

NIRA Proposals

Afghanistan

--Proposals: State Rebuilding, Reconstruction and Development--

(Outline)

July 2004

Preface

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, a military offensive was launched against Afghanistan as part of the “war against terrorism.” This has brought the issues of state rebuilding, reconstruction and development in Afghanistan to the forefront of the issues facing the international community. Following the conclusion of the Bonn Agreement in December 2001, an Interim Authority was established, the Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) approved the formation of a Transitional Administration led by Hamid Karzai in an emergency session, and the administration was mandated to hold another Loya Jirga to adopt a constitution in December 2003. With these developments, the process of state rebuilding, reconstruction and development seemed to be moving forward.

However, with the ongoing military operations aimed at eliminating the Taliban, the influence of warlords, especially those of the Northern Alliance, is increasing both in the Transitional Administration and in the outlying regions. The resulting backlash is hindering progress toward reconstruction and development and creating fertile ground for the revitalization of Taliban activities. Since the start of the Iraq War, attacks on US military personnel, members of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and the staff of international organizations and international NGOs have grown more frequent. In addition, conflicts have begun to develop between various factions, and confrontations have evolved within the transitional government and between central and outlying regions.

In light of these difficulties, NIRA has been conducting research on the “State Rebuilding Process and Development Assistance in Afghanistan” since 2002. Recognizing the problem as a subtle mismatch between the support efforts being conducted by the international community and the conditions that the people of Afghanistan are actually facing, this research emphasizes the human security perspective in attempting to identify problems from the viewpoint of Afghan citizens themselves. This research demonstrated that the war against terrorism being conducted in the country by the United States with cooperation from Afghan warlords is creating divisions in Afghanistan and hindering the process of reconstruction and development; NIRA has suggested that state rebuilding must be predicated on the participation of the entire Afghan people, and proposed a transition from the war against terrorism to a longer-term “anti-terrorism strategy” that emphasizes reconstruction and development. The report of this research project, *Afghanistan: Challenge for State Rebuilding and Reconstruction*, was issued by Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha together with our various proposals in March 2004. The following is an outline of the proposals concerning State Rebuilding, Reconstruction and Development in Afghanistan submitted by Kinhide Mushakoji, Chairman of the NIRA Study Group on Afghanistan in December 2003, prior to the convening of the Constitutional Loya Jirga in that month. Professor Mushakoji’s proposals will be published on the NIRA website*, together with an outline of the detailed discussions of the NIRA Study Group on Afghanistan.

* [<http://www.nira.go.jp/newse/index.html>].

Afghanistan
Proposals Concerning State Rebuilding, Reconstruction and
Development (Outline)¹

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1. Proposals Concerning State Rebuilding

As the U.S.-centered “war against terrorism” continues in Afghanistan, the growing power and influence of warlords in the country is creating serious problems, including the increasing use of military force and the decline of public order. The clean-up operations targeting Taliban insurgents being conducted in the largely Pashtun south and east of Afghanistan have generated a strong sense of alienation among the residents of those regions, who feel that they have been left behind by the rebuilding and recovery process, creating a climate in which the revival of the Taliban, who are presently receiving support from Pakistan, is being welcomed. The guarantee of public order and the active participation of the entire Afghan population are essential to rebuilding the nation and achieving recovery. To make this possible, it will be necessary to conduct the abovementioned clean-up operations without the support of warlords. At the same time, the “war against terrorism,” which relies on cooperation from warlords, should be transformed into a medium- to long-term “anti-terrorism strategy” oriented towards recovery and development. Only on this basis will the preconditions for a rebuilding process participated in by all citizens, including the Pashtun, be realized.

- (1) To ensure public order, the U.S.-centered Allied Forces should transform the “war against terrorism” into a peacekeeping operation which supports the rebuilding process at the earliest date possible.
- (2) It must be made a fundamental principle that public order should be maintained by Afghan citizens. Mediation in negotiations between warlords will be necessary to ensure a fair and neutrally administered disarmament process, and a new Afghan

¹ This proposal was submitted by Kinhide Mushakoji, Chairman of the NIRA Study Group on Afghanistan, in December 2003, prior to the convening of the Constitutional Loya Jirga in that month. Professor Mushakoji is also Director of the Centre for Asia Pacific Partnership (CAPP), Osaka University of Economics and Law.

military and police force encompassing all religious groups and ethnicities must be established as soon as possible.

- (3) In order to achieve the goals outlined in (2), an administration regarded as legitimate by all Afghan citizens must be established in accordance with the Bonn Agreement. This will be facilitated by reforming the power structure of the Transitional Administration, for example by reforming the Ministry of Defense, which is dominated by ethnic Tajiks from the Panjshir Valley.
- (4) Emphasis should be placed on recovery programs capable of benefiting all the ethnic groups of Afghanistan in order to establish the prerequisites for harmonious coexistence. In addition, there should be a transformation of policy towards an “anti-terrorism strategy” which ensures the security of all Afghan citizens. The participation of Taliban moderates in the new Afghan government, a policy advocated jointly by the U.S. Defense Department and the Karzai administration, is considered an attempt towards the implementation of such a strategy.
- (5) The introduction of a new constitution and new political and economic systems should proceed on the basis of a multifaceted and mutually complementary employment of existing Afghan laws, norms and systems. However, traditional laws, norms and systems which contradict basic principles, such as gender equality, should be revised peacefully and democratically based on a consensus of all levels of Afghan society. It will be essential to employ the consensus-building mechanisms recognized as legitimate by local communities in the process of reaching agreement on the establishment of new systems and a new constitution.

It will be necessary for the international community to monitor both the Loya Jirga (Grand Council) being held to establish the new Afghan constitution and the general election, in order to prevent warlords and Islamists from directly or indirectly influencing their outcomes and to ensure that the will of all Afghan citizens is respected. In the medium- to long-term, the international community should support political reforms instituted by Afghan citizens themselves.

- (6) The international community should examine the ideal constitution and political and electoral systems for Afghanistan from the perspective of conflict prevention. At the same time, it should provide support for policies oriented towards the achievement of reconciliation between ethnic groups, policies designed to eliminate cultural, economic and political factors which contribute to insecurity among the populace. Such policies will supplement the role played by the military and the police force in maintaining public order. It will also be necessary to consider the prevention of possible confrontations over postings of public officials and members of the military and police force.
- (7) The international community should respect the spirit of the Bonn Agreement and support the citizens of Afghanistan in their efforts towards its realization, at the same time as remaining faithful to its commitment to support peace-building and

reconstruction efforts. There must be general agreement within the international community that prioritizing the immediate stability of Afghanistan and postponing the solution of basic problems will not contribute to the future establishment of a legitimate government. Emphasis should be placed on promptly achieving solutions that respect the will of the Afghan people. To that end, the second Bonn and Tokyo Conferences must be held with a clear focus on conflict prevention.

- (8) The general election should not become an occasion marking the withdrawal of the international community from Afghanistan. The fundamental goal of the election, the establishment of a legitimate government, should be emphasized. To enable the new government to be regarded as legitimate, it will be necessary to prioritize the reform of the power structure of the Transitional Administration, in particular the Ministry of Defense.

2. Proposals Concerning Reconstruction and Development

The continuing clean-up operations being conducted against the Taliban are contributing to a decline in public safety and retarding reconstruction and development in an increasing number of regions. The return of large numbers of refugees and the effects of a three-year drought have necessitated the prioritization of humanitarian support. However, the emphasis must be shifted to the reestablishment of mechanisms to ensure public safety (national army and police) and mechanisms of governance in order to enable reconstruction. At the same time, the rehabilitation of agriculture and the construction of infrastructure must be focused on in order to promote independence among the populace, and selective and strategic support must be provided to create employment and guarantee income.

- (1) All support provided should be based on the following fundamental principles: It should be provided as equitably as possible to all ethnic groups and regions of Afghanistan; it should function to reduce conflicts between ethnic groups and regions; and it should function to promote mutual cooperation. Support provided independently by individual nations should also follow these principles.
- (2) The transition from humanitarian assistance to support for reconstruction and development is an urgent issue. It will be necessary, however, to prioritize support for human security, in particular support enabling the most vulnerable groups (widows, orphans, victims of mines and air strikes, internally displaced people, refugees, etc.) to achieve self-reliance, while also respecting the mutual aid mechanisms of the communities concerned.
- (3) The reconstruction of farming villages, in which approximately 90% of the population live, will be essential to the creation of employment and the guarantee of income, in addition to the promotion of disarmament and the repatriation of the refugees presently residing in the cities. Particular importance should be attached to the rehabilitation of agriculture and the construction of infrastructure including irrigation facilities, ring road systems and bridges. In

addition, I would like to propose that support be provided for research programs to benefit agriculture and stock breeding and surveys on the current status of livelihood by region, to be conducted using the resources of the existing national agricultural experimental station and the Departments of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry of Kabul University.

- (4) Support workers involved in activities related to raising the status of women in Afghanistan face intimidation and sometimes even risk their lives. The international community must affirm its responsibility to support the cause of women's rights, and ensure that local women are involved in all support activities and that these activities are planned and implemented on the basis of their input, in order to enable support programs to reflect Afghan women's own perspectives on the relevant issues. It will be essential to obtain a detailed understanding of the various problems which local women face and to cooperate with them in creating systems to support the most impoverished (lower income bracket, widows, etc.) in the short term and to contribute to improving the status of Afghan women as a whole in the medium- to long-term.
- (5) It will be necessary to create an environment in which NGOs will be more than merely low-cost subcontractors, and will be able to use their independence and expertise in specific areas to make a contribution to the improvement of human security in cooperation with local people.
- (6) Regional reconstruction in Afghanistan is being conducted by Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), which are joint military-civilian groups. Unless a clear demarcation is established between support organizations and the military, the possibility that these organizations and the projects in which they are involved will be targets of attack increases. In consideration of the significant adverse effects of military involvement on civilian support activities, it will be necessary to draw a clear line between support activities conducted by the military and by support organizations and to encourage the military to concentrate its efforts on peacekeeping.
- (7) It is necessary to ensure that support activities are not connected with the interests of specific armed factions in Afghanistan or those of specific foreign companies and consulting firms.
- (8) It will be necessary to promote the evaluation of support activities, and this evaluation must be recognized as legitimate by the relevant parties in donor nations and recipient regions. Activities should be monitored and assessments conducted as to whether the principles outlined above are being adhered to. The support offered by Japan to Afghanistan and surrounding nations should also be the subject of such evaluations.

3. Proposals for Japan

Japan's standing is high in Afghanistan because it has not involved itself in power politics. This is a "hidden asset" of Japanese diplomacy. Afghanistan has historically been abandoned when major powers have involved themselves in its affairs, and there is concern in the country that it will again be abandoned. If Japan is perceived in West Asia as being merely a follower of the United States, the nation's diplomatic efforts will be impeded. It will therefore be necessary for Japan to formulate independent diplomatic strategies with regard to West Asia which utilize its "hidden asset," while respecting the nation's relationship with the U.S.

- (1) It will be necessary to develop an original diplomatic framework which employs a human security approach and exploits Japan's "hidden asset."
- (2) Japan should make full use of its experience as an Asian industrialized nation to act as an intermediary in promoting a shift from the "war against terrorism" to an "anti-terrorism strategy" that emphasizes reconstruction and development and attempts to solve fundamental problems in the medium- to long-term.
- (3) It will be necessary to establish the appropriate conditions to enable the reconstruction of roads in Afghanistan, such as making Afghan citizens aware that the construction of roads by Japan will be of benefit to them. To this end, it will be essential to make clear the fact that the objective of road construction is to improve the welfare and safety of citizens at the local level, in addition to promoting economic development at the national level.
- (4) To successfully implement DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration), it will be necessary to cease military intervention and the provision of support to armed factions by the United States and other powers and surrounding nations. To enable this, meetings of nations providing support and surrounding nations should be held on a regular basis. These meetings would have the major goal of establishing a common foundation for security in the nations surrounding Afghanistan and would be held with the participation of observers who had the right to report to the U.N. Security Council, which would judge on the level of progress being made towards achievement of the goal.

To advance DDR, it will also be important to deprive armed factions of their financial resources, which have been increased through the collection of levies for safe passage and drug smuggling. In order to improve the capability of the central government, which is suffering from revenue shortages, to collect customs duties, I would like to propose plans to support the opening of customs offices at the borders and to foster customs personnel. A decisive factor in the genuine advancement of DDR will be the creation of an economic environment in which fighters belonging to armed factions are able to realize that demobilization will benefit them more than remaining where they are, which will promote voluntary disarmament. To achieve this, it will be essential to

create employment and guarantee income by rehabilitating agriculture and constructing infrastructure.

- (5) I would like to propose the establishment of centers to provide venues for dialogue and collaboration among Afghanistan's ethnic groups and social classes, in order to enable them to move towards the achievement of "common security."
- (6) Support for the reconstruction of Afghanistan requires long-term engagement. It will be necessary, therefore, to promote field research on Afghanistan's social structure and diverse cultures with the assistance of Afghan researchers. This research should also consider the relations between Afghanistan and the surrounding nations in which ethnic groups of Afghan origin live.

Postscript

The Afghanistan Donor conference in Berlin concluded on April 1, 2004, reconfirming the commitment of the international community to continue its support for Afghanistan's reconstruction with an aid package totaling US\$8.2 billion over the next three years. With Afghanistan preparing to hold a presidential this October and a parliamentary election next April, the country is entering a crucial stage. Instead of viewing the elections as a convenient excuse for withdrawal, this is the time for the international community to adopt a medium- to long-term strategy based on the reality that instability in the country will continue for some time after the election. The international community must not allow Afghanistan, which has been forsaken every time major powers have involved themselves in its affairs, to become mired in chaos yet again.



About NIRA

The National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA) is an independent policy research body established on the initiative of leading figures from Japan's industrial, academic and labor communities. The Institute was founded in 1974 under the National Institute for Research Advancement Act and is funded through an endowment made up of capital contributions and donations from both the public and private sectors.

NIRA's primary objective is to conduct independent research of the highest excellence which will contribute to the resolution of various complex issues facing contemporary society. The Institute's research focuses on current and emerging issues in many areas, including politics, economics, international affairs, society, new technologies, and administration.

NIRA conducts research both independently and in association with other organizations and provides support for the research activities of other organizations where these complement its own research interests. Research exchanges and the broad dissemination of research findings are other key areas of NIRA's work.

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