

# Essay Collection From Afghanistan:

*Each of these essays addresses some aspect of the need to culturally address systemic corruption in Afghanistan.*

## Developing Mechanisms of Accountability to Combat Corruption

**Mojtaba Salem**

### Introduction

Defined by Transparency International as “the abuse of public power for private benefits,” corruption slows down economic growth and has disastrous impacts on the rule of law and good governance (qtd. in Stapenhurst et al. 2). Stapenhurst maintains that corruption is a symptom of the weakness of public institutions (Stapenhurst et al. 9). In Afghanistan, it also causes the weakness of public institutions. Being a cause and product of institutional weakness, corruption is exacerbated by the lack of public morals and the weak law enforcement.

### Problems and Potential Solutions

The severe economic conditions under which government officials live create a pseudo-ethical justification to commit corruption, e.g., to ask for bribes. Likewise, citizens pay bribes to have access to goods and services in advance of other members of society. The willingness to commit corruption is due to the lack of public morals, which is a different notion from the personal ethics of individuals. Public morals are regulated by a system of incentives that discipline, award, and punish citizens’ behavior in the public sphere.

The severity of corruption could be mitigated through addressing two problems in a sequential order. Corruption flourishes when citizens know that corrupt behaviors will not be punished, nor will lawful behaviors be rewarded. If one sees no incentive to stop paying bribes, why not the bribe officials and receive agreed upon benefits before everyone else? The first step needs to be taken by the legislative branch to incentivize citizens’ behavior by means of statutory laws. Such laws set the terms for public morals and, therefore, have to be massively popularized in society. Just as citizens know that the punishment for murder is qisas, they should be aware of specific punishments for committing petty and grand corruption. This is a deterrent strategy, and its public announcement leaves no excuse for the ignorance of public morals.

The second problem is the weak law enforcement. The weak law enforcement means less willingness and capacity to find corruption and the lesser likelihood to punish corrupt officials. This neutralizes the positive effects of the incentive system, which is set forth on paper. To rectify the weak law enforcement, oversight institutions must be developed as independent organizations that are granted authority by the National Assembly

for reviewing the activities of the government and following up corruption cases to ensure the enforcement of law and courts' decision. It is important to position the branches of oversight institutions within the buildings of governmental organs to perform their monitoring responsibilities.

An example of oversight institutions is the supreme audit institution (SAI). Rick Stapenhurst describes the specific functions of SAIs as to:

help deter waste and corruption by attesting to the financial accuracy of the data provided by the government; checking whether the executive's spending has complied with applicable provisions, laws, and regulations; and reviewing the government's performance; that is, whether it has delivered public services in an effective manner (Stapenhurst et al. 5).

In particular, SAIs report to Wolesi Jirga's specialized commissions for the enactment of realistic counter-corruption laws, which best incentivize citizens' behaviors. To ensure their independence, the executive officials of oversight institutions like SAI are nominated by a joint committee of reputable civil society organizations and international donors to receive a vote of confidence from Wolesi Jirga.

### **Accountability Systems in Afghanistan**

The ultimate objective of guiding citizens' behavior in the public sphere through the enactment of counter-corruption laws and creating SAIs is to make and keep government officials accountable. Therefore, defining accountability is important. In democratic political structures, Rob Jenkins

explains, accountability "concerns the ability of the governed to exercise control over officeholders to whom power has been delegated" (137). In Afghanistan, the biggest challenge is the blurred lines of accountability due to the role of international donors and NGOs.

Central to Jenkins' definition are mechanisms of accountability that govern the relationship between the government and citizens. Such mechanisms deal with the principle-agent problem within the state of Afghanistan. The principle-agent problem states that agents (government officials) should do what principles (Afghan citizens) want them to do, yet agents generally tend to stick with their own interests and ignore those of the public. Mechanisms of accountability do not apply to the relationship between international donors, NGOs, and Afghan citizens. It is not conceivable for Afghans to impose sanctions on international and nongovernmental organizations if citizens consider their behavior unsatisfactory.

International donors and NGOs, as partners of Afghanistan's civil society, should take a monitoring function, provide recommendations for law enactment, and, if their candidates received a vote of confidence, run supreme audit institutions (SAIs). And, understanding that bad incentives, poverty, and the lack of public morals tempt government officials to act corruptly, the mechanisms of vertical accountability must be used to hold various organs of Afghanistan's government to account.

By the mechanisms of vertical accountability, Kaufmann and Dininio refer to "the constraints placed on the behavior of public officials by

organizations and constituencies with the power to apply sanctions on them” (21). The objective of vertical accountability is to make corrupt behaviors more costly. Empowering citizens in the grassroots through providing them with information regarding enacted laws, government’s activities, budgets, the asset declaration of officials, and so on, the media play a crucial role in widening the scope of vertical accountability. According to Figure 3.1, the investigative media, if possessing enough freedom, can help civil society to become more involved to check and balance the local branches of the government (Kaufmann et al. 17).

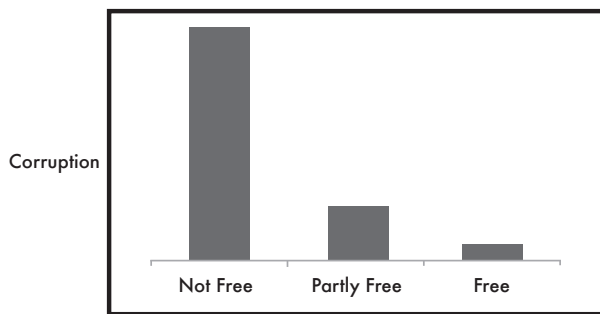


Figure 3.1  
Civil Liberties

*Corruption is Associated with Absence of Civil Liberties*

## Conclusion

It is helpful for different institutions to participate in combating corruption under a well-articulated framework. Mechanisms of horizontal accountability include the enactment of counter-corruption legislature, the regulation of public morals, and the establishment of incentive systems. The levels of corruption are higher where the law enforcement is weak. To fix this problem,

oversight institutions such as supreme audit institutions (SAIs) must be developed with the joint cooperation of international donors, NGOs, and civil society organizations. Mechanisms of vertical accountability include the freedom of information and a free and independent media, which take the counter-corruption campaign to the grassroots of society.

## References

- Jenkins, Rob. “The Role of Political Institutions in Promoting Accountability.” *Performance Accountability and Combating Corruption*. Ed. Anwar Shah. Washington DC: World Bank Publications, 2007. 135-81.
- Kaufmann, Daniel, and Phyllis Dininio. “Corruption: A Key Challenge for Development.” *The Role of Parliaments in Curbing Corruption*. Ed. Riccardo Pelizzo, Niall Johnstone, and Rick Stapenhurst. Washington DC: World Bank Publications, 2006. 13-25.
- Stapenhurst, Rick, Martin Ulrich, and Severin Strohal. “Introduction: Parliamentarians Fighting Corruption.” *The Role of Parliaments in Curbing Corruption*. Ed. Riccardo Pelizzo, Niall Johnstone, and Rick Stapenhurst. Washington DC: World Bank Publications, 2006. 1-12.

# Essay: Good governance: roots and causes of corruption

Javid Ahmad Shayegan

The phenomena of corruption exist persistently over time and space, and this creates challenges that are enormously strenuous to confront. Moreover, as long as the allocation of scarce resources of the world is unfair and unjustified, corruption will remain a challenge. Thus far, it has proved extremely difficult to formulate an encompassing definition for this catastrophic fact. The people of different countries have different understandings of corruption, and they have defined it according to their perceptions and that which they have seen as fraudulent. But I prefer to use the most commonly accepted definition of it: "Corruption involves behavior on the part of officials in the public and private sectors, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves and/or those close to them, or induce others to do so, by misusing the position in which they are placed" (Asian Development Bank).

Afghanistan is in the early stage of democracy and development, thus, poor economic growth, ethnic polarization, and weak democratic institutions pave the way for the demand and supply of corruption in most of its private and governmental sectors. It has been ten years since the international society provided opportunities for the government of Afghanistan to confront terrorists and foster economic growth in the country. Not only has the government failed to eliminate terrorist, but it also did not take significant steps to create a well-

defined strategy to ensure the country's future economy. The current situation of Afghanistan, which places the country amongst the poorest countries of the world, shows that this country lacks necessary economic infrastructures. As a result, the government's budget is not enough to support all its sectors, and the low wages of employees cannot cover their family expenses. Therefore, this in itself, promotes corruption. Finally, low economic development and low civil service wages are indeed associated with a higher corruption rate.

The corruption issue is also related to ethnic polarization in the deeply divided societies of Afghanistan, and the conflict among the different ethnic groups has been a major part of the history of this country. It has become almost customary for Afghans feel obliged to demand favor from their co-ethnic coworkers or relatives in an office environment, and most see this as the only way to obtain a position in the government. Also, most of the governmental positions are given based on ethnicity, not the level of capability and education. At the same time, the increase in such malpractices by ethnic leaders causes fear of social ostracism and the loss of employment for officials under their command, which grants such leaders dictatorial powers. These kinds of rivalries between different ethnic groups in the country fostered patronage politics and bureaucratic predation.

Political instability is one of the reasons for the weak government institution in the country. The unclear, bureaucratic system in Afghanistan caused people to tire of the government and prefer to demand the supply of corrupt services. For instance, when a person finds it difficult to get documentation processed by the government, they may usually pay bribes to officials to help the process. All in all, these issues caused people to not trust the government and take distance from it. So, the government's failure in delivering services increased the demand for and supply of corrupt service in the country.

Eventually, the government of Afghanistan, in order to fight against corruption, should formulate and monitor the implementation of the following anti-corruption strategies:

The government should develop suitable economic infrastructures such as highways, ring roads, railways, and other transit ways. Furthermore, the government should amend the laws related to banking systems according to the requirements of modern banking systems. It should also monitor and regulate the private banking laws in order to prevent bankruptcy or other fraudulent acts, such as those that happened with Kabul Bank. Otherwise, the banks may lose their credit and validity among the civil society, and foster the emergence of a black market economy in the country. A restructuring of the taxation system could also be of benefit, since if done correctly, it could promote growth and foreign investment.

The government should take steps in order to limit ethnic polarization. Government positions should be given on a merit-based system. The punishment for the discrimination against another ethnicity, language, race, and religion should become part of statutory law. And there should be a specific department that can investigate and prosecute the issues related to discrimination against other ethnicities.

Democratic reform from high level of the government positions to low level. The government office should be held accountable for the authorities who are in charge of this reform, which can stimulate the process of diminishing the gap between people and government. Moreover, the information about the responsibilities and service cost of the governmental offices should be provided for the civil society, which is possible through mass media or by the regarded office itself. Procedures and regulations should be written on the notice board of the regarded department for example, to make it more convenient for citizens to access.

Judiciary and any other departments are guardian of law, and they are the basic institutions of a good governance, and require strengthening. As a student of law, I know the judicial system of the government is the most corrupt institution in the country. So, if the judiciary is itself corrupt, how can we expect existing of rule of law in the society? Moreover, if we want presence of rule law, then there should be a certain way of investigation of corrupt acts.

It is very difficult to catch corruption. No one will disclose that he or she bribed someone to

award a contract or the person was given stock to approve substandard construction. So, the investigators have to follow news stories and look for suspicious actions. They also need to review financial transactions and provide phone numbers and email addresses for anonymous tips. Investigators may try to find scope of the offense, duration of the offence, and magnitude of offense. These all help the investigators to better apprehend the corrupted official in order to better serve their society. Then, the investigators arrest the people who are doing wrong; they have to guarantee that they apprehended a criminal; however, it has the risk of alerting other wrongdoers that their activity has been discovered. Moreover, they can delay arrests in order to apprehend others (Iscoe).

In conclusion, this paper illustrates why corruption emerges and how it relates to different factors such as poor economic growth, ethnic polarization, and weak institutions in Afghanistan. And there are also several basic solutions to combat corruption in Afghanistan such as strategies for economic growth, diminishing of ethnic polarization, democratic reform, and making access to information for civil society. Finally, the government must strengthen the judiciary and other related department, which are the basic institutions for the presence of rule law.

## References

- Asian Development Bank. *Publications*. 2011. 6 12 2011 <[www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org)>.
- Iscoe, Craig. Public Corruption Investigation and Prosecution. District of Columbia, 2010. Transparency International. *Corruption Perceptions Index 2011: A call to action*. 2011. 3 12 2011 <[www.blog.transparency.org](http://www.blog.transparency.org)>.

## Essay: Administrative Corruption and Its Consequences in Afghanistan

It is generally recognized that corrupt authorities assist outlaws in continuing illegal activities, crippling state's economic growth, retarding administrative obligations, and undermining public trust of the Afghan system.

Curbing and successfully fighting corruption in Afghanistan can best be conducted through the protection and support of the people reporting the corruption, motivated observers who contact media, and responsible authorities who take counter measures to annihilate corruption in Afghanistan.

Administrative corruption is no longer a fresh term for the people of Afghanistan. Even though the public observes administrative corruption as a bizarre phenomenon, corrupt individuals consider it a valuable source of income. It is generally recognized that corrupt authorities assist outlaws in continuing illegal activities, crippling a state's economic growth, retarding administrative obligations, and undermining public trust of the Afghan system. Widespread administrative corruption plays a significant role in the instability of Afghanistan and appears to have greatly benefited certain people in sudden increases in their wealth. Administrative corruption undoubtedly establishes a habit of expecting tips in exchange for performing official obligations and diminishing public confidence placed in public workers serving them.

In Afghanistan administrative corruption promotes immoral actions, which are deplored by the people of Afghanistan. For example, increased poppy cultivation and drug trafficking, which fueled growing insurgency in Afghanistan, is directly attributed to the administrative corruption. Key governmental posts are said to be acquired through auction process, with the sum set for the position ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Therefore, a large bribe of this amount of money paved the way for office holders to assist the criminal. Moreover, administrative corruption paved the ground for even more prohibited activities such as raping, kidnapping, and even killing because perpetrators can bribe themselves out of a court action. This is why position holders ignore public issue resolution and willingly seek personal interests and gains. The corruption is unchallenged and there is no strong process in place to catch the corruption, let alone a system to quash the corruption. Besides that, bribed government officials weaken the purpose of benefitting the public good, and instead contribute to hampering progress.

Administrative corruption is clearly an inferior tool that may make wrongful acts prevail but also undermines positive societal growth. Bribery is an action through which one can illegally obtain another's hard-earned money, and private assets. A corrupt individual will certainly explore various means and methods to acquire bribes,

and his coworker(s) will simply emulate his deeds for personal gain and therefore contribute the prevalence of corruption in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, bribery initiates from a very low level. For instance, when you watch security personnel at checkpoint(s) along the highways, particularly during the night, you will notice the truck drivers are asked for baksheesh, which is later be shared with an immediate supervisor. Who knows what was in that truck or why the baksheesh was voluntarily paid. Anyway, Afghans will subsequently witness or be victims of devastating incidents due to taking this illegal baksheesh. Administrative corruption emboldens criminals to speed up their destructive, hurtful, and seditious actions because corrupt officials can help them in conducting their illegal activity. Instead of encouraging people to abide by the law and pay the full amount set for the violation of rules and regulations, corrupt individuals are more than willing to fill their own pockets through bribery. Administrative corruption is thought to be a strong economic assault to the Afghan government progress.

Thwarting administrative obligations has an adverse impact on the fragile Afghan economy. First of all, its devastating impacts inhibit the unswerving support provided to the country from generous Western donors by undermining the desired growth from the support. Unfortunately, most corrupt people have links with high-ranking officials who underpin their illegal activities in Afghanistan. Corrupt authorities can certainly broaden their minimal experience of gaining shurrah due to the position and support

received from the higher ups that chose him to run the job. Slower administrative performance leads to economic catastrophe in Afghanistan because resources are either not correctly used or misused. Corrupt people would appear to be inspired by achieving shurrah as part of their job without considering its tremendously negative impacts on Afghanistan's fledgling economy. If someone gets to a department, the person in charge would appear not to follow the procedure to tackle issues, or else she/he will not be directed correctly to acquire needed help unless shurrah is offered for the action. A small amount of bribe to even a petition-writer can give immediate results, and you would be surprised by the tempo of the fulfillment in Afghan administration.

Undermining public trust is a day-to-day occurrence for the corrupt authorities in Afghanistan. State-owned offices are the only places where people can refer their daily business- and nonbusiness-related issues to seek formal assistance. Applicants see meeting officials as an opportunity for righteously and peacefully resolving their issues. However, acquisition of various forms of shurrah such as vehicles, money, property, and even animals through administrative corruption erodes public trust of decision-makers, and the public cannot condone their unjust decisions and unlawful behavior. A corrupted system and illegitimate decisions of authorities frustrate the public and make them distrustful of bringing their issues to the formal system. The public's feeling of general distrust of decision-makers clearly has contributed to the insecurity and instability of



Afghanistan. Gaining public support is a vitally important aspect of governance, undermining the opposition's efforts to challenge government policy. For instance, Kabul Bank's financial fraud strongly reinforced national and international concerns ranging from lower to higher level authorities involvement in the worse corruption scenario ever recorded in Afghan history. The presidential election fraud and more recently the parliamentary election fraud in Afghanistan undoubtedly sapped confidence placed in the system due to administrative corruption.

Administrative corruption or fraud is a phenomenon that can be eradicated through

persistent monitoring of the culprits via electronic means while in office and through severe punishment for those involved. The methods for dealing with shurrah, detecting corrupt individuals, and curbing corruption in Afghanistan can best be conducted through the protection and support of people reporting the corruption, motivated observers who contact media and responsible authorities who take counter measures to annihilate corruption in Afghanistan.

# Essay The Greatest Need: Leaders of Integrity

Captain Felisa Dyrud (USAF), *Anti-Corruption Task Force*

*Baar-e kaj ba manzel na merasad.*

(A crooked load will not reach its destination.)

~Afghan proverb

What is the greatest need in a place like Afghanistan? Food, rain, schools, roads, midwives, demining organizations? So many things are desperately needed. With 35% unemployment, anecdotal evidence as well as population surveys reveal that what is still foremost on most Afghans' minds is survival: finding work and feeding their families. A thousand types of aid and billions of dollars have poured into the country, but it is widely recognized that in many cases this continued deluge of assistance seems to be pouring into a receptacle with a giant hole in the bottom—it is, in many cases, misused, mismanaged, and misappropriated. The name we give that hole is corruption, and pessimists believe it is irreparable: that the cup is not only half empty but continuing to drain, that it is just part of the culture. This brief article suggests an alternative vision: that the solution lies in transformation at the hands of Afghans—the construction of a new cup which is sound, albeit not perfect (for what system or culture is?). The vision is a renewed

version of a culture mangled by desperation and despotism—a culture that will prize integrity because it is the quality that enables trust, without which a nontyrannical government cannot successfully rule and care for its people. The greatest need in Afghanistan is for leaders with the character, boldness, and tenacity to effect this transformation.

An enormous challenge faces the government of Afghanistan. On the one hand they must visibly make progress toward building conditions that enable Afghans to survive (and eventually thrive)—such as those laid out in the Afghan National Development Plan, recently approved at the Kabul Conference in July 2010. They must, on the other hand, develop government systems and security forces they can trust to protect these conditions.

The success of these government entities and security forces will depend in large part on the strength of their leadership, at both the highest

## **Integrity** *n*

- 1. adherence to moral principles; honesty**
- 2. the quality of being unimpaired; soundness**
- 3. unity; wholeness**  
[from Latin *integritas*; see **INTEGER**]

**(Collins English Dictionary)**

and tactical levels. These leaders must, above all, have integrity. In the long term, then, the single most strategic investment in the future of Afghanistan is discovering the best way to train and mentor leaders of character who will tackle the present and future challenges of their nation, in an upright way—but an Afghan way.

Afghanistan needs visionaries who can both see clearly the root problems that exist today and hold on to a sometimes unlikely hope that transformation is possible. It needs leaders who are willing to give more than expected, serve rather than be served, take responsibility instead of cheat, and accept less rather than deprive someone else. It requires leaders who inspire others by their words and even more by their actions. Afghanistan needs these kinds of leaders in all areas of society: business, medicine, law, education, politics, and in a uniquely urgent way, in the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)—its military and police. In the realm of security, the demand for personnel, equipment, and infrastructure needed to police, protect, and gain the trust of a country with the geographic

and ethno-linguistic diversity, economic and educational deficits, and a dizzying history of ancient and recent conflict calls for a historic effort led by exceptionally strong, inspired, and servant-hearted leaders. Where will they come from?

**Pashto Words for the Concept of Integrity**

**Rishtiyawali:** implying honesty, truthfulness  
**Saadiqwali:** truth, verity, truthfulness, honesty  
 (From the Arabic root—same as in Dari)

**Dari Words for the Concept of Integrity**

**Dorosti:** implying honesty, truth, correctness  
**Amaanat:** implying honesty, trusteeship  
**Raasti:** uprightness, truth, straightness  
**Tamaamiat:** entirety, wholeness  
**Be aibee:** without fault or defect  
**Kamaal:** perfection, good breeding  
**Sadaaqat:** truth, verity, truthfulness, honesty

In 2010, leader development was a top priority in the Afghan Ministries of Defense and the Interior, the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A), and ISAF. But we may have mistakenly assumed we were developing leaders by putting uniformed people through courses. Encouragingly, the career of every member of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) now includes professional military/police education and training such as literacy, branch-specific schooling, and professional military education (PME). These are all necessary to create a baseline of skills—to professionalize the officer and non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps. However, even the massive feat of sending all ANSF members, in the recruit-train-assign model, through a carefully laid-out series of professional courses does not equal producing leaders—especially leaders of integrity.

NTM-A has recognized this fact, recently revising the underlying mantra of “build the army” (read:

“quantity, quantity”) to the mantra of “quantity . . . with quality.” Yet it is not totally clear how that quality is actually attained, and we are still most concerned with numbers—not slowing the throughput of trainees, getting soldiers out to the field, having measurable growth to report. The approach has largely consisted of “more school, better school” with significant initiatives like the founding of an Afghan Defense University (ADU), literacy training for tens of thousands at a time, and enhancing the programs and systems of institutions like the National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA).

It is important to reiterate that none of this is bad—it is in fact all very good. However, the critical question remains: for these institutions and programs to succeed in the long-term, and for them to produce the kind of leaders Afghanistan needs in the critical realm of security (the transformation of which has the potential to impact all of Afghan government and society), who will lead them? Who, at each level, will both articulate and model a lifestyle and professional ethos which commands trust and respect? What kind of training and mentoring will identify and develop these leaders?

with real life so that concepts learned can be immediately applied. It must be based on values—not so-called Western values, but universally recognized principles of uprightness, applied and understood in the Afghan context with examples, stories, and terms that are readily understood and easily transferrable to others. It must be interactive—creating an environment where participants are free to discuss, grapple, and even disagree. Finally, the training must be exceedingly relationship-based, like Afghan

culture. The instructors or mentors and students must be able to say to each other: “And when the going gets rough, I’ll be here. We’re in this together.”

In this description lies the reason why the coalition has not done

much of this type of training so far. We are outsiders and visitors with, generally speaking, an embarrassingly limited understanding of language, culture, and what it means to be Afghan. Though we can say that as a coalition “We will be here; we are committed to your success,” very few can say that individually. We are here for 6 months or a year... and then we are gone. Barely enough time to learn how to greet and make small talk.<sup>1</sup>

**Training must be:**

- **Intensive, yet immediately applicable;**
- **Based on values, yet steeped in Afghan context;**
- **Interactive, ability to grapple and disagree; and**
- **Relationship-based: “I will be here when it’s time for the tough**

Training must be intensive, yet concurrent

Perhaps another reason why we have not pursued

<sup>1</sup> The important roles of mentors, Afghan Hands, and those like them (such as many PRTs and other partnering units), is addressed further on in the article

more of this focused, advanced leadership training is because the numbers will not be impressive in the media. We are not talking about doing this type of training for all 300,000 or more soldiers and policemen projected to be serving in Afghanistan. The number would be relatively quite small and selective, since candidates would be screened in a competitive process. From those, fewer still will emerge as leaders who will change the face of the nation.

It is striking that many of the great leaders we recognize arose to confront a desperately important task facing their generation, country, or people. Martin Luther King Jr. saw the injustice faced by his race in his own country, and could not stand to let it continue. William Wilberforce likewise recognized the outrage of slavery for what it was and did not give up speaking, praying, and acting on behalf of the oppressed until it was abolished. Names like Nelson Mandela and Abraham Lincoln inspire respect not only because they were successful leaders, but because we recognize what they stood for as exceedingly right. There have surely been many strong personalities who used their power for terror and evil—these we may acknowledge as leaders, but we do not admire nor aspire to be like them.

*Challenges-* Leaders are born with unique qualities and gifts. But they are also nurtured—and tested. By calling leader development one of our key priorities at NTM-A, we affirm that leaders can and must be trained. The potency of the leaders just mentioned and many others developed from a series of challenges, choices,

and relationships.

*Choices-* The first is somewhat circumstantial, the level of gut-wrenchingness of a human's trials having only partly to do with his or her inputs to the system. However, without adversity a leader will not reach his or her potential just as muscles do not grow without strain and tension. Let us say for the sake of argument that challenges and hardship are ingredients that exist in plenty for the nascent Afghan leader.

The response to those challenges—one's personal decisions—are another critical element in determining what kind of leader one becomes. This is worth emphasizing because a person who consistently chooses honesty and uprightness even at great personal cost may not see the immediate positive effects of these choices, but must know that he or she is thereby becoming a person who can be trusted and followed, one who is willing to stand out for the sake of justice and truth.

A person who chooses to seek out opportunities and challenges will grow, whereas a person who chooses to stay safely in the realm of the familiar will not. In addition to elements of personality and natural inclination, decisions are influenced by factors like culture and upbringing, education (or lack thereof), access to certain options and opportunities, and especially relationships.

*Relationships-* The people who surround a leader, and especially those in regular and close proximity to him/her undeniably have a profound effect—whether for good or ill. The type of

training described above focuses on the last two dimensions of developing a leader: equipping him to make wise and often difficult choices via the processing of key underlying issues ahead of time, and keeping him accountable through trusting relationships that develop among trainees and mentors.

The role of coalition mentorship and the personal relationships that develop during the course of these assignments are not insignificant. Yet with most mentors in place for a year or less, and most beginning that year without significant depth of experience in the local context, not to mention language training, many simply will not reach the level of a trusted, long-term sounding board. And with Inteqal<sup>2</sup> on the horizon in the next few years, these temporary roles must be replaced with a plan for continued mentorship and investment in current and potential leaders. The role of the Afghan hands of the AF-PAK Hands Program is also important. The vision for their commitment, which is for at least 3-5 years of assignments in and out of country, involves immersing themselves the Afghan community and building enduring relationships.<sup>3</sup>

One of the missing pieces in the plan for leader

development of the ANSF has been tapping into local capacity for conducting values-based leadership training and creating networks of leaders from both the civil and military sides. We must not underestimate the power of a growing group of men and women with a shared understanding of leadership and integrity, an expectation of personal accountability, a willingness to think deeply and challenge the status quo, and a vision for their country. The coalition and GIRoA must seek out organizations such as Morning Star Development and School of Leadership – Afghanistan that can train, inform, and inspire the future leaders of ANSF, and who have the ability to create enduring relationships and accountability networks, having roots in Afghan soil. It is said: “If you want to be prosperous for a year, grow wheat. If you want to be prosperous for a decade, grow trees. If you want to be prosperous for life, grow people.”

To be “prosperous for life” in Afghanistan, a major effort of NTM-A and the international community must be to grow people . . . leaders of integrity who will in turn grow many others.

---

<sup>2</sup> Transition

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/news/afpak-hands-begins-immersion-in-afghanistan-2.html>