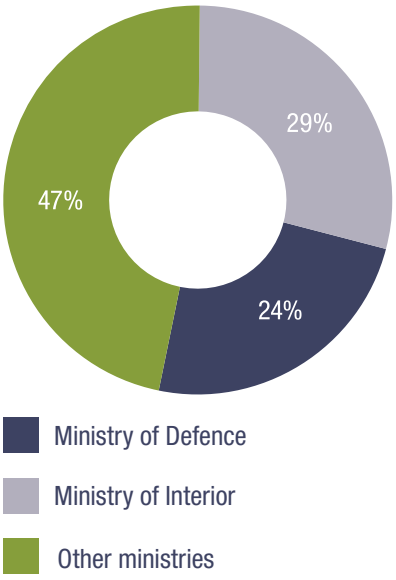
2. **Specialist counter-corruption task-force to support the mission**
   An agency was set up by ISAF in 2010 to provide support for corruption prevention efforts, as the international military realised that corruption problems exacerbated security problems and threatened the success of the mission. Entitled Shafafiyat, which means "transparency" in Dari, this evolved from the earlier Anti-Corruption Task-Force, established in 2009. Although it suffered from being a military creation rather than an agency across the whole IC, it was nonetheless a dramatic improvement on the previous lack of any critical mass on the topic. Such an agency (or similar capacity) should be an integral part of future international missions. More information on Shafafiyat can be found at http://www.isaf.nato.int/subordinate-commands/combined-joint-interagency-task-force-afghanistan/index.php

3. **Specialist capacity to track corruption and fraud in international contracting for the mission**
   After a public outcry against corruption in international contracts for logistics supply to Afghanistan, the US set up an agency specifically tracking corruption and fraud in their contracting for Afghanistan. Called "Task-Force 2010", it had considerable success in both tracking problem contracts and in encouraging better behaviour by contractors. A similar effort with a mandate broader than US contracting could have had a positive effect on contracting more generally.

1. Introduction

Figure 1: Spending breakdown by government department in the 2011 Afghan National Budget

Afghan Budget Breakdown (SY1390)



It is hard to read about Afghanistan without finding multiple references to corruption. Afghanistan remains one of the worst performing countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, ranking in the bottom four in 2014, along with Sudan, North Korea and Somalia.[4]

Over the period of this study corruption has affected both Afghans and the international community. Huge national corruption scandals such as Kabul Bank,[5] where $935 million was misappropriated and the IMF suspended its support programme,[6] compete for space with articles about provincial and district police chiefs buying their positions for $100,000. Reports of the US paying warlords for the protection of international convoys – as in the report "Warlords Inc."[7] – are set alongside international investigations of corruption by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, SIGAR.[8] Corruption has consistently featured as being one of the top three concerns of Afghan citizens in national surveys.[9] The surveys indicate that the level of concern is still rising in 2014.[10]

WAS THIS INEVITABLE?

The sums of money flowing into Afghanistan have been extremely large. Total US spending on the war in Afghanistan since 2001 exceeds $760 billion, which includes approximately $104 billion in reconstruction funding up to mid-2014. This total is greater, in inflation-adjusted terms, than the Marshall Plan that was designed to rebuild Western Europe after World War II.[11]

In addition to the huge amounts of money involved, the other distinguishing feature of the international effort in Afghanistan is the high proportion of the international effort devoted to reconstructing the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP). There is no comparable blueprint in the history of international interventions, except perhaps US involvement in South Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s.

Similarly, Afghan national spending is heavily skewed towards the police and the military, with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Ministry of the Interior (MoI) absorbing more than the next 13 Ministries combined (see Figure 1).[12]

This places a huge responsibility on the international community to rebuild the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) in a way that is sustainable, with new forces that have had sufficient integrity and capacity training to stand up to the challenges they are bound to face. Without such core capabilities, the ANA and ANP are unlikely to command the respect of a population that has become increasingly critical of corruption. The current situation in Iraq demonstrates the consequences of pouring money into an armed force without sufficient leadership, integrity and anti-corruption training.

The question on many people's minds is whether, if faced with an insurgency comparable to ISIL in Iraq, the Afghan army would do any better.

Corruption is a complex phenomenon, ranging from state capture through to bribes required for the provision of daily services. It is inherently political and entwined with power and influence. In interventions there is overwhelming pressure to achieve specific goals within tight deadlines while operating in challenging environments that may require international personnel to work with potentially corrupt actors. Without careful planning such activity can directly contribute to an increase in corruption and insecurity. These dilemmas are central to the comments of many interviewees:

> *"Our conception of what the state does and how it derives legitimacy… was fundamentally at odds with the ruling political elites and their governing model which was more of a patronage system where you use international resources to support patronage networks of key individuals to keep you in power and keep the support base intact. These were the two very fundamentally contradictory models which were working in Afghanistan... Our resources were more often than not used to support local power brokers, which was then interpreted by the Afghan public as corruption".*
>
> International policy researcher, 07.12.2012

There will never be a "one-size-fits-all" solution to the problem of corruption in international interventions. But an approach in which corruption is seen as an inevitable part of the context in which the mission must operate is insufficient and counterproductive. This belief is shared by almost all the Afghans TI-DSP has met in the course of its work, whether civilian or military, government or civil society.

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

Transparency International (TI) is a civil society organisation leading the global fight against corruption. Through more than 100 national chapters worldwide and an international secretariat in Berlin, TI works with partners in government, business and civil society to put effective measures in place to tackle corruption.

Since 2004, Transparency International UK's Defence and Security Programme (TI-DSP) has actively engaged defence and security ministries, armed forces, police, defence contractors, peacekeepers and civil society to counter corruption in the defence and security sectors. Our emphasis has been on practical measures that reduce corruption risk, each of them trialled in a real-world national environment. Our work is designed to aid policy makers and those engaged with managing defence and security institutions to increase transparency and accountability, recognise the threats posed by corruption, and encourage the development of "clean" establishments.

TI-DSP has been actively engaged with Afghanistan since 2008. We have developed and implemented training courses for senior officers in the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police on corruption prevention. We have been in regular discussion with both ANSF and ISAF personnel on corruption prevention measures, and organised events to this effect. We have twice reviewed how ISAF has developed its corruption prevention activities, and have engaged with Afghan policy makers and NGOs on how to address the corruption threats. TI-DSP has produced a detailed report on the vulnerabilities of the ANA to corruption.[13] TI-DSP is also active on corruption prevention activities with national security forces in a range of other countries where instability and the threat of conflict are prevalent.

THIS REPORT

We have examined why there was limited effort by the international community to address the corruption threats to the stabilisation mission in Afghanistan. We carried out detailed interviews with 75 people who have been involved with Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. To the maximum extent possible, these are individuals we know to have good knowledge of the corruption issues in Afghanistan, and to have made serious contributions in their respective fields.

The report is divided into a briefing for policy makers, followed by the research analysis. The analysis is presented in seven chapters. After the introduction, we present the methodology for this study with information on the interviewees, interview questions and our different levels of analysis. Chapter 3 then covers corruption in its Afghan context, including an analysis of the scale of the issue, the role of patronage, and the impact of the international mission. Chapter 4 covers the broad approach of the IC to corruption threats in Afghanistan and the various reasons why it was slow to respond to them. Chapter 5 reviews the role played within the international community by the major international stakeholders. Chapter 6 examines the institutions of the army, the police and the rule of law. Finally, Chapter 7 contains our conclusions. This includes reference to a proposed framework to assist policy makers in addressing corruption threats in future interventions and technical assistance missions. The framework is presented at the beginning of the report in the “Briefing for policy makers”.

This report is part of the same series of work as our recent publication for practitioners: “Corruption Threats & International Missions: Practical guidance for leaders” (2014). It also draws on earlier TI-DSP reports on “Corruption as a Threat to Stability and Peace” (2014) and “Corruption & Peacekeeping: Strengthening peacekeeping and the UN” (2013). Information on Transparency International’s work in the defence and security sector to date, including overviews of current and past projects, and publications, is available at the TI-UK Defence and Security Programme website: www.ti-defence.org.

2. Research methodology

Seventy-five semi-structured interviews were conducted between mid-2012 and mid-2014. They were based on a question set of some 30 questions, to which interviewees were encouraged to give extended responses.

1. The question set covered four broad topics (see Annexe 2):
2. Afghanistan, the political context, and corruption
3. Corruption threats and risks in Afghanistan, and reasons for the slow uptake of the subject by the international community
4. The role played by international institutions, states, and individuals
5. The building of the military, the police, and the rule of law

The interviewees were chosen because they had first-hand experience of Afghanistan for various durations between 2001 and 2014. They include people from across the policy and diplomatic communities, the military and police. They were approached for interview because we believe that they are some of the most knowledgeable people in the international community on Afghanistan and on the way that corruption issues played out in the country and in the international community.

The types of interviewees were divided as follows:

33% Policy makers: These included politicians, senior diplomats, journalists, and military advisers. The category also includes officials from UNAMA, UNDP, NATO, the EU, World Bank, and national agencies such as USAID or DfID. This category also includes several former senior military officers who moved into civilian policy making roles.

25% Military: These included serving military officers and military advisors working for NATO and various national militaries. They mostly comprised colonels and general officers.

17% Policy implementers: These included senior development officers, former military officers and consultants in training roles, and others working for aid agencies, UNAMA, UNDP and Shafafiyat.

14.5% Academics/Think-tanks/NGOs/ Media: These included Afghanistan subject-matter experts, publishers, researchers, journalists and university lecturers.

10.5% Police: These included police advisers, inspectors, and trainers, working for EUPOL, NATO, and national forces.

FIGURE 2: INTERVIEWEES FOR THIS STUDY BY CATEGORY AND NATIONALITY

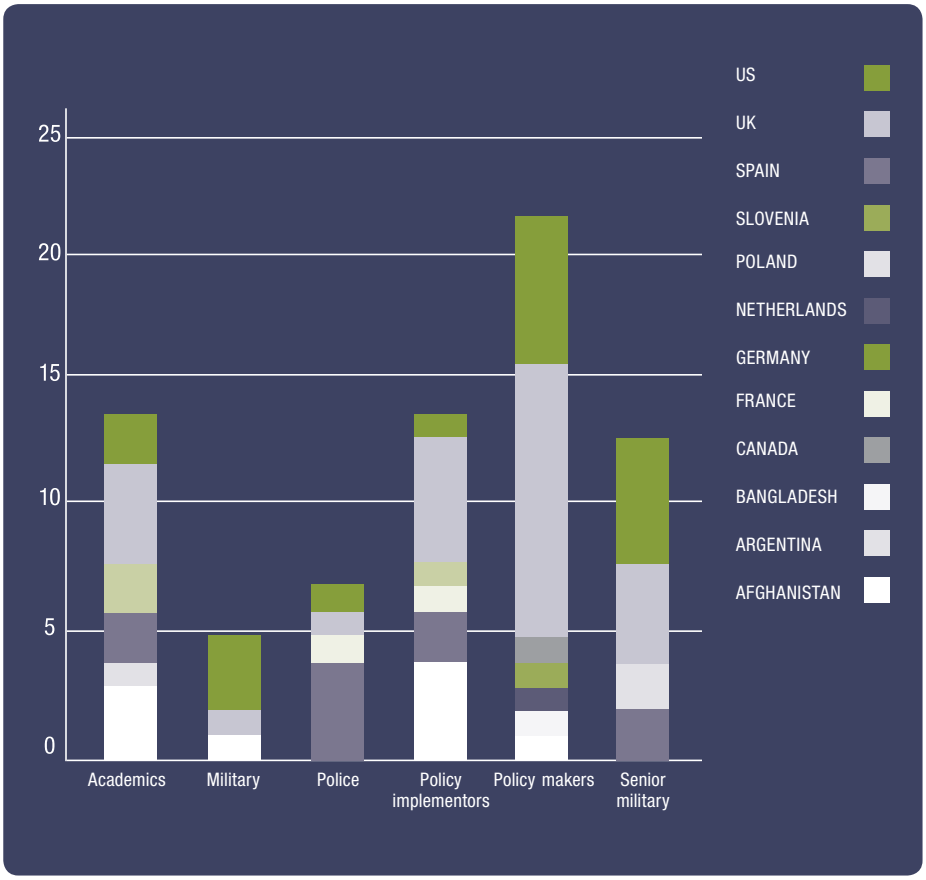
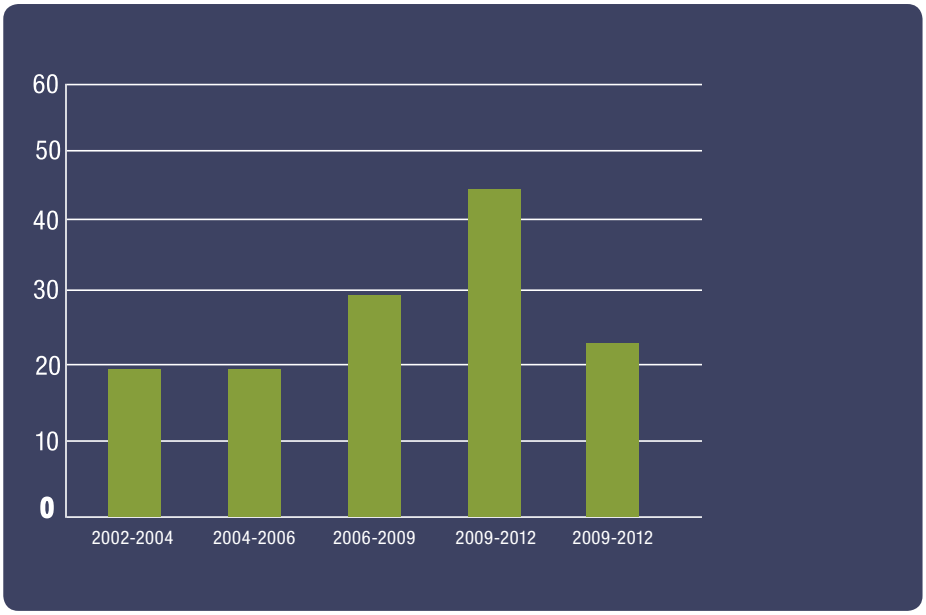


FIGURE 3: INTERVIEWEES FOR THIS STUDY BY TIME PERIOD OF INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN



In general, interviewees quoted in the report are identified by the type of role that they played, as described in the six categories above, rather than by name, together with the date of the interview. In a few cases, where the identity of the interviewee is particularly material to the remark being made, we have identified the author of the quote by name, where permission has been given. All quotes, whether attributed or unattributed, are made with the permission of the interviewee. The graph below shows a breakdown of the timeline, and the number of interviewees actively engaged with Afghanistan during those periods. The five broad time periods correspond to the main political periods discussed in Annexe 1.

In order to limit subjectivity in the way in which the material has been summarised, the transcripts were analysed both by area experts and by using textual analysis software to statistically identify trends, themes and associations. These outputs provided an opportunity to check our assumptions about the different interpretations of corruption risk among our interviewees, and generated eleven core topic areas that can be seen in Annexe 2.

A proportion of the transcripts was reviewed independently by three experts. Two were Sir Stewart Eldon, retired senior UK diplomat and formerly UK Permanent Representative at NATO 2006-2010, and Sir Ian Andrews, former Second Permanent Secretary at the UK Ministry of Defence 2002-2008 and former Chairman of the UK Senior Organised Crime Agency 2009-2013; both are senior advisers to the TI-DSP programme. The third was Drago Kos, a former Deputy Director of the Slovenian Criminal Investigation Directorate and an expatriate member of the Afghanistan Independent Joint Anti-corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (the MEC), who currently chairs the OECD Working Group on Bribery.

3. Corruption in the Afghan context

The concept of corruption is broadly similar around the world and is generally understood. However, the term itself is contextual: different nations, cultures and groups place different meanings on "corruption." Transparency International's widely accepted definition is "the abuse of entrusted authority (public or private) for illegitimate (private or group) gain".[14]

We explored how our interviewees articulated the issues of corruption in Afghanistan starting with the intervention in 2001. We also wanted to understand how corruption was interpreted in the Afghan context, including whether there was a difference in perceptions of corruption between members of the international community and the local population, and how concepts such as patronage and factionalism fit into the corruption landscape in Afghanistan.

We also asked some specific questions as to whether efforts to tackle corruption had varied between provinces and what the rationale for a differentiated approach would be, and discussed the scale of corruption in Afghanistan.

THE SCALE OF CORRUPTION

The levels of corruption in the country are extreme. According to a recent Asia Foundation study, in 2014, 62.4% of Afghans reported that corruption was a major problem in their daily life (see Figure 4), a significant increase from 2013 (55.7%).[15]

Overall, perceptions of corruption as a major problem in daily life, people's neighbourhoods (53.3%), local authorities (59.9%), provincial governments (67.8%), and in Afghanistan as a whole (75.7%) have all risen since 2013, as well as since the survey began tracking perceptions of corruption in 2006. This is with the exception of the country as a whole, which polls at around the same, albeit high, level.

FIGURE 4: THE ASIA FOUNDATION: AFGHANISTAN IN 2014

"Please tell me whether you think corruption is a major problem, a minor problem, or no problem at all in the following areas: a) in your daily life." Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2014* (2014) www.asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/Afghanistanin2014final.pdf

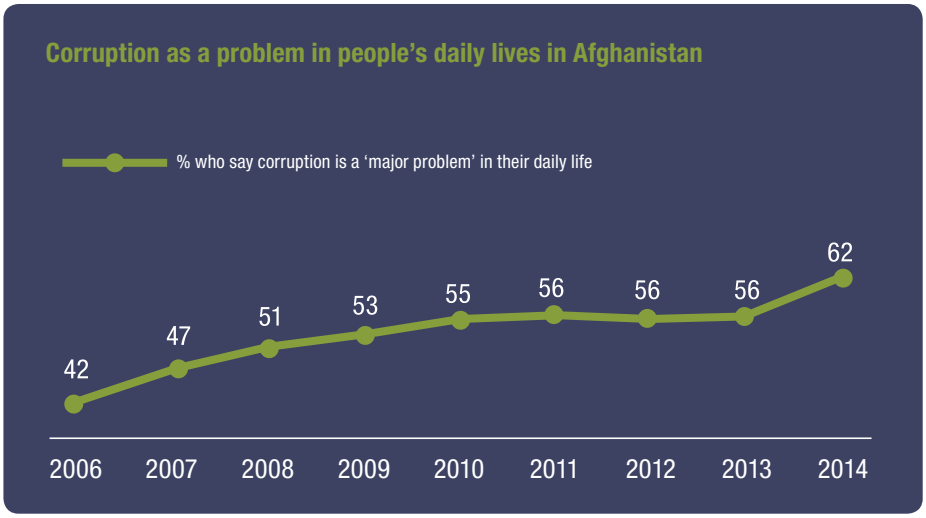
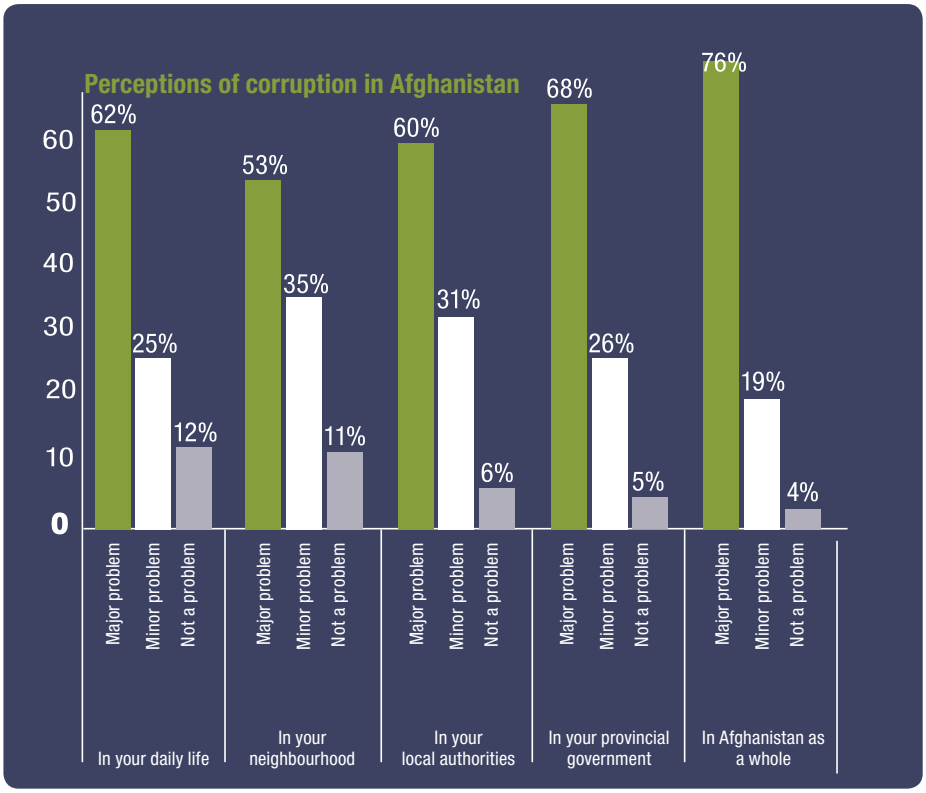


FIGURE 5: THE ASIA FOUNDATION: AFGHANISTAN IN 2014

"Please tell me whether you think corruption is a major problem, a minor problem, or no problem at all in the following areas. a) In your daily life; b) In your neighbourhood; c) In your local authorities; d) In your provincial government; e) In Afghanistan as a whole." Asia Foundation, *Afghanistan in 2014* (2014) www.asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/Afghanistanin2014final.pdf



Similar observations about the scale of corruption were made by the international interviewees, many of whom are very experienced in international interventions in conflict environments. For example: *"Corruption in Afghanistan is the worst… It is not limited in the level of people taking part in it; it is not limited in the amounts. It is everywhere and everybody is involved in it".* The official went on to say: *"It also seems that accepting bribes is understood as being the right of public officials, who really do get offended if they don't get bribes. It is extremely difficult and corruption has become part of the modern culture of Afghanistan".*[16]

Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranks countries based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be. Afghanistan has consistently scored in the bottom levels of the CPI, showing that it is perceived to be highly corrupt, relative to the other countries included in the index. In both 2012 and 2013 it received the lowest ranking of all countries included in the index.

In the 2014 update of the CPI a small improvement was noted, with the score rising from 8/100 to 12/100.

Afghanistan's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index

Year	Score /100	Rank
2007	18	172/179
2008	13	176/180
2009	15	179/180
2010	14	176/178
2011	15	180/192
2012	8	174/174
2013	8	175/177
2014	12	172/174

Interviewees pointed to some differences in approach to corruption between provinces, and identified three main factors why *"every province was completely different. Every province was on its own, almost a separate world, somewhere similar, but really challenging to each commander in its own way, because of its geography, the human geography, everything like that"*[17]:

- The nature and longevity of the Afghan leadership in the province
- The variations in available rents between the provinces. For example: customs revenues are only attributable in provinces with borders; mineral resources are only exploited in the north-eastern provinces; and high land value is largely restricted to Kabul.
- The nature of the different international community nations and national commanders in the province. Some were seen as being tolerant of corruption; in order to, for example, ensure a lower level of violence or fewer attacks on their national troops. Some were seen as uninterested in governance or anti-corruption, whilst others were seen to put great store in trying to develop good governance.

IMPACT OF THE INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION

When asked to identify how corruption manifested itself throughout the period of 2001 to 2014, interviewees described an evolving set of issues, starting with the moment international troops and funds entered the country:

- Many interviewees insisted that Afghans tend to think of corruption as a relatively new problem for their country. As one Afghan interviewee put it: *"20 years ago corruption was a shame among Afghans. If you were corrupt, your life was hell because people would stop talking to you. And now that's completely changed. A new culture has risen: if you're not corrupt, people think you're stupid"*.[18]
- Early decisions during the intervention were considered to send a strongly permissive signal both to the elite and the general population about corruption. Notably, the way that the 2002 *Loya Jirga* (grand assembly) was run was denounced as *"throwing money… at corrupt and predatory local actors"*.[19] This was compounded when no steps were taken to rein in the warlords as their power and influence grew. *"Boundaries were not put on predatory action by strongmen."*[20]

- Also in the early years of the intervention, corruption problems manifested at an operational level as some of the early inflows of funds had almost no controls on them. As one senior policy maker recounts: *"Much of the corruption was introduced by some elements of the very poorly planned aid response and the flood of unaccountable money through multiple channels."*[21]
- As money flows increased, both local and international individuals and institutions quickly profited. Short time frames and the drive for results by the IC meant that there were very strong incentives not to prioritise corruption-reducing measures, which would inevitably slow down the spending rate. This climate of perverse spending incentives and opaque deals was reported as *"not cynicism, [but] a fundamental reality"*.[22]
- Despite some better mechanisms being introduced, for example the World Bank's dual key mechanism, there was a decline in the effort devoted to countering corruption between 2005 and 2008. In 2008 then NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said that corruption was important, but *"to the extent it is not linked to military activities – it is not NATO's first responsibility – there are other organisations and donors that work on development cooperation that focus a bit more on this topic."*[23] From 2008 onwards the Afghan government was increasingly criticised for a perceived lack of interest in improving governance and the delivery of services. Key anti-corruption agencies – the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption (HOOAC) and the Attorney General's office – were widely seen as ineffective and corrupt, but were still protected by the president.

  Awareness of corruption threats and their direct influence on insecurity rose around 2009, in parallel with the dramatic surge in resources entering the country. By this time corruption was one of the top three concerns to Afghans, along with insecurity and employment.

CORRUPTION, PATRONAGE AND CRIMINAL NETWORKS

Talking about corruption in the Afghan context raised a number of specific questions surrounding how corruption is understood in different social, cultural and political contexts. This included unpicking distinctions between different levels of corruption, as well as exploring the link between ethnic tensions, factionalism and the unfair accumulation of resources.

Interviewees did not regard corruption issues in Afghanistan as unique. Nevertheless they did highlight a number of specific Afghan interpretations of the country's significant corruption problems:

- **Patronage, nepotism and criminal networks:** Interviewees recounted how, in strong family-dominated societies, some degree of nepotism is accepted as being entirely normal and even desired: you are expected to look after your extended family. However, large-scale nepotism is recognised as a different issue and is not accepted as a legitimate form of governance. As one senior policy maker from the UN put it: *"Because we are dealing with a very weak state, and a very strong personal network, once the personal networks come in contact with a state structure, they start to dominate and redefine that state structure. You can take any minister, any police chief in Afghanistan and the way that he functions, or the way that his office is run is that it's run on the backbone of his personal network."*[24]

Similarly, an international policy maker stated: *"The guys at the bottom are sending money to the top of the system and the guys at the top are sending protection downwards, which is how a mafia runs. That for me was a huge epiphany."*[25]

Nepotism within government institutions is rife, as reflected by one interviewee: *"I would say at appointment level – those in the sensitive positions – they are mostly if not all linked to some factions or some personalities of the country who are extremely corrupt. They're not faithful to the government but to their own Jihadi factions or their own political groups. It's all a matter of appointment at the administrative level…They progressively facilitated the interests of the Taliban in the region. They were giving everything to the Taliban... Then with that the Taliban became much stronger. That's how the Taliban increased their power there. And that's the level of corruption. And these people were not nice people: they were involved in all kinds of trafficking."*[26]

- **Corruption in contracting:** In addition to a certain degree of accepted corruption in appointments procedures involving family ties, some interviewees reported that a certain system of reward for the giving of contracts was also not uncommon. As one interviewee recounted: *"In this country contractors have to give 5% of the value of the contract to the person who gives the contract to them. It's part of the culture, a kind of thank you for the contract... I only had problems talking with contractors – they tried to pressure me into giving them 5% more money, because they had to pay the 5% to the director of department, or to pay for terrorists – Taliban – for security reasons, driving to Kabul, bringing materials and equipment from Kabul, or paying for terrorists because they were afraid of security... I usually got this request. According to our regulations, after signing the contract I couldn't pay more money. I said 'you have to do this contract according to this money. If you need additional money I will break up this contract and I will get new contractors.' After these discussions they usually didn't ask again."*[27]

- **Daily services:** Interviewees described Afghans as being well aware of the corruption problems. As one pointed out, Afghans have over 15 words for corruption in Dari and Pashtu. There is routine acceptance of run-of-the-mill corruption in carrying out daily activities. But, again, interviewees recognised that Afghans differentiate between that type of corruption – even though they don't like it – and more egregious forms. As one senior policy implementer put it: *"I'll give you an example, when I was in Kunduz, people tried to get passports and it cost a large amount of money. I tried to take this up with the police and governors, and talk to people. I tried to talk to people in meetings, open it up in debate, but nobody wanted to talk about this. And the people didn't want to talk because they just wanted to pay and get their passport rather than get no passport."*[28]

- **Corruption as incompetence:** There are some examples given by interviewees that suggest that Afghans consider managerial incompetence or ineptitude as corruption. In contrast, it took the international community some years to recognise that having multiple

In June 2014, Integrity Watch Afghanistan (an Afghan NGO) issued their latest National Corruption Survey. It found that corruption tied for second as the greatest challenge facing Afghanistan, after security. While 18% of respondents in the 2012 survey said that they had faced corruption within the last 12 months, this rose to 21% in the 2014 survey. The survey also noted that Afghans believe that corruption in most public sectors undermined their access to services. For example, 28% of respondents believed that their households were deprived of access to electricity because of corruption and 18% said corruption blocked their access to higher education. These are services which the US has invested billions into developing and which are commonly referred to as success stories of international aid.

Integrity Watch Afghanistan, "National Corruption Survey", May 2014: http://iwaweb.org/national-corruption-survey/

sub-contractors for one contract, to the point where only 5-10% of the original contract value is actually delivered on the ground, should really be considered at best as bad practice and at worst as a form of corruption, even though the sub-contracting itself is entirely legal.

- **Factionalism, ethnic divisions and corruption:** Interviewees had a common narrative on links between factionalism and corruption, noting that different ethnic groupings are part of the power structure of Afghan society. Similarly, organised crime groups – and criminal patronage networks – tend to be ethnically based, so there appears to be an ethnic division, when in fact the overriding problem is one of elite factionalism.

  This distinction came across in several interviews, with one interviewee commenting that Afghan society could effectively be divided into *"the grassroots, the mid-level, and also the top level—as soon as you go down to the level of citizens, the majority of the population, you will see less ethnic tension and as soon as you go upward, you will find more ethnic tension among those leaders."*[29]

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF CORRUPTION IN AFGHANISTAN

The narrative surrounding corruption in the Afghan context has, in some cases, become highly politicised. Several interviewees commented on the way that the Afghan government, notably President Hamid Karzai, intentionally chose to define corruption as a problem brought into Afghanistan by foreigners. This opinion has since carried a lot of weight in terms of local perceptions of the intervention, in no small part because of the president's influence over the media. This plays into the view, held by many, that there was less corruption in the past, and certainly much less before the Russian invasion in 1979.

The tendency to adopt a one-sided narrative about the sources of corruption is also evident in Western narratives that blame corruption on the Afghans. Both sides fail to acknowledge the dual internal-external nature of corruption threats to missions, which can arise as a function of both local conditions and the impact of international actors. Many interviewees also recognised the **international dimensions** of corruption in Afghanistan:

- **Donor funds:** As one of the Afghan interviewees said: *"It must be well known (in the international community) how aid leads to more corruption; there will have been knowledge from earlier interventions. Thus the international community should have flagged it much earlier, and connected all funding to proper conditionality and much tighter oversight of disbursement"*.[30] Additionally, there was a huge disparity in the size of international and Afghan resources, which was picked up on as one senior policy maker as fuelling corruption: he said that there was one of *"the greatest asymmetries between national capacity and international support that I'd ever seen"*.[31]

- **Stability choices:** Interviewees were well aware of the compromises being made by the international community. For example: *"From the point of view of stabilisation, tolerance of significant corruption may seem a better alternative than avoidable provocation of local power structures. One reads that this is again and again the decision that alliance commanders and, possibly, PRT heads, have had to accept, and had a devils bargain... Corruption may sometimes be a kind of glue, although it has its own toxicity and is a kind of solvent of other things".*[32]

  Another notes that there was a lack of long-term vision for Afghan stability among contributing countries, meaning that compromises on ethical standards became common in pursuit of short-term stabilisation: *"State-building wasn't the idea, it was a war on terror… In 2002, the Americans put more resources towards building the Afghan state, and then were planning to withdraw progressively from 04/05. They couldn't invest more resources, so they had to rely on patronage."*[33]

  The following was given as a typical example: *"A senior Afghan general was in charge of one of the airports of the country. He was claiming he had 5000 staff on his books, but actually only had about 3000… In order for security in that region to be maintained, the NATO regional commander put up with that situation. The consequence was that NATO was seen to be working with a corrupt general."*[34]

- **Choosing not to see the corruption:** As one experienced military officer put it: *"I think what's happened is the Americans, we've done a see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil when it comes to corruption because it's our largesse that allows corruption to occur."*[35] Similarly, from a police adviser: *"You make the best of the situation. The next guy coming, when things are stable, you can deal with it. In Kandahar it was worse. You saw the governors and their houses and villas, and thought, 'Wow!'. But you had to deal with it. He's the governor. We have to wait for the next guy, because if you deal with it, it will break out all over the place."*[36]

- **Fraud and waste in international contracting:** International attention turned to corruption in defence and security only relatively recently and it has tended to focus on international contracting behaviour. For example, according to the Commission on Wartime Contracting *"at least $31 billion, and possible as much as $60 billion"*[37] of US funds were lost as a result of contracting waste and fraud in Afghanistan and Iraq between financial years 2002 and 2011.

4. Recognising & addressing corruption threats: reasons for delay

SUMMARY

In respect to the principal questions – how to recognise and address corruption threats, and why the IC was slow to respond to them in Afghanistan – the interviewees had the following proposals for improvement:

- Be clearer in the objectives of the mission: attention to corruption should be part of the mandate.
- Be restrained in providing support to nefarious actors. Ensure that controls over them are tightened over time.
- Analyse corruption threats and behaviour early and incorporate the implications into mission policy.
- Insist on unified command and control.
- Change organisational incentives/ benchmarks away from spending targets.
- Spend less.
- Do not let the anti-corruption agenda be deferred. Pay more attention to corruption from the beginning.
- Pay earlier attention to rule of law issues.
- Invest early to strengthen civil society.

They noted in particular three good practices from Afghanistan to adopt elsewhere: a dedicated anti-corruption task-force, joint national-international independent oversight of progress on anti-corruption, and a task-force investigating corruption on international contracts.

This first phase of the analysis focuses specifically on the insights that interviewees gave into how the international community understood and considered governance and corruption in Afghanistan. Almost all interviewees gave detailed and thoughtful responses to this question, many of which should serve as a good basis for future military and civilian planners.

We then asked interviewees to consider why the IC was slow to develop a response to the danger from corruption threats and corruption risks throughout the mission. We found nine broad categories of reasons, and have structured interviewees' views on both topics under these headings:

1. Early political decisions
2. Political difficulties and dilemmas
3. Complacency among policy makers
4. The primacy of security
5. Perverse spending incentives for funds
6. Limited anti-corruption tools
7. Disconnect between research and policy
8. Host nation countermoves
9. Weakness of Afghan civil society

A few interviewees commented that it was unfair to judge the mission on attitudes to corruption from the very beginning in 2002, as in the early years there was very little focus on corruption as an issue by the international community. However, the majority of interviewees indicated that the underlying conditions for corruption had actually been established in those early years; the lack of attention to the issue at this stage set up many of the problems for the future.

4.1 Early political decisions

For many interviewees, a passive attitude towards corruption was signalled from the beginning of the mission. This was primarily through the way the early *Loya Jirga* settlement was handled, but also because of the free hand given to actors to do deals with powerful warlords without a serious effort to restrain their power later. These awkward partnerships meant that there was a reluctance to open up the question of corruption later in the mission, as it would have meant investigating many of those whom the IC were supporting. Eventually these deals contributed to the difficulties of state-building in Afghanistan, as in practice the IC had allowed the consolidation of territorial power by a group of Afghan warlords because they were seen as essential allies who could get things done. As one senior interviewee put it: *"past dozen years as a whole in Afghanistan, there was a lost opportunity and strategic mistakes were made early on, so moderate levels of corruption initially got out of hand over time"*.[38]

Without a determined effort by the international community to tackle corruption, local perceptions and expectations of the mission were damaged, and malign actors were strengthened.

4.2 Political difficulties and dilemmas

Interviewees said that one of the most striking problems facing the IC was how to untangle the emerging dilemma over who to engage with on the ground in Afghanistan. Many discussed the tension between the desire to stabilise the environment by co-opting existing power brokers and the risk of compromising other objectives by openly dealing with actors seen as being corrupt.

This dilemma was seen as being deferred rather than addressed, with one international policy maker observing that *"politicians on both sides will usually defer the anti-corruption agenda as not as important as other political agendas. At the beginning of the intervention they will generally say 'not now because we need these people as cooperative partners.' At the end they will say 'not now because we need these people as cooperative partners in the exit.' In the middle they will say 'not now because we need their cooperation to carry out our on-going agenda and requirements'"*.[39]

Research was being carried out, even in the early years, that showed the damage to the government's credibility from corruption, but this was reportedly not appreciated fully at the policy level. This is illustrated by Andrew Wilder, one of the IC's most experienced experts on Afghanistan, who reflected on his own experiences from 2003 to 2007: *"we were doing a lot of research at the sub-national level and highlighting the fact that support for predatory local leaders and bringing back the warlords was really damaging perceptions of the government. So there was awareness amongst analysts fairly early on: but there is very little tolerance at the senior international level for bad news because Afghanistan was the good war and Iraq was the bad war"*.[40]

Raising corruption as an issue was repeatedly mentioned by interviewees as being politically very difficult. The will to see the mission demonstrating progress was described as very strong, with a real sense that *"Afghanistan was meant to be a success story, particularly after Iraq turned out to be a disaster… governments prefer to receive good news. One of the chronic diseases of diplomats is to be over-optimistic."*[41] This had the consequence that people who did try and raise the issue were met with *"closed doors"*.[42]

Similarly, the military were described as being constantly optimistic about progress, giving policy makers a reason to not listen to concerns about corruption. As one senior diplomat put it: *"on the military side, they are always optimistic, they were always getting close to defeating the enemy"*.[43]

This changed in 2009, as ISAF developed its understanding of the direct links between corruption and security. ISAF set up the Anti-Corruption Task-Force, working closely with rule of law groups like the Major Crimes Task-Force (MCTF). The good side of this initiative, which evolved into the task-force Shafafiyat, was the development of a serious centre of competence in understanding corruption and its impact on security and the international mission.

The ISAF work on corruption and security convinced many senior figures in the military and international community of the need to give much greater weight to corruption threats. For example, Admiral Mike Mullen, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in his testimony to the US Senate Armed Services Committee in September 2011, stated: *"No amount of military success alone in counterinsurgency is ever enough. Other critical challenges plague us; challenges that undermine our efforts and place at risk our ultimate success in the region. First among them in my view is the pernicious effect of poor governance and corruption. Corruption makes a mockery of the rule of law. It delegitimizes the very governing institutions to which we will be transitioning authority and it sends an aggrieved populace further into the waiting arms of the Taliban"*.[44]

However, many interviewees noted that the period 2010-2011, which included the setting up of Shafafiyat, also corresponded to a time when the attention of US and international policy makers to the corruption concerns was beginning to decline. As one Afghan journalist put it: *"I think that anti-corruption was dead in the water from 2010… Shafafiyat was set up; but [its] mandate was effectively over before [it] got there... So [although] 2010 was actually the height of anti-corruption in Afghanistan, it was [already] over"*.[45]

This observation was in part based on an investigation and arrest in 2010 that exposed the political difficulties and contradictions of maintaining a common line on corruption across the international community – or within the US government. This was the *Salehi* case, in which a corruption-related arrest of a government official, intended to be a test case of Afghan and international resolve against corruption, collapsed in farce when the official in question was identified as a provider of secret funds to the Afghan leadership by the CIA.[46] The case had a major impact in reducing the international appetite for anti-corruption efforts.

4.3 Complacency among policy makers

The political difficulty surrounding raising corruption as an issue was exacerbated by a widespread feeling that corruption was an inevitable part of life in Afghanistan. A senior American military officer, General H. R. McMaster, spoke of the problem as follows: *"I think the IC was passive about it [corruption] and largely ignorant about the scope of the problem, […] its impact on the mission, the Afghan state and the Afghan people. And it was this lack of understanding that drove, I think, complacency about the problem and drove this simplistic interpretation of corruption that is really bigotry masquerading as cultural sensitivity: this idea that Afghans are corrupt and there's nothing we can do about it"*.[47]

This attitude fed into a lack of ownership of the corruption problem as efforts to combat corruption risk were seen as a *"transfer cost"*[48] that was superfluous to the success of the mission itself. As one senior policy maker noted: *"I do remember these news stories about logistics contracts and actually what I think tthose stories precipitated was the idea that it did not matter that all kinds of warlords and human rights abusers and all kinds of bad actors were getting money through corruption in international military contracting"*.[49] It is this situation that led one interviewee to decry the fact that *"it wasn't just that there wasn't any anti-corruption activity; it is that we were enabling the corruption."*[50]

The problem of complacency was seen as most acute at the senior levels of the IC. One military officer in Shafafiyat expressed their frustration that *"within the international community there is probably a decent amount of people who understand how governance works… [however] once you get into higher strategic staff… the chances that they really understand corruption and governance is minimal"*.[51]

The fact that high-level staff did not seem to engage with corruption as a risk was cited by several other interviewees as a leadership problem that allowed corruption to remain at a secondary level that fell outside of the mandate of senior planners.

As one of the few anti-corruption experts in ISAF emphasised: *"With regard to understanding the multifaceted problem corruption plays in a civil-military engagement, higher ranking officials tend to say they understand the complexity of the problem. But herein lies the trouble: with rank comes the expectation that leaders understand ALL complex issues and problems encountered in the operational space. In reality these officials are saying they understand the problem of corruption for two reasons: 1) to quickly sweep the issue under the rug because they lack*

comprehensive understanding of it, or 2) doctrine and policy hasn't driven them to take proactive action against issues of corruption, therefore as a soft power problem it is less important than the kinetic fight."[52]

Within the military, theatre-wide anti-corruption efforts were launched in the summer of 2009, with the establishment of the precursor to Shafafiyat called the Anti-Corruption Task-Force. They started information-sharing and providing mutual support across the civilian-military divide, e.g. with the Major Crimes Task-Force and the Afghan Threat Finance Cell. This task-force was instrumental in bringing the senior military more on board about the importance of corruption, but still faced the active unwillingness of senior civilian leaders to even address the issue.[53]

The fact that high-level civilian policy makers did not treat corruption as a risk that they needed to mitigate was particularly significant because the structure of the international mission left a lot of discretion to leaders of the individual international institutions to direct the overall strategy. One senior policy maker gave the following example: *"the problem with the UN political missions is that far too much power has been decentralised to the SRSGs [Special Representatives of the Secretary General]"*.[54]

According to one interviewee, a senior policy maker, the fact that the international leadership were frequently disengaged from the problems posed by corruption was exacerbated by the lack of culturally sensitive nations in the coalition. Commenting on the national composition of the international mission, he noted that – while at times the IC woke up to the nature of the challenges – *"without a culturally sensitive and significant partner in there, we could never achieve the functioning governance [system] that was necessary to deal with the endemic corruption and the necessary corruption that allowed the country to function"*.[55] This inability to connect with the Afghan environment is put forward as one of the reasons why there was a broad lack of senior understanding across the IC of how corruption risks affected the mission.

The underlying problem for many interviewees was one of will and engagement. As an Afghan policy maker recounted: *"They always put this as a capacity problem, but the real issue is political will. For years they weren't saying anything about political will. The discourse about a lack of political will is very new. You couldn't discuss, contest the fact that there's no political will—so you focus on capacity"*.[56] This reluctance to dedicate significant time to countering corruption risks to the stabilisation effort was characterised by one interviewee as being symptomatic of a wider feeling of complacency among international actors when it came to the Afghanistan mission: *"I do remember people saying to me in Whitehall, that this war is not quite big enough to dominate the government in the way Iraq did, and yet it's not small enough to be left somewhere down the line to deal with. And so I always felt it was this orphan war, which just didn't get the serious grip or attention that it needed"*.[57]

4.4 Primacy of security

Intervention by the international community in an unstable or war-torn country has the establishment of stability and security as its top priorities. However, one of the big lessons from Afghanistan was that corruption threats should have been treated with similar importance, but were not.

As one international policy maker phrased it: *"the central paradox was that in the early years of this intervention, the military took the view (conscious or unconscious) that it needed to suppress concerns about corruption in order to focus on the overriding military imperative. Then, far later down the track, there's the sudden realisation that the military mission is becoming jeopardised*

by… corruption."[58] The interviewee commented that *"the irony was that having ridden rough-shod over everyone else in those early years, the military then turned round and complained that no one was addressing it and then took up the mantle (ISAF, Shafafiyat), all too little too late."*[59]

The late realisation that corruption was damaging the mission's success was reflected in a comment from a senior military officer, who reported *"We went away and then came back and thought ' well, this is all going wrong, the Taliban are coming back, the insurgency is coming back, we need to bolster the country up', and we did that by bringing in as much aid as possible… and that money all of a sudden started, without good controls on it, started going to the wrong places… Eventually, when people start to realise this, that is when people start shouting out about corruption."*[60]

Misappropriated funds, vanishing resources, and a reliance on malign power brokers damage the operational success of a mission. Considering it as a secondary issue increases the likelihood that the international effort will fail. As one international policy maker emphasised, *"Acute structured corruption is one the most important drivers of international instability that there is."*[61]

The primacy of security is also reflected in conflicts and dilemmas. For example, there is a dilemma in paying militias not to attack bases, and as a consequence being seen to be complicit in paying off military groups. There will usually be no easy answer, but a broader understanding of what was driving the conflict changes the balance of the options.

4.5 Perverse spending incentives for international community funds

Many interviewees commented on how the speed and scale of the disbursement of funds was prioritised over the achievement of concrete project goals. This observation fed into a wider concern that *"the only way currently to demonstrate that [something] is a priority is by budgeting more money for it – that is how you show its importance in our political systems"*,[62] allowing the desire to be seen to be doing something to override many other concerns, including those surrounding accountability and corruption.

Many interviewees commented that the only real way to stop swamping a state's ability to absorb funds is to spend less. Karl Eikenberry, former Commander of the US-led Coalition Forces in Afghanistan and former US Ambassador to Afghanistan identified how *"The net result of our well-intentioned efforts is that the international and national development agencies, along with the NATO and US military forces, flooded Afghanistan with cash to such an extent that efforts to build accountable institutions suffered"*.[63]

This approach meant that monitoring and evaluation, two key tools for reducing corruption risk, were not prioritised and large sums of money exchanged hands in what was already an extremely unstable and factionalised environment.

An Afghan interviewee emphasised this point, stating that *"the worst national donors are the big ones… None of them have anti-corruption monitoring systems or any interest in pursuing allegations"*.[64] While this was not a universal criticism, with the Danes and Norwegians picked out by some interviewees as being far more engaged in anti-corruption measures than many of their counterparts, the overriding conclusion was that *"the disproportionate amount of money being spent in Afghanistan became part of the problem"*.[65]

These perverse spending incentives are discussed by many interviewees as a strategic error on the part of the mission planners, and one that started right at the beginning of the mission. A senior former UN official recounted how, at the beginning of the mission, *"the heads of the UN agencies on the ground were given 10 days to write $2.7 billion worth of projects"*.[66]

Instead of contributing to a broader interpretation of stabilisation than the high-level officials discussed in the previous section, one of the most interesting observations that interviewees offered about aid agencies was that their funding streams were dependent on their adoption of a narrative of hard security benefits. As one respondent put it: *"for development actors, their livelihoods… depended on the assumption that what they were doing was in their national security interest… The development budget of, say, USAID was as big as it was because of the assumption on security. Many of the development actors did not want to question that their programmes were having stabilising effects and were less tolerant of the idea that they were having destabilising effects than the military"*.[67]

4.6 Limited range of anti-corruption tools

For senior officials and planners who did feel that there was a need to address the corruption risks to the mission, their failure to implement successful programmes was partially attributed to a lack of available options.

This fed into a reported concern that the mandate of the mission itself did not lend itself to addressing corruption threats. There was also evidence that the multinational nature of the mission stymied the synchronisation that would have been needed to deliver a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy. As a Dutch diplomat put it: *"I think coordination of the international community is very weak because none of us probably want to be coordinated by the other… I don't think there is a clear leader on anti-corruption"*.[68]

As well as the multinational nature of the mission creating challenges, the complexities of balancing roles on a mission that involved both military and civilian staff was cited as preventing coordinated action from being taken to tackle corruption: *"The military could contribute resources and they had skills in the area but they couldn't possibly do it all. Nor could they work effectively with the aid community without some sort of translation mechanism"*. On the civilian side, there was recognition that *"we deliberately didn't look at corruption in the broader sense. We went at what the American military calls CPNs (criminal patronage networks) and so we were deliberately going in at the hard end"*.[69] This meant that there were very limited tools aimed at tackling corruption, and programmes that were in place like the High Office for Oversight and Anti-Corruption Control (HOOAC) and the Major Crimes Task-Force (MCTF) were described as deeply flawed.

An Afghan interviewee described the situation as the following: *"Day to day, week by week and month by month, the ordinary people were always complaining about the performance [of HOOAC and the MEC]… especially the judiciary section. And that is why, if there is no political will, no one thinks about this problem. The HOOAC and the MEC and other independent entities were established; but none of them worked"*.[70] The failure of big pieces of the IC state-building anti-corruption toolkit like HOOAC discouraged further action, allowing corruption risks to proliferate unchecked.

Other potential tools did perform relatively well – such as the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which was one of the major IC

funding vehicles. Many praised the fact that it had a "dual key" mechanism to control spending, based on an approach first used in the intervention in Liberia in the 1990s.

However, others pointed out that the fund had never been designed to mitigate corruption risks, so despite the proactive approach taken to monitor spending its auditing mechanisms were relatively weak, with no physical evidence required to validate spending claims. As one interviewee recounted: *"I nearly fell out of my chair when someone told me that their [the ARTF] auditing mechanism was 'Not designed to detect fraud.' Basically, say for example, they get the receipt from the Ministry of Education and give the money for the cost for the chairs. I asked if anyone actually goes to the school to see if the chairs exist and they said no. I understand that there are some security concerns, but there are ways to work with local authorities and local NGOs to verify these things. That money could be used for anything"*.[71]

Whilst both HOOAC and the Attorney General's office were widely seen as corrupt by both Afghans and the IC, interviewees spoke more positively about two other anti-corruption oversight mechanisms introduced by the international community: the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (the MEC), and the Special Investigator General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). SIGAR got off to a slow and shaky start, but in due course became very active in tracking waste and corruption in US contracts. Whilst SIGAR was often a thorn in the side of the US administration, it was widely seen as strengthening the credibility of the US to spend money without corruption or waste. More information is available here: http://www.sigar.mil. The MEC is an external corruption monitoring body comprising six respected individuals: three Afghans and three from the international community. They are supported by a sizeable secretariat. They produce external reports of progress against corruption commitments across the whole of the Afghan government. More information can be found at www.mec.af.

A number of senior policy makers expressed the view that there was a limited range of anti-corruption tools available for large-scale application across the military and the police. As Karl Eikenberry, former Commander of the US-led Coalition Forces in Afghanistan and former US Ambassador to Afghanistan, said at the time: *"The international community offered many programmes and projects for economic development… but had very few that focused on preventing and combatting corruption"*.[72] There was disagreement on this topic, but what is clear is that there is no comprehensive guidance on the different anti-corruption tools and measures that are available. Developing such a toolkit would be a constructive contribution for stabilisation practitioners.

4.7 Disconnect between research and policy

Many interviewees remarked that the IC's behaviour during the period between 2001 and 2005 did little to allay corruption threats that later had a negative impact on the mission. The issue remained off the radar.

The deteriorating security situation after 2005 allowed other narratives to emerge about the roots of instability, and the idea that corruption was feeding the insurgency led to research on the links between the two. Andrew Wilder commented that: *"After 2005, when security started to more noticeably deteriorate and the insurgency more noticeably appeared to gather steam… the security factors started to lead to more questioning as to what is driving this insecurity. By 2007-08 [there was a] more widespread recognition that bad governance (and corruption was an important part of*

that) was a driver of conflict. But the IC systems take time to absorb that sort of analysis. By 2009-2010 there was a lot more recognition as we started to focus more on the population-centric COIN strategy of the negative effects of corruption".[73]

By 2010, emerging from the international military, there was beginning to be *"a clear analysis and recognition [among the military] of how corruption, and more than that impunity, was fuelling the insurgency and was the threat to the survival of the state".*[74] This led to the evolution of the Anti-Corruption Task-Force of 2009 into a larger, dedicated task-force to analyse corruption and propose how ISAF should address it. The task-force was given the name *Shafafiyat*, which means "transparency" in Dari. It comprised some 60 staff, both civilian and military, all members of the IC with no Afghan participants. This change of direction turned the attitude among the military until that point of *"see no evil, hear no evil"*[75] on its head.

Shafafiyat was given a broad remit to understand the corruption threats in a more fundamental way than anyone had done up until then. Its first head, General H.R. McMaster, explained how they went about their task: *"We asked: what is the nature of corruption and organised crime? What is its effect on the Afghan state and the mission? And then we built the organisation around that and focused our effort on where we saw the most severe threats with the objective to reduce corruption and organised crime so that it was no longer fatal to the Afghan state. We felt we deepened our understanding every day in each of these areas. But we took three months to frame it properly. There was a lot we didn't know and had to learn. But I think we were right in our overall definition of the problem: there was a connection with a criminal underworld and a political upper world, and a political settlement that rested in large measure on criminality and impunity".*[76]

Their early work led to the concept of Criminal Patronage Networks, within which there is a constant flow of money upwards through the hierarchy and a flow of protective patronage downwards.[77]

However, this analysis and recognition did not extend across the international military. It was limited mostly to Kabul, and to the small group of senior officers who "got it". Several international military interviewees did not know of Shafafiyat, with one Polish military officer admitting: *"I don't know about their activities"*,[78] and others being dismissive of their mission. Although a step in the right direction, Shafafiyat was not a silver bullet solution to the problem of adopting a comprehensive anti-corruption approach within the Afghanistan mission.

4.8 Host nation countermoves

One of the greatest tensions in interventions is the fact that the IC is present at the invitation of the host nation, yet in reality elements of the host nation leadership are likely to be invested in corruption, patronage and criminal activity and therefore will likely be resistant to some of the IC's anti-corruption actions.

As one international researcher put it: *"Our conception of what the state does and how it derives legitimacy… was fundamentally at odds with the ruling political elites and their governing model which was more of a patronage system where you use international resources to support patronage networks of key individuals to keep you in power and keep the support base intact."*[79]

Inevitably, efforts by the IC to limit the diversion of funds or patronage invited countermeasures. Sarah Chayes, one of the international civilians most identified with the development of the ISAF Anti-Corruption

Task-Force in 2009 and in-country from 2001, commented that *"The countermoves were incredibly sophisticated by the Afghan government, including the development of the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption Control [HOOAC] which became a whole spiderweb trapping a lot of international community focus because it was like – 'Let's help Afghan institutions with this. Let's pour money, time and energy into this office…' which was obviously completely under the Karzai thumb… [This] was never going to be an effective corruption fighting institution."*[80]

Many interviewees discussed the range and sophistication of the countermoves. These included the Interior Ministry demanding to see a copy of the evidence before arrests could be made, so as to sabotage investigations and undermine judicial independence; sabotaging search warrants, even at very low levels, e.g. of border guard stations; and diverting the international community onto less sensitive anti-corruption initiatives, such as updating legislation.*"[Karzai's] approach is one of counterattacking – asking 'can I see some proof please?' This is sometimes difficult."*[81]

The government also became very adept at playing back corruption as the fault of the international community: *"President Karzai – over the last years when he was still in power – used the argument more and more that it was the West that was fuelling corruption in Afghanistan. He is partially right on this, but by saying it how he does, he also suppressed half of the truth, which is that the system of governance he established, based on patronage networks, contributed to the spread of corruption almost equally."* [82]

Similarly: *"There is one definition of the corruption that's coming from the government, especially from President Karzai's side. He is defining corruption in Afghanistan as a problem brought by the foreigners."* [83]

The irony is that he was partially correct – the international community was partly fuelling the corruption, through the surge of money and its own poor practices, which were not helped by a frequent unwillingness to recognise it or address it.

This led to a realisation within ISAF that directing all of its information-gathering and intelligence activities towards the insurgents was at least partially wrong. *"The major changes in military intelligence-gathering initiated by Major General Michael Flynn… were a good example of this. He really was one of key players in this project of understanding things like governance. […] They started to target and understand people were ostensibly on their side but who they now viewed as malign actors."* [84]

General McMaster, former Head of Shafafiyat, made a similar point: *"I would really foster the [international] ability to identify the subversive campaigns of criminal networks, narcotics trafficking organisations and insurgencies"* [85]

4.9 Weakness of civil society organisations

The initial weakness of Afghan civil society organisations is an additional reason why the international community was slow ito recognise and address the corruption threats. The core logic of supporting civil society was recognised by most interviewees, for example: *"There should be more civil society engagement with government. Civil society can play a role in external oversight and bring transparency and accountability in the provision of government services and how government projects could be streamlined to reduce corruption".*[86]

But civil society organisations in Afghanistan were seen as being weak and not well supported by the international community. They were unable to assume a high profile in tackling corruption:

- "People here don't work together very well, probably because of the civil war and things like that. So even civil society is fragmented."[87]
- "There are lots of fantastic examples of a civil society organisation working with media and exposing this corruption. But most of those activities have been very either localised, or at a national level have been sidelined or silenced. So there has not been the kind of movement we saw, let's say in India. And I am not surprised that within the current system itself we have not had an organic leader emerge who could take the issue of corruption at a national level".[88]

However, civil society organisations were seen to be increasing in influence over time: *"Civil society and media were less involved and developed than now. We didn't have information. Now they are more visible and can raise their voice"*.[89] And: *"The pressure on the political structure by civil society is growing. This is due in large part to the level of security in Afghanistan. Today civil society groups feel safe enough to speak out, to be vocal. This is an amazing improvement. I think the announcement that any citizen was able to obtain a copy of the budget was remarkable. Those are leaps and bound beyond where Afghanistan was in 2001"*.[90]

The influx of international funds to government institutions placed Afghan civil society in a comparatively weaker position.

"Western governments have dedicated an enormous amount of money to fight corruption, but severely undermined it by the way other parts of the mission worked. The way how, for example, funds like the US military's funds were used… not only resulted in throwing money out of the window but contributed to feeding corrupt parts of the Karzai administration… Instead, much more money should have been provided to fund Afghan civil society, to guarantee its financial – and with it, also political – independence."[91]

Additionally, there was limited understanding among the IC of what civil society can do: *"I think the international community recognised the need for civil society but they didn't fully understand what the function of civil society is in the broader context of a healthy society, and therefore did not understand how weakness, or absence, or lack of Afghan civil society directly contributed to the corruption problem. …We threw billions of dollars of aid money around, which hyper-empowered the private sector… this really strong government sector relative to the rest of society… But this really under-empowered civil society [could not match it]"*.[92]

‘Civil society has not been developed enough to have any impact... And we – the international community – have done nothing of substance to develop civil society.’[93]

5. The International Community

SUMMARY

Interviewees recognised the importance of international institutions in the international community's efforts to address corruption, and the dangers when they failed to do so. They had the following proposals:

- Early evidence of the IC's intent to limit corruption is necessary.
- Conversely, an early lack of focus on corruption sets the wrong agenda and leads to low expectations of the IC. This also reduces scope for international institutions to show leadership on the topic.
- Both, national and international corruption should be fought and should be seen being fought.
- The great autonomy given to the senior individual in charge of international missions needs to be balanced by clear policy guidance on the need to address corruption threats and corruption risks.
- Large international support programmes can be well controlled, despite the difficulties.
- Corruption threats only started to be seriously thought about by the IC after a sizeable, dedicated group has been formed. However, this could have been more effective had it been civilian-led, e.g. by an international institution, rather than military-led.
- Unified command is essential. Unhealthy competition and imbalances between the civilian and military communities, and between various international institutions, severely damages the effectiveness of anti-corruption work.
- International institutions need to improve by reviewing and adapting their policies, guidance and practices in relation to corruption threats on international interventions.
- Some nations have started to change their military doctrine and guidance in response to the corruption threats on operations, but this is not yet institutionalised.

They noted good practice from the World Bank that could be adopted elsewhere with respect to the mechanisms for corruption control in large programmes.

So far in this analysis we have discussed the actions of the international community. But the IC is far from homogenous. It includes global international institutions like the UN and its Agencies, the World Bank and the IMF, supranational entities like the EU, regional institutions like the Asian Development Bank, international military structures like NATO and police missions such as EUPOL, individual nations contributing to the mission, a host of specialist national and international agencies, international media and international civil society organisations.

We asked interviewees for their views and conclusions on the way that each of these different IC elements had played a part, or not, in recognising and addressing corruption threats. We had many thoughtful responses, and some partisan ones. We have sought to extract those observations which shed light on the way in which organisations chose to address corruption threats among their many other priorities. We also reflect on the ways in which organisations were unable to do this, either because of the political and institutional

environment they found themselves in, or for other reasons, and what this means for future missions.

This chapter is broken down into six sections, one for each of the following:

1. The United Nations
2. The European Union
3. NATO and the International Security Assistance Force
4. International development institutions
5. States
6. Individuals

5.1 The United Nations

The United Nations has a long history of engagement with Afghanistan. It facilitated the 1988 Geneva Accords setting up the terms of the Soviet withdrawal, and from there on in had a three-pronged strategy. The first was humanitarian relief, delivered through the UN's Special Mission to Afghanistan. Another was an attempt to end the civil war through the mediation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with the engagement of Afghanistan's neighbours and other stakeholders. The Security Council also imposed sanctions on the Taliban regime as they took control of more and more territory. Sanctions, as Secretary General Kofi Annan acknowledged in 2001, failed to stop the Taliban from consolidating power; but, as an international policy implementer asserts, at least *"forced people to think twice before recognising the Taliban as the de facto power of Afghanistan"*.[94] Sanctions also did nothing for the wider issue of development and governance. But these were not the priorities: the international community was understandably focused on brokering a ceasefire and a general political settlement. However in early 2001, Vendrell's Geneva Initiative proposed directing economic aid in a way that would build up an alternative political structure in Afghanistan and Kofi Annan recommended a "comprehensive approach" to Afghanistan's problems.[95]

As one of the most critical players in the resolution of international conflicts, the UN's role was discussed by almost all interviewees, with four predominant themes:

First, at the political level, several interviewees commented on the relatively modest size of the UN mission in Afghanistan:

Lord Malloch-Brown, a former Deputy Secretary General of the UN, observed that *"It was a strange mission, because it was a hybrid mission: it didn't have the right amount of blue helmets in that sense, so it was a political mission, not a peacekeeping one in that sense. And therefore it had fewer levers to pull, but it was a mission, which, as always in these things, depended very much on the personality of its top person. There were major actors, the Western militaries on the one hand, the World Bank at the other, or the other big donors, and in the middle you had the poor UN, neither doing the peacekeeping nor doing big dollar development, and so when Brahimi was in charge and it had authority, and there were some quite good people who ran it afterwards, the UN was never […] as powerful a voice as it might have been. In a way that was the UN's history, it had been there through thick or thin in the country, which also made it many enemies"*.[96]

Similarly, another senior policy maker observed: *"We should have had a much bigger role from behind-the-scenes in getting a proper constitution. The current constitution, despite some exclamations of support in the West, suffers from many defects and gaps, except for the chapter on human rights. We should have had a much bigger role in the elections of 2004 and 2005. In 2002, when we had the emergency Loya Jirga, the warlords were not members of the Jirga but pushed their way in. However, they sat down and commandeered the whole show"*.[97]

Second, many observers remarked on the inconsistency of the UN mission in the country, not only in its approach to corruption but to the full spectrum of issues, largely on account of the autonomy given to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG).

From an IC senior policy maker: *"The problem with the UN political missions is that far too much power has been decentralised to the SRSGs. His personality and interests thus dictate the organisation's agenda. So something that should be a leitmotif and something that they engage in consistently tends to be grounded in the interests of the SRSG and not driven out of New York, which is unfortunate. So one SRSG may be interested in tackling the issue whereas the other may not. So I would say inconsistent without being detrimental."*[98]

The UN approach on corruption threats was seen as a passive one. Professor Antonio Giustozzi, who worked in UNAMA in 2003-2004 commented that *"in principle, UNAMA was concerned with corruption and always asked people to report on the issue. But they never really took much action from that, so people on the ground – I was one of those people on the ground reporting corruption, and got the impression that what was reported to the centre was not being used in any way… So, over time, corruption has lost traction in the UN. Then the UN itself was being exposed as corrupt in a number of recent scandals; particularly UNDP. So the credibility of the UN as a watchdog on corruption has been compromised"*.[99] This passivity was reflected by others in senior IC positions in Kabul, e.g. General McMaster, former Head of Shafafiyat in 2011: *"The dominant attitude [of the UN] towards corruption was one of passivity in reference to the problem and understanding the political nature of the problem"*.[100]

Another experienced observer commented that it was hard for the UN system to source the right people with the right competences for the role: *"The UN you would like to think, in the best of all possible worlds, would play more of a role in these contexts. But the way they function and their incentive structures and their personnel systems are not set up […] to be the most effective on the ground. They are set up to make sure that all the various constituent member states in the UN get their piece of the pie. I don't see turning them into a really effective force is necessarily going to happen any time soon"*.[101]

What the UN was not doing was what outside observers would hope to see – playing a coordinating role on the IC's efforts to recognise and address the corruption threats. E.g.: *"The civilian side was always fragmented. And the UN became so focused on handling the elections and spent all of the political capital that subsequent successive UN SRSGs had on those questions that they didn't have a lot of space left to really put the aid effort together, and because UNDP was so disregarded by most of the aid community, the UN didn't have the moral authority, even if they had the technical authority, to bring them all together in the way they might have done"*.[102]

5.2 The European Union

The EU mission in Afghanistan was a small one, so it was not at the centre of IC efforts in the same way that the UN was. Nonetheless, in its comments on this report the EU External Action Service highlighted its driving role pushing the anti-corruption agenda in a Law and Order Trust Fund (LOFTA) context, noting that anti-corruption is mainstreamed into all EU operations. However, the strength of its engagement was cited by interviewees as variable, depending on who was heading the mission: "*The EU was concerned about the issue [of corruption] depending on who was running the mission. When Vendrell – the special representative – was running the EU political mission, I think there was more concern over corruption."*"[103-104]

EUPOL was one group within the EU that received particularly good reviews despite the impression that they were under-

resourced. An international policing adviser praised the fact that: "*[EUPOL] brought in some awfully good people. And they individually have done some very good work.*"[105]

Nevertheless, the EU received mixed reviews from interviewees. One Afghan policy maker expressed their frustration with the impression that the EU had given regarding its concern with tackling corruption in Afghanistan, remarking that: "*The [EU] line was '[corruption is] a national issue. It does not concern us. We can provide funding.'*"[106]

5.3 NATO and the International Security Assistance Force

In the first years of the international military engagement, 2001-2008, corruption threats and corruption generally played no part in international military thinking: *"There was real resistance on the military side in particular to an understanding of the issue and its contribution to it."*[107]

Officers responsible for planning the early operations state that the subject just never came up. At best it was not in their mandate. This started to change around 2009 as a huge increase in resources took place and the need to be more joined up across military and civilian efforts began to emerge, along with evidence of the links between corruption and security.

Increasing military attention to corruption threats lagged behind the huge increase in resources:

- As the military campaign was heavy and intrusive, corruption became almost inevitable: "*The net result of our well-intentioned efforts is that the international and national development agencies, along with the NATO and US military forces, flooded Afghanistan with cash to such an extent that efforts to build accountable institutions suffered*".[108]
- "*At the very moment they were starting up all this anti-corruption stuff and trying to [implement] oversight for contracts, contracts were increasing exponentially because of the surge. So at the very moment they were trying to do something about the problem they were also making it exponentially more difficult to do anything about the problem*".[109]

The establishment of the Anti-Corruption Task-Force in 2009 and then Shafafiyat in 2010 marked a more proactive ISAF approach to tackling corruption. It took a focused approach, centred on the key political corruption issues of Criminal Patronage Networks.

The big increase in ISAF attention to corruption came from 2009. There were major efforts by General Stanley McChrystal and Sarah Chayes to establish an "Anti-Corruption Task Force" within ISAF.

This in turn led to the creation of Shafafiyat in 2010. As well as this, ISAF started to put a major effort into supporting a range of initiatives within the Afghan National Army to limit corruption. These ranged from setting up an Inspector General system in all the Corps and at the MoD, meeting quarterly with the Minister to review all IG files, establishing a dedicated corruption prevention unit within the MoD, and inviting external observers into Procurement Tendering Boards.

General David Petraeus, the ISAF Commander from 2010 onwards, commented: *"We could've started doing what was done in 2010 sooner. As you begin to ramp up in Afghanistan and as you start to pour substantial amounts of additional forces, funds, civilians, and other assets into the country, that is the time to increase focus and elements to try to identify and then deal with the cancer that is corruption"*.[110]

This change of approach was also recognised by policy makers on the civilian

side: *"We deliberately didn't look at corruption in the broader sense. We went at what the American military calls CPNs (Criminal Patronage Networks) and so we were deliberately going in at the hard end of this and where this was this nexus of drugs trafficking, insurgency, and reaching into the state. One of the things I hadn't realised until that phase, and in some ways was one of the last things I said when I left, was the Venn diagram with those three circles was much tighter than I had appreciated at the local level"*.[111]

However this greater effort by the military was not always welcomed on the civilian side: *"NATO felt that the IC did not step up to the mark to take on the corruption thing, for example. And then when NATO did go and do something about it, there was a big outcry from the IC to say 'What are the military doing taking on this role?' So both parties were at fault"*.[112]

A senior military officer described a spirit of competition rather than cooperation: *"there are so many different agencies out there dealing with corruption, that when you try and link in with them you don't always get that support because they see you as a threat rather than a friend."*[113]

Shafafiyat also generated criticism from the civilian community for overstepping its natural mandate: *"The anti-corruption task-force, Shafafiyat, established by General Petraeus was a good faith effort to fight the widespread corruption endemic in the US defence contracting system in Afghanistan. However, its remit went far beyond military contracting and included all international contracting in Afghanistan. One of the harmful consequences is that we were setting a bad example for the Afghans - rule of law efforts as comprehensive as those Task-Force Shafafiyat undertook should be civilian led and not militarised"*.[114]

There was a call for more balanced leadership between military and civilians: The excess weight of the military reportedly worked against any coordinated approach to corruption. *"In NATO, which was the big kid on the block in everything, there hadn't really been a balance between the military and the civilian. The civilian international leadership was very dispersed. So [the solution] was to essentially put a civilian four star alongside the military four star… Had somebody been doing that job at that level two or three years before, it might well have happened then. But everybody recognised the big issue in Afghanistan that had to be sorted out… was Afghanistan going to be able to sustain itself against a continuing insurgency? The military could contribute resources and they had skills in the area but they couldn't possible do it all. Nor could they work effectively with the aid community without some sort of translation mechanism"*.[115]

Even after Shafafiyat had been set up, counter-corruption efforts were also damaged by inconsistencies of strategy and of military leadership. There was a huge transition of staff throughout the mission, and consistency and institutional memory became great challenges. One interviewee recounts: *"I am not optimistic because changing institutions and bureaucracies is difficult. … The rotation issue has been recognised as an issue for 10 years. But we have seen very little improvement in it and there are very good bureaucratic reasons for that."*[116]

5.4 International development institutions

A wide range of international development institutions have been involved in Afghanistan, but most comments from interviewees related to UNDP and the World Bank.

UNDP came in for criticism from many interviewees. There were problems in the early years, when UNDP was coordinating on behalf of a number of UN agencies. *"They had the coordination role and launched the appeal for UN projects. The heads of the UN agencies on the ground were given 10 days to write $2.7 billion worth of projects. They launched these thousands of projects without consulting the governments and refused to divulge basic information. There was justification is some areas to move quickly – like the return of refugees, but a lot of them were things like building schools and hospitals. This was entirely outside the framework of analysis and policy".*[117]

There were persistent corruption problems with the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), set up in 2002 by UNDP to enable the international community to mobilise resources to strengthen the country's law enforcement. These problems had a major negative impact on the UN and on the confidence of the IC to speak about corruption in Afghanistan. For example, from one senior policy maker: *"By the majority of people living or working in Afghanistan, the UN is considered to be the most corrupt organisation working there. So their image is extremely bad. The majority of the anti-corruption work is done by UNDP, which did not insert the necessary checks and balances of spending millions of their money. We had the LOTFA case where they were spending $1 billion a year without proper checks and balances".*[118]

Similarly, from another international policy maker: *"When I pointed out for example LOTFA, the UN Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, was billing for non-existent policemen in 2005-2006 on a massive scale… we got rather pushed back by our senior people in the UN; I think the UN has a massive problem with that. The pressure on UN managers across the globe is still primarily on spending the money allocated to their programme".*[119]

Competition between the UN and the World Bank was also evident to some interviewees, e.g.: *"In 2006 the UN wrested the coordination function away from the World Bank and that, whether it is a correlation or a causal relationship, and my opinion is that it is partly causal, coincided with a period of declining accountability".*[120]

The same comment about the great autonomy given to UN SRSGs was also made of UNDP. For example, from a former Ambassador: *"Under the previous country director, UNDP did a disastrous job. Many of their programmes were subject to corruption. Didn't take action even when there were reports – people that came forward were punished. Until 2012 they had a bad record. It's a scandal and an outrage. The new country director, because the situation had gotten so bad, has stepped up and taken some initiatives to clean up a particular project, which was beset by corruption".*[121]

The World Bank received mostly positive comments from interviewees on its approach to corruption risks, with The Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund praised for its level of control over funds:

- *"I know for the World Bank, corruption has been a big issue in terms of funding big projects in terms of dams and electricity grids".*[122]
- *"The World Bank, for example, has funded the National Solidarity Programme, which by its nature being a localised community-based development project was able to keep more [of a] check on corruption. It wasn't about giving large rewards to key figures. It was working at the local level".*[123]
- *"There has been a set of anti-corruption benchmarks on the World Bank's engagement in the ARTF."*[124]
- *"When the World Bank had the oversight through the national programme system, the dual key mechanism provided the checks and balances and provided a catalyst for accountability."*[125]
- *"There's a huge difference between 2001 and now; it was the same for all agencies…. There might be different reasons, and as I said the breaking point was 2006-2007, when corruption became an issue to the government and the donors. Each accusing the other. Bill Byrd and the World Bank were also drivers for mapping corruption in Afghanistan."*[126]
- *"The World Bank is, at least for us, very useful because they set very strict conditionality in the area of fighting of corruption".*[127]

Nonetheless, there were also criticisms:

- *"The World Bank was poor in addressing the issue [of corruption]. They seem to have a high tolerance for it. No measures to mitigate it. Accept it as a cost of doing business here. When the subject has come up I've been disappointed in their lack of interest in raising it as an issue or even taking what I would think are obvious measures to ensure the integrity of the program".*[128]
- *"One of the things that was most striking about the World Bank, about the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, I nearly fell out of my chair when someone told me that their auditing mechanism was 'Not designed to detect fraud.' Basically, say for example, they get the receipt from the Ministry of Education and give the money for the cost for the chairs. I asked if anyone actually goes to the school to see if the chairs exist and they said no. I understand that there are some security concerns, but there are ways to work with local authorities and local NGOs to verify these things. That money could be used for anything".*[129]
- *"The World Bank, because they have such stringent contracting rules and that kind of thing, they're a little bit better. However, again, they don't have enough people out in the field. So when they put out an RFP or request for proposals it's the same cast of characters winning, after winning, after winning. And once you get onto the World Bank standard offer agreement there's very little follow up in the field as to whether people are actually producing, and doing what they're supposed to be doing".*[130]

5.5 States

Four themes emerged from interviewee comments on individual states:

1. Public opinion in the home country drove actions on corruption as much as, or more than, policy makers. The change of mood against Afghanistan was to a significant degree pushed by corruption stories, such as "Warlord Inc."[7]
2. A major change of strategy, from an intelligence- / special forces-led operation in 2001-2003 – which by its nature involved co-opting warlords and individuals – to a full-scale engagement from 2004, meant that corruption, as an issue, would start on the back burner for most states. It did not get on to the policy radar until evidence that corruption had an impact on security emerged around 2009.
3. There is a wide range of opinions towards the issue of corruption across international actors. Some states, for example Denmark, were regarded by several interviewees as particularly interested in corruption and transparency issues. Others were seen as not that interested or concerned.
4. The US, by far the most deeply engaged and influential state in Afghanistan, was seen as not having any comprehensive view on the corruption threats to the mission until the later years of the mission. There were many in the State Department with a highly developed understanding of the issue, but the same understanding was not found elsewhere in the US government. Up until 2010, the Department of Defense, the military and USAID were seen to be driven primarily by incentives to spend, not to ensure that the spending was effective and non-corrupt.

Nordic countries were generally similarly well regarded by interviewees, because of the care that they took over the use of their funds. *"The main donors that have been more involved (on anti-corruption) have been Denmark and Norway"*.[131]

5.6 Individuals

Interviewees were asked to identify international leaders who were most prominent in highlighting or addressing corruption as an issue in Afghanistan, and in pushing for reform.

The principal finding was how many interviewees commented that no one had taken a strong profile on this topic: *"I think coordination of the international community is very weak because none of us probably want to be coordinated by the other. But I don't think there is a clear leader on anti-corruption."*[132]

"I've dealt with senior British people and senior Americans on the ground and corruption was never brought up as an issue."[133]

Across the 34 interviewees that did name individuals that took a high profile role on the corruption threats, three names were cited most frequently: the first head of the ISAF Shafafiyat Anti-Corruption taskforce, Lt. General H.R. McMaster, and Generals Stanley McChrystal and David Petraeus, both former Commanders of ISAF Forces.

All three individuals, McMaster, McChrystal and Petraeus received mention from experts in a range of fields, from aid specialists to diplomats, which demonstrated that their actions on anti-corruption were not visible outside of the military. The Afghan leaders named the most were Dr Abdullah, Dr Ashraf Ghani and Dr Spanta.

6. Building the army, the police and rule of law

SUMMARY

The message in relation to the huge investment in re-establishing and training the military was clear: the international military needed to be better trained and better supported on two questions:

1. How to recognise corruption threats that affected the mission
2. How to build transparency, accountability and counter-corruption measures into a national military

Both need to be built in to doctrine, exercises, training and pre-deployment training, in nations and in international missions. Some such measures are emerging in nations and in NATO, but they are not yet institutionalised or at critical mass. The need for specialist task-forces capable of addressing harder questions, such as understanding the spread of criminal networks and illicit funds flows, was also recognised by military interviewees: as was the need for a full-time transparency and counter-corruption group within the national military.

Interviewees noted the importance of embedding transparency, accountability and counter-corruption (TACC) throughout the national military, both at leadership level and in the "back office" functions such as procurement, personnel practices and disciplinary or inspector general mechanisms.

In relation to the police, there was a common view that re-establishing a national police force, and especially one with a focus on transparency, accountability and counter-corruption, was a task that the international community had not yet found any good answer to.

One of the distinguishing features of the intervention in Afghanistan was the huge investment that the IC poured into the Afghan military and police. As a former UN official put it, *"the situation is comparable perhaps only to the experience of Vietnam, where the international community… shored up a client state by immense investment in an oversized military"*.[134] As the primary recipients of international funds, their future role in stabilising the Afghan environment will be crucial.

The dominance of the military and police as core enablers is clear when looking at the 600 pages of interview transcripts. An analysis of word frequency reveals that words like "police" (1014 occurrences), "security" (393) and "army" (178) dominate, while "transparency" (54), "accountability" (95) and "justice" (92) occur far less frequently.

A secondary focus of our analysis has been to ask whether enough has been done to train sustainable military and police forces. The four main areas picked out by interviewees as crucial to this process were: procurement, promotion, payment and oversight.

FIGURE 6: AFGHAN POLICE TAKE CHARGE OF OPERATIONS

(Source: Flickr Creative Commons, Official Marine Corps photo by Sgt Mark Fayloga)

A strong need for integrity-focused training and consistent messaging from IC mentors was also noted by interviewees as a core part of ensuring that international investment in the military and police yields positive results.

Interviewees recognised that training police and military forces in a conflict or post-conflict environment was difficult, and not something for which a pre-established approach could be defined: *"the person who discovers a way of training a professional, clean police force in a post-conflict country would deserve a Nobel Peace Prize"*.[135] It is therefore understandable that efforts to build a functioning army and police force evolved with experience.

6.1 International trainers

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was the lack of training and doctrinal guidance for those training the ANA. This was, however, a problem that military interviewees saw as being readily solvable if time was taken to institutionalise integrity programmes such as anti-corruption training. For example, General Petraeus, formerly Commander of ISAF, commented that *"The way to get at this is to get it into the institutional side of the military services and that is through doctrinal field manuals, through the courses that are run for the commissioned/non-commissioned officer leaders, through the scenarios for training at the combat training centres, and then in the lessons learned centres"*.[136]

Interviewees praised some of ISAF's efforts to raise awareness of corruption for ISAF personnel in Afghanistan, for example the "ISAF Anti-Corruption Guidance".[137] This guidance, which came jointly from the ISAF Commander and the NATO Senior Civilian Representative was specific and clear on how it expected ISAF to act with respect to corruption.

Including guidance on corruption in the overall counter-insurgency strategy seems to have catalysed the inclusion of similar components in the training of both international and Afghan military. There were remarks that suggest that ISAF began to get better at raising procurement and financial management awareness among its personnel by the end of the mission: *"I know from governors and directors from [government] departments that ISAF organised some lectures, and sometimes, probably twice, we had in our bases a conference for local government about economic issues, about funds, about budget and how to spend it, how to construct it."*[138]

6.2 Training the national army

The ANA benefited from the fact that there was one main trainer – the US – with a single organisation having complete control over the training input. As one US policy maker put it: *"the Americans started building [the Afghan military] pretty early on... So they had more time to build that as an institution. In the military, Americans were really big on trying to recruit… and they did all kinds of things on quality control"*.[139]
A Polish military officer recounted how they had achieved a certain level of institutional learning through reducing international staff turnover: *"I requested to have the team for a year and not to have them switched, because a new team would be exposed to plans they didn't understand, and good connections and relations and recognition of who they are dealing with would be lost."*[140]

The oversight structure for military training was therefore relatively easy to manage, a state of affairs that was aided by the control structure that was built in the ANA. In comparison to the Afghan National Police (ANP), the command was tightly centralised to cut down the number of actors who needed to approve decisions.

One interviewee gave a very practical example of this: *"ANA patrols and ANA check-posts were much preferred by truck drivers carrying basic goods. The problem is the ANP, because the ANP is structured around a district and comes under the mayor. The mayor comes under some kind of parallel government… So the head of police in Kandahar couldn't do anything without [the mayor] signing off on it"*.[141]

The way that the military was designed also contributed to reducing the opportunities that army personnel had to engage in corrupt practices. An academic who was engaged in Afghanistan for the duration of the mission reflected that *"one of the reasons you see less corruption in the Army is that they have less opportunity for corruption. They have less interaction with citizens. And that is why former minister Wardak didn't want the army playing a policing role. He knew that if the army played [a policing role] that there would be more opportunity to take bribes"*.[142] Oversight was therefore fairly strong over the military's activities, with both US trainers and the Afghan government aware of the risks involved in deploying new troops into an insecure and highly corrupt environment.

Nevertheless, the system for developing and training the ANA had its flaws. Many interviewees commented on the way in which rapid rotations of international military training staff increased corruption risk. The lack of continuity and the deliberate exploitation of the handovers by Afghans were reported as being damaging to efforts to build a functional Afghan military. While elements of the ANA experience might serve as an example of positive practice for both military and police training in the future, there is a need to refine the process.

6.3 Building integrity in the army

Our interviewees reported that military training, although relatively well developed in terms of putting together an Afghan army that had access to military equipment, fell short in terms of the sort of comprehensive institution-building that would have developed doctrine and ethics that could tackle corruption. One interviewee comments how *"the focus was on developing the army, training and equipment. There was very little effort placed on developing the administration, creating the personnel and systems"*.[143]

This focus was cited as one of the reasons that reformers were unable to understand or control *"deeply entrenched factional interests"*[144] that ran through the old army administration. A senior military officer urged future mission leaders to *"test organisations to see if they can get to a more inclusive political order through how we spend our money, with how we engage, which leaders we empower and really understand the drivers of these local or micro-level conflicts"*.[145]

The failure to adopt a comprehensive training approach that could tackle mindset and behaviour as well as reforming military institutional processes is one of the main regrets expressed by those who were closely involved. There was a strong call to adopt clear and consistent messaging in terms of the ethics and behaviour that should be expected from an army. For example, General Eikenberry, former Commander of the US-led Coalition Forces in Afghanistan and former US Ambassador to Afghanistan expressed it thus: *"Efforts to build transparency and accountability into organisations must be included in the initial project design. The higher the level of development ambition, the more important this becomes"*.[146]

6.4 Reforming institutional processes in the army

Promotion and purchase of posts

The promotion of military personnel is a high-risk area in terms of corruption threats to building an effective army. Without strong institutional structures, factionalism, nepotism and patronage can quickly take root. In Afghanistan, this was one of the key problems identified by interviewees when asked about the future of the ANA. One notes that *"promotion of ranks within the ANA was seen as a very challenging issue that was affected again by nepotism and also the affiliation of political parties and groups… Promotion was not taking place… based on merit or years of experience, so there is a lot of complaint by ANA people about their own ministry"*.[147]

The purchase of posts was also a core problem identified in the military. Promotions were reportedly sold for huge sums of money, meaning that the top levels of command were not only implicated in corrupt practices but that they often had pressing incentives to get money to repay the loans they had taken out for their positions.

Salary payment

One important area where interviewees reported that the ANA had made progress throughout the mission was pay.
A monitoring expert described the improvement: *"In the last few years they [the ANA] have changed the system used to pay soldiers their salaries. Now they at least get some money without interference from their superiors,"* adding that *"this was the most serious issue… having guys out there fighting for their country and they then had to pay bribes to get their salaries"*.[148]

Procurement

Procurement is one of the areas where militaries face a high corruption risk. The secrecy afforded to large swathes of defence contracting and bidding procedures mean that many countries with highly developed militaries still struggle to reduce their own corruption risks in this area. Building transparent procurement processes into a brand new military in a highly unstable environment is always going to be a challenge.

Integrity in procurement is rapidly becoming more important for the ANA as the IC withdraws and the ANA takes over procurement processes that have hitherto been run largely by the IC. Experience so far has been mixed. Recognition by interviewees that the Afghan National Army (ANA) *"has a lot of procurement processes whereby there had been corruption involved, and the friends we know have been contracted, they talk to us about how much they bribe people and how much share they give to others to get those large procurement projects"* [149] highlights both a critical and a complex challenge for Afghanistan going forwards.

6.5 Training the police

The international effort on building the national police was much weaker than with the ANA. There were many different leaderships and programmes, with a visible lack of overall coordination. Once taken over by ISAF, police training accelerated, but was still weaker than training for the ANA.

The main criticism levelled at the approach taken with the ANP was the lack of a coordinated, long-term vision for police reform. As one interviewee put it, there was *"an underappreciation of the situation in Afghanistan – optimism that the police can be reformed fairly quickly [while] not taking in [to account] the factionalism within the Afghan force"*.[150]

The lack of a durable strategy was exacerbated by the involvement of a large coalition of international actors. A UN advisor notes how *"Each of them [the IC countries] brought something from their own country and taught it to [the Afghans]. In other words in the same entity you have different training and doctrine. The same isn't applied to the army"*.[151]

There was also limited police training expertise available. For example, this meant that the mentorship system largely consisted of non-police specialists: a clear weakness in the programme. A Canadian police advisor discussed this problem, stating how *"sadly it was often a military mentor trying to mentor a police leader"*.[152] Interviewees tended to agree that, while police integrity training had made some positive gains, in general the ANP *"needs a lot more leadership training, integrity training, training in loyalty, training in what being a police [force] is"*.[153] Similarly, a former UNAMA official described how *"there's very little room within the UN system for hiring a country specialist … [People] do counter-corruption for UNDP in Bangkok, in Kenya, in I don't know where… We don't have enough people coming from a background of police"*.[154]

The core funding mechanism itself – LOTFA – had significant corruption weaknesses that were exploited by police officers, as discussed in Chapter 4.

6.6 Building integrity in the police

Police integrity training received mixed reviews from interviewees. In terms of good practice, there does seem to have been a concerted effort to get anti-corruption onto the radar. For example, one interviewee related how *"EUPOL had done a lot of anti-corruption training. And they developed an anti-corruption plan, and a lot of training for the police"*,[155] while another recounted how *"we do have anti-corruption in the training… there is an anti-corruption course. It starts at the lowest level through to the advance classes. The 'train the trainers' in principle let the Afghans train their own people and they have to go through anti-corruption training"*.[156] There was also a mentorship programme, which had getting the *"culture of corruption to at least abate"*[157] as a specific goal.

Another interviewee was visibly impressed by the attitude taken by new ANP recruits when faced with integrity training, describing how: *"they ran this officer training course and that course in particular had an anti-corruption piece in it. I don't know how big it was. I walked into the class one day and they were talking about corruption. The young men that were sitting at the tables, it was really quite inspiring. To look at them, you could see the future of the ANP as being quite promising, if they're ever able to get into senior positions"*.[158]

There are also positive signs that corruption prevention and investigation mechanisms are slowly improving, for example through the nascent Police Inspector General system: *"From 2010 you have the Inspector General of the MoI – an American idea – acquiring functionality.*
They started training inspectors to go around and investigate cases. They are still developing the capacity. They now have inspectors in every region".[159]

The time available for training, however, was very short. A US police trainer proposed that more time be taken over tackling corruption issues in future: *"Police training is 6-8 weeks, so not much time for human rights, corruption, and gender issues while you're learning about policing, which is ridiculous. No matter what you train on, when you send them into field and a commander says, 'I need 200 dollars', it doesn't matter what you've been trained on. In one respect they launched an anti-corruption effort, which is a Code of Conduct signed by the Ministry last year and they've done Code of Conduct training reaching out to police at the beginning. But again the problem is as above. It takes a long time to embed and we're not even close doing to that. It's a sign that people are making time for them, but it need to be complemented in leadership"*.[160]

6.7 Reforming institutional processes in the police

Promotions and purchase of posts

Initially, there seemed to be a lack of IC attention on the development of the Afghan police forces. Interviewees noted that attention to the destabilising effect of a corrupt police force increased as time went by, and that promotion procedures were the first priority for reform. A leading expert on Afghanistan reported that *"the US became much more actively involved and there was a brief moment in 2006-2007 when the international community recognised the very damaging effects of a corrupt and predatory police leadership in Afghanistan on state legitimacy and security. There was then an effort to go into a more rigorous vetting process. This was where the IC had consensus on the importance of merit-based appointments"*.[161]

However, the effort was not sustained, and the lack of persistence on the vetting of senior police officers sent out the opposite message.

Once IC consensus on the importance of an improved promotion policy was secured, some reform did have success: *"There were tests and a ranking system, to the point that UNAMA was quite involved and a few individuals within UNAMA were so involved that it became close to becoming a security risk for them"*.[162]

Salary payment

Payment of police officers was another area where interviewees noted significant progress. A police advisor credits the American approach, stating that they *"were very good at recognising that the police have to be paid well"*.[163]

UNDP also received praise in this area, with an aid worker commenting how they *"managed to pay the police officers, which was one of the biggest challenges. And they managed to remove a lot of ghost officers off the payroll"*.[164]

These reforms tackled a very real connection between payment procedures and corruption that had left corruption prevalent in the early ANP. As a senior US officer recalls, there were links between payment, promotion and the collection of bribes on a large scale: *"I routinely saw police on the street shaking down average ordinary citizens for bribes. And it's all connected. In other words, there is no such thing as petty corruption. The police commander had to pay $5m dollars for his position. He has five subordinate commanders and he expects one million dollars out of each of them. They each have their subordinate guys that he expects tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars from and it works its way down to the average cop on the street who has to… it's a pyramid scheme where he has to suck up money from the citizenry to push up the chain in order to pay the bills for everybody's position"*.[165]

Interviewees did, however, emphasise that these reforms were relatively small-scale, highlighting the fact that *"taking the sort of fight against corruption from that level to something that was really going make a difference is obviously very hard"*.[166]

Procurement

Interviewees noted the significant long-term challenges for the ANP, and that one of the most pressing reforms needed was an overhaul of procurement. An Afghan journalist put it this way: *"The police is still very, very corrupt in Afghanistan… A generational change is needed inside the MoI but at the same time we need to change lot of procedure inside the Ministry to make it more transparent, especially their procurement procedure... It should be more open, inclusive, transparent"*.[167]

6.8 Rule of law

Interviewees stressed the key role of the rule of law in Afghanistan, emphasising the need to focus on developing integrity in the judiciary as early as possible, and the importance of allowing anti-corruption experts to develop the rule of law.

Rule of law was described as being central to tackling corruption: *"You cannot deal with corruption unless you can build the rule of law. The international forces are very good at training a national army. The international community… is pretty good at building an army. Every army has its own justice system – if you don't do as I tell you then I can discipline you internally"*,[168] and as being as important if not more important than building integrity in the police force, *"I would have focused more on a judiciary that was independent and respected. I would have started there rather than a police force"*.[169]

Many interviewees emphasised than an absence of the rule of law affects other national institutions, and leads to corruption:

- *"We recognised that security forces and institutions, if not connected to rule of law, are of limited value and could actually be dangerous or counterproductive. So we focused on the judiciary as well."*[170]
- *"Without a solid rule of law running in the country all the other pillars of government start to crumble. It all needs to be supported by rule of law which the population has confidence in. Rather than this continual culture of impunity, which of course the population see and then start pull back from supporting the government."*[171]
- *"We were pushing very hard for the rule of law because if you looked at what caused real disaffection between the population and the Afghan state, corruption was a symptom of it, but [the underlying cause] was the abuse of power, and the absence of the rule of law, and the fact that in many cases the police force was being seen as a predatory force… essentially an armed militia"*.[172]

The development of the rule of law in Afghanistan was only partially successful, for two main reasons. First, the focus on developing integrity within the police force lead to the neglect of other aspects of the rule of law, and secondly, because the international community began building the rule of law at too late a stage:

- Although the development of integrity within the police force was being pursued, two other aspects of the rule of law were being neglected: *"one is prison detention centres and… one is the legal side of the house. His [Petraeus'] response to diplomats that voiced the same concerns about why the military is getting into this was – 'because no one else had'"*.[173]
  One senior government official

stressed the importance of overhauling detention centres: "to help the Afghans with their own detention centres – quite an important element of rule of law needless to say. Of course prisons and other places are where corruption can be a cancer eroding the rule of law."[174]

- Building rule of law needs to start early, and takes a long time. A senior policy maker summed up the views*: "Rule of law is really hard. It is harder in ODA terms anyway because you end up funding things that are pretty close to the edge of the definition or sometimes on the other side of it. I am firmly of the view that that is the thing that takes longest because it is absolutely in the DNA of the country concerned,"*[175] and the international community shifted its focus too late: *"We really didn't start into the rule of law until way too late in the campaign".*[176]

Building rule of law should be done by experts: *"I think one of the lessons that we Afghans have learned, I think we had been talking about it early but no one was listening to it: improve rule of law. And instead of appointing people in the key positions based on political affiliation… it has to be more based on technical professionalism"*,[177] and with a combined effort from both military and civilians.

'We really didn't start into the rule of law until way too late in the campaign.' [176]

7. Conclusions

"Much of the corruption was introduced by some elements of the very poorly planned response and the flood of unaccountable money through multiple channels."[178] As discussed in Chapter 4,the actions of the international community in Afghanistan contributed to the growth of corruption and instability in the country as an unintended side-effect of the intervention.

Our primary objective was to understand why it took so long for corruption to be understood as a threat to mission success in Afghanistan and, from that, to develop guidance that can help the international policy making, military and security communities to prepare better for corruption threats when planning for future missions and assistance. Based on the interviews, we concluded that there were nine reasons why the international community was slow to develop a response to the danger of corruption. These were:

- A lack of appreciation of the nature of corruption threats, plus a decision to use corrupt actors without an appreciation of the implications at the beginning of the mission,
- A sense of complacency within the IC towards the extent and impact of those threats,
- The political dilemmas faced throughout the campaign,
- The primacy of security considerations,
- The perverse spending incentives that prioritised 'burn rate' over outcomes,
- The limited development and mobilisation of anti-corruption tools,
- A disconnect between research and policy on corruption risks,
- Counter-moves by the host government, and
- The weakness of local civil society.

The mission in Afghanistan is not the only mission where there has been a slow or insufficient international response to the threats from corruption. Interviewees made the same point in relation to other missions such as those in Bosnia, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The interviewees did not ask us how Afghanistan was different to other missions – except of course in relation to its much greater scale – but why the problems were so similar to what they had experienced elsewhere.[179]

What might be different next time around?

We think that there are two parts of the answer to this question. First, the corruption problems in Afghanistan have been so widely aired that the awareness of the problem is much wider than before across civilian, military, governmental and media communities. This awareness has encouraged the beginnings of some "answers" to corruption threats in fragile environments. These include, for example, the well-resourced, joint national/ international monitoring committee in Afghanistan, US scrutiny of its major Afghanistan contracts, attention from major donors during the London Conference on corruption, and some of the new training and doctrine on corruption being pursued by the international military.

Unlike in the past, a body of knowledge on the practicalities of addressing corruption threats is now emerging, and various organisations are now able to train policy makers, military and security personnel to recognise and address corruption threats. Improved awareness paves the way for more concrete progress to be made towards tackling corruption threats to missions.

Second, future missions will probably force the IC to concentrate its security policy efforts on some critical corruption-related specifics. We think there are five such areas, which form the basis of framework in the policy briefing at the beginning of this report.

The first of these is not specific to a particular mission and can be set in motion now:

1. Use the growing body of knowledge to better train and equip the international policy and military communities. Practical guidance and a comprehensive toolbox for addressing corruption threats are part of this.

The other four are largely specific to missions, although subject to many common considerations:

2. Be explicit about the threats from corruption from the outset, in the mandate and in preparatory planning.
3. Develop a common, sophisticated and civil-owned approach to addressing the corruption threats that can be adopted by the IC from the outset of a mission.
4. Spend less, measure success through outcomes and not burn rate, and be much more transparent about all levels of spending.
5. Strengthen oversight to reduce corruption risks both to host nation and international institutions.

The growing awareness of corruption threats to missions should galvanise debate and shape the future of international policy in this area. To this end, some of the observations and proposals offered by our interviewees might serve as a basis for this:

Transparency, Accountability and Counter-Corruption (TACC) should be recognised as a formal discipline and corruption-limiting tools such as dual-key controls on spending, the use of joint national-international monitoring committees or the establishment of anti-corruption agencies should be developed.

Those involved in stabilisation operations should **develop a formal toolkit of measures for recognising, analysing, and mitigating and monitoring corruption issues on operations**. The toolkit should include measures that can be applied at large scale in the re-establishment of national military, police and rule of law capabilities.

Establish a higher standard of accountability by IC funding agencies. This is long overdue. All the agencies involved, whether international or national, need to make use of existing international forums to develop a set of requirements for verification of aid and support outcomes that are more rigorous than most that exist today. This standard should also apply to military assistance projects.

Maintain the highest standards within the mission. Setting a good example is essential to the credibility and sustainability of the mission. It is almost impossible to restore the reputation of the IC once local expectations have been disappointed. This may require dedicated TACC staff and leadership at all levels of the mission.

The key message to come from our research is that failing to address corruption threats weakens the international response to international crises. Nevertheless, the growing awareness of the problem and the good practice that eventually came out of the mission in Afghanistan both stand as evidence that progress is possible. Transparency International is committed to helping to find constructive solutions to corruption threats in fragile and conflict environments.

We welcome all engagement, and hope that this framework will help everyone - whether in positions of authority or in civil society - to prepare in a timely manner for the difficult and dangerous threats from corruption in the future.

Annexe 1: The international community's involvement in Afghanistan 2001-2014

Post-9/11, international engagement in Afghanistan was quantitatively and qualitatively different from anything that had gone before. Between 2001 and 2014 the US alone spent $104 billion in aid and reconstruction funds - more than it had given in aid to any country throughout its history and more than it spent on rebuilding Europe (after adjusting for inflation) through the Marshall Plan.[180] The military commitment was also extremely large: International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troop numbers peaked at approximately 132,000 in mid-2011, with 90,000 of them American.[181] But the results of the International Community's involvement are still disputed. As a senior policy advisor warned, *"if Afghanistan fails the test of independence, and the Taliban come back, part of that narrative will be a little bit like what was said about South Vietnam in 1975, this remained a hopeless, corrupt, client state, that had just not built the legitimacy, or the sustainability that will populate support to survive on its own"*.[182] The governance and security situation in Afghanistan leaves much to be desired – proof of the maxim that there can never be a purely military solution to an insurgency.

Corruption underlies many of Afghanistan's problems; indeed some would say that corruption currently underpins the government and the political economy of the country. It may be described as what the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace termed *"systemic corruption", i.e. 'not as a failure or distortion of government but […] a functioning system in which ruling networks use selected levers of power to capture specific revenue streams.'*[183] Corruption pervades the system of political appointments, hampers legitimate economic development and shifts economic activity into areas such as drug trafficking. As a senior Afghan interviewee told us, *"corruption has become a big political factor. If you remove corruption from the Afghan government, it would collapse. Corruption is sustaining the network"*.[184]

Another senior Afghan stated that *"corruption has mattered a lot as a political factor. It has allowed people to come into the power structure. All key government positions were given through corruption mechanisms. This has affected the political development processes in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan there is a political-economic mafia in control of all resources, the economy and power"*.[185]

International success in Afghanistan depends on the existence of a stable and effective government. But does corruption impair stability and effectiveness? Corruption is often seen as subsidiary to ideological drivers of insurgency. But most interviewees countered that an insecure environment enables corrupt networks to function better and sustain instability, and vice-versa.[186] Corruption also has connections with insecurity in the region more generally. Illicit drug trade networks reach deep into neighbouring countries, allowing powerful players to gain influence by supporting Afghan factions and perpetuating the insurgency.[187] It is therefore clear that corruption has acted as a severe impediment to efforts to stabilise Afghanistan.

However, the problem is not limited to the Afghan side: there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that international interventions can unintentionally aggravate and entrench corruption. Without an in-depth understanding of the political system and the role that corruption plays in it, it is easy for things to go wrong.[188] As a prominent international policy maker said, *"There is a link, and certainly a major link, between corruption and people's unhappiness with the government… Although most of the Western governments thought they had provided security, in my view and in the view of many others they have been providing insecurity by making people afraid"*.[189]

PHASE 1: 2001 – 2003

- US Operation Enduring Freedom begins (removal of Taliban regime) (2001)
- Bonn Agreement (established an Interim Authority for six months and set out roles of an UN-mandated force in securing Kabul and training Afghan security forces) (2001)
- International Security Assistance Force established (2002)
- Tokyo Donor Conference (US $4.5 billion in aid pledged over the next five years. Most aid funds used for short-term humanitarian relief) (2002)
- Emergency Loya Jirga (Hamid Karzai confirmed as transitional leader) (2002)

If corruption is overlooked early it becomes much harder to correct later. International engagement in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014 followed a decade of relative disengagement after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. The country had descended into a chaotic civil war among rival warlords and subsequently into progressively more severe Taliban rule. Some states, particularly Afghanistan's neighbours and Saudi Arabia, supported one or other of the warring sides; the United States ordered intermittent air strikes on Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and protested the Taliban treatment of women springing from its extreme interpretation of Sharia law.

As mentioned in chapter 5, the United Nations has a long history of engagement with Afghanistan. It facilitated the 1988 Geneva Accords setting up the terms of the Soviet withdrawal, and from there on in it has been deeply involved in assisting the country.

Understandably, the picture changed radically after the attacks of 11 September 2001. The immediate priority was simply to neutralise Al-Qaeda and its Taliban allies. After the fall of the Taliban the election of a democratic government meant that building the authority of that government with international support became a key objective. There was much talk about economic development and support for democratic institutions, although underlying this was the need to prevent the use of ungoverned space for terrorist activities. Despite significant development and reconstruction programmes; governance and rule of law issues (including tackling corruption) received relatively little attention until 2009-2010. Interviewees agreed that while corruption seriously undermined the effectiveness of Afghanistan's government and the life of the average Afghan, for the international community the immediate military security agenda trumped the anti-corruption agenda. This did not change until Barack Obama took over from George W. Bush as US President:[190]

"After the change in US administration to Obama, corruption was perceived as an important political factor. For the Bush administration, security was a bigger problem. With Obama, corruption became more politicised, especially related to Karzai's government."[191]

The objectives of the international intervention also, inevitably, evolved over time: *"Several transformations of military intervention [were seen] between 2001 and today. Initial objectives were in response to the Taliban's refusal to hand over Bin Laden… Once regime change took place and counter terror and stability operations came into play, they were permanent 2002 to 2008. International military contribution was significant. In 2008 it became clear that more attention had to be paid to corruption. In 2009 it was clear that corruption in Afghanistan was a fatal threat to ISAF's mission. In the summer 2010 we started anti-corruption taskforces, designed to focus on our military contribution to the corruption problem."*[192]

Following the December 2001 Bonn Conference, which set up a political framework for a transitional Afghan government, there were five distinct phases of international involvement.

During **Phase 1** – 2002-2003 –Afghanistan saw two distinct strands of involvement. One was the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), launched in October 2001 in response to the Taliban's refusal to turn over Osama bin Laden, which had primarily counter-terrorist goals. Its mandate did not prioritise stabilising and reconstructing Afghanistan or tackling issues such as corruption and the rule of law. The US did invite allies to establish Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), small civil-military teams with a focus on reconstruction, but their context was counter-terrorism. It was, one interviewee suggested, a *"war on the cheap"*,[193] conducted in the shadow of the impending intervention in Iraq: *"So the US essentially*

PHASE 2: 2003 – 2005

- Expansion of ISAF (NATO takes over ISAF, ISAF takes over a German-lead PRT in Kunduz) (2003)
- New constitution adopted following the 2003 Constitutional Jirga – presidential system of government (2004)
- Berlin Donor Conference (2004)
- ISAF takes over Regional Command North (2004)
- Elections (Hamid Karzai elected in presidential elections) (2004)
- National assembly and provincial council elections (2005)
- ISAF expansion taking over Regional Command West (2005)

takes over patronage of the Northern Alliance from India, Iran and Russia. We provide the money with bribes and weaponry… we're wedded to the illegitimate actors, which are the warlords that lost their legitimacy with the fall of Najibullah government in 1992. So for four years they go about destroying Afghanistan as they fight each other, their behaviour results in the rise of the Taliban who've come in to get rid of the corruption brought about by these characters. But now the characters that were corrupt are the characters we base our whole policy on because the Bonn conference [was] only a conference of the victors and not the losers…. The Bush administration is already planning the attack on Iraq in the fall of 2001. So [there's] a desire to keep everything nice and easy, and the warlords are rebranded as the Afghan National Security Forces."[194]

OEF worked with regional warlords to secure their cooperation in the hunt for Al Qaeda. Reconstruction projects were assessed in terms of their usefulness for counter-terrorism. *"The toppling of Taliban regime was done through a combination of large amounts of CIA distributed money and special forces teams. This is where 'corruption' or 'money flow' and military power aligned brilliantly. Between 2001 and the expansion of NATO… the regions of the country were basically run by warlords who were kept in patronage positions. That set up the parameters for the US and NATO intervention."*[195]

This strategy entrenched the dominance of warlords and gave less priority to reconstruction and governance issues. This view was common across both IC and Afghan interviewees, as exemplified by this international policy implementer: *"Lakhtar Brahimi at the UN and Mr Khalilzad made huge mistakes. At time of intervention in Afghanistan we invited the criminals to the table of negotiation at Bonn. Part of the government was Jihadi, behind trafficking of drugs and humans, they were part of the first government of Karzai and we supported this government."*[196]

Afghanistan's governance structure, first transitional and then officially confirmed by the January 2004 constitution, contributed to solidification of the warlords' influence. The combination of a strong president; less significant Parliament and regional representation; and overall weakness of the Afghan state, forced Hamid Karzai to rely on regional warlords e.g. for the collection of taxes and customs revenue.

During this phase, reconstruction, governance and development activities largely fell to the UN. It established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), responsible for some aid and reconstruction projects, shepherding a more permanent political settlement, demobilising regional militia and collecting their weapons, and for the initial steps involved in setting up the Afghan army and police force as mandated by the 2002 Geneva agreement with donors.[197]
The Bonn Agreement of December 2001 also mandated the establishment of an international force to maintain peace in and around Kabul. The International Security Assistance Force stood up in January 2002.

During **Phase 2** of the engagement – December 2003 to October 2006 – ISAF was taken over by NATO and – with UN authorisation – began to expand across the country, with a four-stage process completed in October 2006.[198] This was accompanied by a reduction in the size of OEF and the transfer of some of its activities to ISAF.

PHASE 3: 2006 – 2009

- Afghanistan compact (poverty reduction and aid effectiveness. Commitments made to improve aid effectiveness. 'Principles of cooperation' is to 'combat corruption and ensure public transparency and accountability'.
- Afghan government agrees to ratify the UN Convention against Corruption by the end of 2006 and to implement 'measurable improvements' in tackling corruption. A 'zero-tolerance' policy for official corruption is incorporated into the counter-narcotics plan (2006)
- ISAF taking over Regional Command South and Regional Command East (2006)
- 2006 Insurgency (Insurgency starts in the south and east, drawing attention away from governance issues)
- Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS established the strategy which is organized under three pillars: i. security, ii. Governance, rule of law and human rights, and iii. Economic and social development (2008)
- Paris Declaration (2008)
- Anti-corruption Agency (High Office of Oversight and Anti-corruption as mandated of oversight function) (2008)
- SIGAR (US Congress established independent oversight of Afghanistan reconstruction and development projects) (2008)
- Barack Obama elected president (2008)
- The Hague Conference Declaration (2009)

ISAF's overall task was assisting the Afghan government in creating a secure environment, including developing and training the Afghan National Security Forces, providing support for civilian-military reconstruction projects, speeding up the disarmament of armed groups and supporting humanitarian assistance operations. The mission's expansion was accompanied by the adoption of the Afghanistan Compact, a successor to the Bonn Agreement, in February 2006. The Compact, while pledging more assistance, set out expectations for the Afghan government: tackling corruption through a set of measurable improvements to governance was one of those expectations. Corruption was also recognised as a contributory factor to the narcotics trade and its eradication seen as one way to diminish the influence of narco-invested warlords. But while the Compact recognised the importance of corruption, in practice the follow-through was limited.

The Taliban-led insurgency, which erupted in the south and the east in the summer of 2006, dominated **Phase 3** (October 2006-December 2009). The focus moved away from governance towards counter-insurgency and security. The imbalance between the military and civilian elements of the international presence —including the relative weakness of UNAMA when compared with ISAF—exacerbated the problem: *"The civilian element to the mission in my time [late 2007, early 2008] was a miniscule component of the setup."*[199] and *"the intervention was a military-led process with the civilian side following the military."*[200] *"The intervention was very much driven by security aspects, insurgency-driven, with very little emphasis on state-building or peace-building. The priority for the Americans and the Western Allies has been Al-Qaeda, Taliban, insurgency, and not so much the population itself. The intervention was very much driven by the military."*[201]

In 2008 Congress appointed the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) to oversee the spending of aid money and the delivery of reconstruction projects. But the importance of corruption as an issue in these new circumstances was not recognised by the international community until **Phase 4** (December 2009-September 2012). One interviewee told us: *"In 2010 I had a conversation: 'Well we're just getting started, we haven't done anything on corruption in the last couple of years.' There was a big shift when ISAF made the shift to a counter-insurgency approach."*[202]

The shift to a 'population-centric' counter-insurgency approach put a premium on reducing civilian casualties and on 'winning hearts and minds' through better governance and improvements in basic services. General David Petraeus and General Stanley McChrystal, both ISAF commanders, recognised that the achievement of the mission's counter-insurgency goals depended on fighting corruption, which Afghans identified as the most important factor in people's support for the Taliban over the Karzai government. Fighting corruption, one NATO official told us, was *'a moral imperative, and it's an operational imperative'.*[203]

The influx of funds into the country following the surge of US military and civilian personnel also contributed to the recognition of corruption as a serious issue: *"Things changed in the 3rd stage, post-General McChrystal… Because it was a surge [before], they didn't have long to get things done, and didn't have time to wait for Afghan government institutions to build themselves. When you step forward, you take the host nation government out of the loop. The ground work was laid before 2009, but in 2009 corruption suddenly became an issue because there was so much money."* [204]

PHASE 4: 2009 - 2012

- US surge, 33,000 additional troops deployed to the south and east (2009)
- London Conference (a phased transition to an Afghan lead on security operations to begin late 2010. Increase in international forces announced. (2010)
- Kabul Conference (security handover - Afghan forces to lead security operations by 2014. At least 50% of aid to be channelled through the government of Afghanistan) (2010)
- 'Warlord, Inc.' Report – report details the diversion of US funds to fund Taliban activities and draws attention to corruption issues (2010)
- Task-Force Shafafiyat established (ISAF) (2010)
- Independent Joint Anti-corruption and Monitoring and Evaluation Committee monitors and evaluates national and international anti-corruption efforts in Afghanistan (2011)
- Bonn Conference II (2011)
- End of US surge (2012)

PHASE 5: 20012- 2014

- Drawdown

In 2010, the House of Representatives' report 'Warlord, Inc.' drew attention to the consequences of corruption, showing that a substantial percentage of US aid money had found its way to insurgent groups. In 2010, ISAF's task-force, Shafafiyat (Transparency), started work mapping corruption networks and providing anti-corruption knowledge and support for ISAF personnel.

In 2012, as the intervention entered **Phase 5** (September 2012-December 2014), troop numbers began to fall and the handover to Afghan security forces began. International donors met at a conference in Tokyo. Alongside further aid pledges, they agreed to the Afghanistan Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF). The Framework stated that "business as usual" was no longer an option and set out measurable objectives for the Afghan government to achieve. One of them was the creation and enforcement of 'the legal framework for fighting corruption including, for example, annual asset declarations of senior public officials including the executive, legislative and judiciary.'7 Nevertheless, progress in eradicating corruption has at best been mixed: in 2013, DfID Permanent Secretary Mark Lowcock stated that more needed to be done.8 *"As NATO troops move towards withdrawal in 2014, they have become less concerned about corruption."*[207]

Annexe 2: Technical Appendix

Topic modelling the transcripts

The transcripts were put through textual analysis software in order to provide a check on the qualitative analysis. By identifying all repeated phrases and connections, without the subjective filter of an analyst, the team could check that it was avoiding subjective bias and ensure that strong arguments in just a few transcripts did not dominate the overall analysis.

At first the interview transcripts were coded for the period the interviewees were in Afghanistan and then analysed using MALLET, a modelling algorithm that draws together topics based on clusters of words that occur frequently together. This uses a form of conditional sampling called the Gibbs procedure, which considers each word in the corpus and generates a probability of it being assigned to a category. The output consists of topic modelling charts, which show the distribution of topics across the different professions, as well as topic stream that shows the topics discussed on the basis of when the interviewees were based in Afghanistan.

Topics that came out of the textual analysis process:

1. **Warlords, Taliban, Karzai and power:** This was the most discussed topic in our corpus, and is also the one that remains the most stable in terms of the extent to which different professional classes of interviewee talk about it. Engagement with warlords in Afghanistan, as well the dominant role of Karzai throughout the intervention, come out very strongly. A preoccupation with the Taliban is also understandably evident. Power is a thread that runs throughout this topic, coming up in connection with all of these actors.
2. **Insecurity and lack of strategy:** The second most dominant topic running through the interviewee transcripts is that of insecurity and lack of strategy. Insurgency, stability, cooperation and coordination are core themes of this topic, and are predominantly discussed by interviewees from a military background. That said, policy makers, implementers and academics also show a strong interest in this topic, with only interviewees from a police background falling behind in the amount of times they mention this theme.
3. **Establishing institutions:** Supporting the establishment of institutions such as procurement and services is another core topic that can be pulled out of the corpus. Our police interviewees show the most marked interest in these concerns, followed by policy implementers.
4. **Donors and funds:** Monitoring, funding and donor programmes were a consistently strong theme in our transcripts. Only lower-ranking military personnel did not dedicate as much time to these issues, with all other professional categories contributing strongly to this discussion.
5. **Western support:** Western support in terms of providing defence capacity, rather than the money discussed under donors and funds, was a theme that the military discussed particularly often. Although this theme is present across all of our professional categories, it is worth noting that all others give predominance to the question of financial support over technical assistance.
6. **Accountability and transparency:** Being both accountable and transparent in dealings with society was a central theme across all professional categories, although it is strikingly dominant among high-ranking military personnel.

7. **Resource flows:** Resource flows is another theme that runs throughout our transcripts regardless of professional background. It is, however, particularly strong in transcripts from interviewees with a police background.
8. **Local capacity and spending:** Local capacity and spending is a central theme across policy, military and academic interviewees, although it does drop from a position of prominence among police personnel. Despite this, it is worth noting that themes such as local context, perceptions and perspectives come through very strongly in this topic, showing a preoccupation among our interviewees with assessing their impact.
9. **Networks and sanctions:** Sanctioning certain networks within Afghanistan is a particularly strong topic among lower-ranking military personnel. While policy makers and implementers do also spend time discussing these tactics, police and high-ranking military personnel do not show great interest in this topic.
10. **Capacity, contracts and budgets:** Capacity, contracts and budget oversight is a significant, albeit weaker than the above topics, theme in our corpus. Policy implementers spend the most time talking about this, although it is far from dominating discussion even in this category. It is, however, a topic that is discussed across the professional spectrum.
11. **Anti-corruption, crime and enforcement:** Anti-corruption, crime and enforcement is a strong theme in police and low-ranking military circles, although it is far less evident among other professions.

FIGURE 7: WORD CLOUD OF MOST COMMON TERMS FROM THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Guideline Question Set for Interviews

1. Afghanistan, the political context, and corruption:

- How has corruption mattered as a political factor over the last 11 years?
- Is there a relationship between corruption and security, or insecurity, in Afghanistan? If so, how does it work?
- In your view, how did regional dynamics with bordering countries affect tackling corruption, and what lessons can be learned for future operations?
- Could you provide us with your overview of the international intervention in Afghanistan since 2001 in terms of the military intervention and addressing corruption?
- How has it mattered as a factor in political and military evolution of the last 11 years? Is there a difference in corruption before and after the international intervention?
- What is your overview of the corruption situation in Afghanistan since 2001?
- Do you think Afghans view corruption the same way as the international community?
- Do you think ethnic divisions play a significant role in levels of corruption?
- How have efforts to tackle corruption varied between provinces? What has been the effect and why?
- What is your view of the nature of corruption in Afghanistan?
- What do you see as having been the main political initiatives in respect of corruption since 2001? Nationally? Through the international community?

2. Corruption threats and risks in Afghanistan, and reasons for the slow uptake of the subject by the international community:

- Why did the international community take so long to recognise corruption as a major obstacle to progress in Afghanistan?
- How well do you think the international community has understood and considered governance and corruption in Afghanistan?
- In your view, what are the lessons Afghans (and others) can learn from the last 11 years in order to move forward?

3. The roles played by international institutions, by states, and individuals:

- Who has been particularly good or bad: states i) US – military, state, ii) USAID; iii) UK – DOD, FCO, DfID; EU; vii) Germany; Canada; Netherlands, etc.). How has the US viewed corruption in Afghanistan? Has it gone through different phases since 2001?
- Who has been particularly good or bad: The World Bank and the UN (UNODC, UNAMA, UNDP)
- In your view, how could NATO, ISAF and the international community have done better, especially in tackling corruption?
- Have there been particular international leaders who have raised the role of tackling corruption? Who? To what effect?
- Have there been particular Afghan leaders who have raised the role of tackling corruption since 2001? To what effect?
- What has been the approach of President Karzai in relation to corruption?
- How has the US viewed corruption in Afghanistan? Has it gone through different phases since 2001?
- How have Afghan strategies – politicians, civil service, military, police – changed to address corruption since 2001?

4. The building of the military, the police, and the rule of law:

- What is your view of corruption levels and relevance in respect of the Afghan police and the MOI, and how, if at all, has it been countered? Please amplify.
- What is your view of corruption levels and relevance in respect of the Afghan military and the MOD, and how, if at all, has it been countered? Please amplify.
- Which military procedures (e.g. doctrine, training, mentoring, monitoring, civ-mil, etc.) have changed in relation to addressing corruption?
- Which police procedures (e.g. doctrine, training, mentoring, monitoring, civ-mil, etc.) have changed in relation to addressing corruption?
- How have the coalition's military, strategic and tactical approaches (if any) to countering corruption since 2001 changed and what have been the effects?
- In your view, how could the national Afghan military and police have done better, especially in tackling corruption?

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