

# DIAG EVALUATION

## Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups in Afghanistan

A project of the United Nations Development Programme  
& the Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DIAG was created in 2005 as a follow-on to the 2002-06 disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of Afghan Military Forces that was carried out by the Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme of UNDP. Both the DIAG and DDR projects come under the Afghan government's Disarmament and Reintegration Commission, chaired by His Excellency the Second Vice-President, with His Excellency Minister Mohammad Masoom Stanikzai as Executive Vice-Chairman.

The utility of ANBP as a flexible political tool is widely recognized. Alongside the D&R Commission, ANBP provides a platform where Afghan ministers and governors and military and police personnel can find leverage points, and meet donors and partners seeking political solutions. The D&R Commission's existence fulfils a key UN strategy for combating illegal small arms, and is the place where issues of small arms and armed groups can be discussed by a wide range of concerned ministries: insecurity is as important for the education, health and transport systems, as it is for police and military officials. Without the D&R Commission, there can be no coherent national campaign for peace. ANBP has a critical role to play as the donor counterpart organisation for the D&R Commission, and DIAG is recognized as an important project not only for arms control, but also for promoting good governance, sustainable development, and peace and reconciliation. ANBP and DIAG are important political tools for peace, and give good value for money.

Given the deterioration in security throughout southern and eastern Afghanistan, it is not surprising that donors are disappointed with the impacts of DIAG. Former *qomanders* in the north are saying that it may be time to re-arm, in case the Taliban return to power. The US army has indicated its intention to launch an Afghan Public Protection Program (APPP): armed community militias who may receive weapons from the US. The Afghan government recognizes that there are strong arguments both for and against this strategy, but arming communities clearly does nothing to advance the short-term interests of DIAG. Some observers feel that DIAG should close down: re-arming the groups DIAG has just been disarming can seem rather absurd.

In the view of the evaluation, DIAG's political potential outweighs such short-term frustrations, despite the fact that key DIAG indicators are disappointing. The programme can be made more efficient and more effective, and there are recommendations to this effect. But the essential point concerns its political value for Afghanistan. A large majority of both Afghan and international stakeholders believe that DIAG has an important political and security sector role to play. **The evaluation recommends** that DIAG objectives should expand from the disbandment of armed groups and arms collection to a wider ambition of weapons management – of which disbandment is just one aspect – and the promotion of governance, development and peace as part of the Afghan government's strategy to promote long-term security and stability.

DIAG is a mechanism for weapon management and regulation across Afghanistan until these responsibilities are handed over to a strengthened Ministry of Interior. The MoI DIAG Unit is now established, and private security companies are in the process of being registered. This represents a significant achievement for DIAG and its weapons management objective. Weapon licensing and registration for private citizens has also begun. Five hundred IAGs have now declared themselves 'disbanded' and several dozen

districts are supporting this process, which means that fewer firearms are in public circulation. The number of weapons collected has been small, but ammunition and explosives continue to be collected and destroyed. A weakness has been the failure of ANBP to convince the government that it would be cheaper and better, and safer, to destroy collected weapons rather than to store them. So long as weapons are surplus and stored, they will leak into the black market. **The evaluation recommends** that a public weapon destruction ceremony should be organised and filmed, to avoid leakage, save money and promote public confidence in the peace process.

Some of the key contributions of DIAG to Afghan governance include the vetting process of senior government appointees and of election candidates, thereby eliminating certain warlords and known armed criminals from public office. DIAG can help make the coming elections more than a fiction. The vetting process itself strengthens DIAG by turning certain commanders away from violence and bringing them into the political process. DIAG's carrot-and-stick policy suffers from the international coalition's inability to adopt a common approach to weapon management and from ISAF commanders' reluctance to enforce DIAG's disarmament aspect. **The evaluation recommends** greater use by ANBP and DIAG of District Development Assemblies and Community Development Committees (including women's committees) and rural mosques to improve the impact of the 'carrot', which purports to offer development projects as an incentive for disbandment and weapon management, and the surrender and/or registration of weapons. Even in dangerous areas, new strategies could be tried through CDCs and mosques if adequate resources are provided to ANBP. However, the development aspect is weak, and recommendations are made for its strengthening.

The present system of ANBP three or six-month staff contracts creates unproductive administrative work, and weakens the programme as staff seek more permanent employment. **The evaluation recommends** that the continuation of ANBP and DIAG should be decided for seven years, with the Steering Committee approving a five-year action plan and three years of assured funding. Unless this timescale is respected, the haemorrhage of staff will continue. **The evaluation recommends** that a donor conference should be held in or before December of each year to review progress, fix targets, and approve the content of the programme and the budget for the coming three years. In July 2009 a plan should be produced, and at the end of 2009, when the first round of elections should have been completed, actions and funding should be approved until end 2012; otherwise donors and the Afghan government should decide clearly that they do not want ANBP to continue.

Better monitoring and evaluation is essential, linked to a more coherent development approach, but neither can happen without guaranteed medium-term funding. An even greater priority is political commitment from the Afghan authorities and the funders. For development to reach former IAGs quickly and effectively, contracts need to be signed with Community Development Committees to avoid the cumbersome procurement procedures of central government. A Presidential Decree is needed, and provincial governors must support DIAG actively. For PSC controls and district re-mapping to work, the government must remove obstacles posed by influential security and business interests. Successful weapon registration cannot be done in Kabul: gun permits should be issued in the district with the signatures of officials who actually see the weapon and know the gun owner.

The attraction of computerized records and compiling a national database – which may

prove unusable in practice - must not block the objective of achieving realistic management of weapons in every community across Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Military objections must not be allowed to obstruct the destruction of unused weapons. Coherent international support for DIAG must be mobilised. The special interests of influential GOLIAGs cannot be allowed to undermine the weapon management objectives of DIAG. Centralisation will restrict DIAG's impact. **The evaluation recommends** that if the necessary political will cannot be mobilized for DIAG to achieve its objectives, the programme should be closed.

## **Acronyms used in this report**

AITM	Afghan Institute for Training in Management
AMF	Afghan Military Forces
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANAP	Afghan National Auxiliary Police
ANBP	Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme
ANP	Afghan National Police
APPP	Afghan Public Protection Programme
APMASDP	Anti-Personnel Mines and Ammunition Stockpile Destruction Project "Ammo Project"
ATA	Afghanistan Transitional Administration
BCPR	Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
CBO	Community-based organizations
CDC	Community Development Councils (of NSP)
CIP	Commanders' Incentive Programme (of ANBP)
CRIB	Commanders' Incentive Review Board
CSO	Civil society organizations
CSTC	It means 'ISAF military people supporting ANA'
D&RC	Demobilization & Reintegration Commission
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
3D4R	Successful DDR needs 3Ds and 4Rs: DDR is not enough
DIAG	Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN
FRP	Financial Redundancy Package offered to CIP commanders
GAP	Government Appointments Panel
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
GOLIAG	Government Officials with Links to Armed Groups
HWC	Heavy Weapons Cantonment
IDLG	Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDDRS	International DDR Standards (published by UN)
ILO	International Labour Organisation of the United Nations
IMS	Information management systems.
INGO	International NGO
IOG	International Observer Group
IP	Implementing Partner
ISAF	NATO forces working in Afghanistan
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDU	Mobile Disarmament Unit
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoE	Ministry of Education
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled
NABDP	National Area-Based Development Programme (MRRD & UNDP)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSDP	National Skills Development Programme
NSP	National Solidarity Programme (of MRRD)
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PWD	people with disabilities
ROM	Regional Office Manager (DIAG and ANBP)
RSPE	Reintegration Support Project for Ex-Combatants
RVC	Regional Verification Committee
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SRSg	Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TSA	Transitional Safety Allowance (given to XCs in 2003)

UNDPA	United Nations Department for Political Affairs
UNDPKO	UN Department for Peace Keeping Operations
UNFPA	UN Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMACA	United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan
UNODC	United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme of the United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation of the UN
XC/Xcom	ex-combatants

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## **1. History and Context of DIAG and ANBP**

### ***1.1. Context: ANBP and designing the new Afghanistan***

The establishment of the Afghanistan's New Beginnings Programme (ANBP) was announced under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in February 2003 at the Tokyo Conference on Consolidation of Peace in Afghanistan, as part of the Afghanistan Transitional Administration (ATA) package for Security Sector Reform (SSR) to support the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, now the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

ANBP assisted the Afghan government's Disarmament and Reintegration (D&R) Commission to establish and implement a comprehensive, country-wide Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme planned for approximately 100,000 Afghan Military Forces (AMF). By 2006, 63,000 AMF ex-combatants had been identified, disarmed, demobilized and given training to assist them with re-integration into civilian life. However, the decision to limit DDR to those combatants registered as members of the AMF under the Ministry of Defence left large numbers of men remaining under arms, and linked to other non-AMF armed groups.

With the mandate of the DDR project restricted in scope to disarming and disbanding only the AMF, it became necessary to create a second project to disband those illegal armed groups (IAGs) which remained outside the DDR process. To initiate the project, the Government drafted the Gun Law and Security Company legislation in order to signal its intent, with the creation of a Joint Planning Cell as part of a preparatory assistance project supported by UNDP. Through a joint venture, ANBP/Joint Planning Cell produced key outputs, including policy discussion papers in conjunction with key ministries. At this time UNDP/ANBP provided policy advice, qualified personnel, logistics and administrative assistance to achieve the goal of disbandment of IAGs. The project was placed under the leadership of the Second Vice-President's Office, with project implementation through the D&R Commission and the Joint Secretariat.

The President tasked the D&R Commission (originally created for DDR) to oversee DIAG implementation. Chaired by HE Vice President Abdul Karim Khalili and managed by Vice-Chairman and Presidential Advisor Mohammad Masoom Stanikzai, the D&R Commission consists of the Joint Secretariat (D&R Commission and ANBP) as well as other stakeholders including government ministries (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Defence and National Directorate for Security), international military forces and donor countries.

This commission provides policy guidance to the programme and coordinates the process of weapons collection and storage, as well as ensuring development of community projects, across multiple government ministries commissions.

ANBP is staffed mostly by Afghan personnel, and the programme is based in Kabul, where its central office is linked to eight regional offices in Mazar-i Sharif, Kunduz, Bamyan, Kabul, Jalalabad, Gardez, Kandahar and Herat. In addition to DIAG, ANBP also runs the Anti-Personnel Mine and Ammunition Stockpile Destruction (APMASD) project, which closed in early 2009 when ANBP handed the project over to the Ministry of Defence and where ISAF

will take over providing technical support. There is a strong argument for strengthening the Afghan staff, yet also for having an expatriate in every ANBP regional office to increase the prestige of the Afghan Regional Director and maintain the international nature of the programme. This was the policy previously, using UNVs, and it was a success.

The key partners in the implementation are D&R Commission, Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Ministry of Defence (MoD) and National Directorate of Security (NDS). Ministry of Hajj & Islamic Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyred, and Disabled and Ministry of Education are other government bodies supporting DIAG. Additionally UNDP/ANBP works closely on DIAG-related issues with UNAMA at a strategic and policy level. Donors, with Japan as the focal nation, remain involved in DIAG, as do international military forces.

The key contextual challenge for the success of DIAG as a peace building mechanism remains the insecurity in the South. BBC World News reported on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2009 that 2,118 civilians were reported killed in 2008, of whom 1,566 were killed by insurgents and 552 by NATO troops.<sup>1</sup> The actions of 'Pakistani Taliban' and 'Al Qaeda' appear to be as important as any Afghan Taliban.

The BBC report stated that \$200 million per day has been spent on military operations since Operation Enduring Freedom began, while \$7 million per day has been spent on development. If any statistic can explain the lack of peace in Afghanistan and the failure of the International Coalition, surely this is it.

DDR activities were not part of a proper DDR process, as there was no legal frame or agreement between parties and armed groups apart from the Bonn Agreement from which the Taliban were left out. The rebuilding of the country did not take place; it brought stabilization to a certain category of people but did not stabilize the country.

Director of IOM, ANBP Implementing Partner, July 2007

## **1.2. Initial strategy for DIAG:**

### **DIAG - the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups project.**

The DIAG project is the continuation of the DDR and CIP processes under a new name and with different parameters. DIAG began in July 2005, when it was determined by the Afghan government that illegal armed groups were a threat to internal security and stability. A strategy evolved of offering community development projects in exchange for weapons and disbandment. DIAG's strength is that it is a government-led project overseen by the D & R Commission, which is chaired by Vice-President Karim Khalili. The

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<sup>1</sup> These are UN estimates. Agence France Presse on 21 January 2009 reported figures of nearly 4,000 civilians killed, citing a report *The Plight of Afghan Civilians* by the independent Kabul-based group Afghanistan Rights Monitor (ARM). The report says 3,917 civilians were killed, more than 6,800 were wounded and around 120,000 were forced out of their homes in 2008. More than 2,300 were killed in insurgent attacks, including 930 in suicide bombings. Around 680 were killed in US air strikes. NATO says that just over 200 civilians were killed mistakenly last year by foreign troops.

Executive Vice-Chairman is Minister Mohammad Massoom Stanikzai. Although the AMF had been officially demobilized, the presence of other informal armed groups in Afghanistan was seen as a continuing threat to security, and therefore to development.

**DIAG's stated aims** are two-fold:

- a. To support the government through disarmament and disbandment of illegal armed groups, and reduce the level of armed violence in the community;
- b. To empower existing government programmes for socio-economic development to enhance stability and the promotion of good governance, an essential part of security sector reform in Afghanistan.

These aims do not explain that DIAG is structured to collect "weapons in exchange for development" – a mechanism that has been used by the UNDP and other agencies in places as disparate as Albania, Cambodia, Mali, and the Balkans. The 2006 BCPR mission described DIAG as a political and a law-enforcement programme, and wondered whether its structure as a development programme would allow its essential nature to be expressed. It praised as 'innovative and worth pursuing' the idea of working through commanders of armed groups, rather than attempting voluntary civilian disarmament - a 'rich source of lessons to be learned in Afghanistan and elsewhere.'

In para 82 the BCPR team remarked that, 'If the programme is successful in disbanding illegal armed groups, Afghan security structures are unlikely to be able fill the security vacuum that may be created. The Afghan National Police (ANP) has neither the capacity nor the legitimacy to provide security for the population.'

As long as police reform was stalled, DIAG faced big challenges. The problem of *de facto* armed groups disguised as private security companies was also perceived as a threat to stability. As police reform has slowly improved, Operation Enduring Freedom has continued fighting and, as a result, general insecurity has increased in the south and east and also the west, to the extent that DIAG has become irrelevant in many regions of the country. As one former commander in the north of the country observed, "With the Taliban growing stronger, we need more arms, not less arms."

The original three-year design for ANBP neglected the complexity of 'reinsertion and reintegration' of former fighters, and ignored armed groups that were not part of the AMF. This project design error was imposed by the donors. DDR has been the most successful of the five pillars of Security Sector Reform, and the donors – led by Japan - were generous with funding that was adequate and flexible.

Most of the beneficiaries of DDR were part-time jihai, fighters who returned to their farms after the war ended, and for them this DDR process was an unexpected bonus. Some of the long-serving jihadis were left out, however, and these are bitter men who feel they fought against communism to win the liberation of their homeland and they have been forgotten. The DDR table below (supplied by ANBP on 27 August 2007) indicates the number of XCs and the number of weapons collected:

<b>Disarmament</b>	<b>Demobilization</b>	<b>Reintegration</b>
63,380	62,376	53,145
<b>Light Weapons handed to MoD</b>	<b>Heavy Weapons collected for MoD</b>	
38,099	12,248	
<b>Total weapons destroyed</b>	<b>Total weapons collected</b>	

56,163	106,510
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The Disarmament & Reintegration Commission, Chaired by Vice-President Khalili with Minister Stanikzai as Executive Vice-Chairman, is the appropriate high-level mechanism for coordinating inter-ministerial actions and the Afghan government's partnership with UNAMA and UNDP in the delicate security sector. The mandate of the D&R Commission was extended to cover destruction of surplus weapons and ammunitions and explosives, and the DIAG project that was created when the need to negotiate with non-AMF armed groups was identified as a priority.

By presidential decree 50, remnants of the AMF and groups that had never joined the AMF were declared illegal in June 2004. It was estimated that up to 1,800 illegal groups comprising some 120,000 persons were still operating in the country. As the DDR project only dealt with the AMF forces, the follow-up DIAG project was formulated to deal with these now-illegal groups.

When discussing IAGs, we quickly run up against a conceptual problem concerning Afghanistan's counter-narcotics (C-N) strategy, defined by President Karzai as one of the five pillars of Afghan SSR. The repression of opium crops currently undermines DIAG by exacerbating violence and, indeed, the C-N strategy undermines a great deal of the country's search for security. Destruction of the opium crop began in 1971, and it failed. The policy is still failing, because it opposes the most fundamental of all the laws of economics: the law of supply and demand. There is a strong demand for opium, and if that remains true, there will always be suppliers.

As long as national and international policy prefers repression and confrontation with opium farmers instead of consultation and collaboration, peace will not come to southern Afghanistan. It is not possible to destroy a man's livelihood and remain his friend. Developing alternative cropping systems is a *sine qua non* for reducing opium production – and there are welcome new moves within the Ministry of Agriculture in this direction, funded by the UK. DIAG may be able to develop provincial partnerships with the MoA. Developing alternative uses for the opium crop is also essential, so that this part of the Afghan economy becomes both useful and legal. Why do France and Australia grow 'medicinal' opium and make hefty profits, while Afghanistan does not? Making morphine for export would create jobs and allow the Afghan authorities, for the first time, to gain some legal leverage over some part of the opium harvest. A new counter-narcotics strategy is urgently needed.

The Acting Programme Director of ANBP is aware of the challenges. Innovative directions for DIAG have been discussed and will be introduced in the following section.

The police chief of Badakhshan province – who had been recently appointed through the Ministry of Interior reform process – narrowly escaped an assassination attempt. The likely reason? He had shut down heroin laboratories and supported the implementation at the district level of police reforms that would have limited the capacity of illegal armed groups to benefit from the heroin trade.

DIAG, as originally conceived, was ill equipped to face this new challenge, necessitating as it did intelligence sharing, strengthened law enforcement capacity, and high-level political engagement. It was also essential that ISAF – including all 37 of its contributing nations – be prepared to back up enforcement operations. Such backing was agreed to by the ISAF commander and provided for in the DIAG Concept of Operations, but ISAF troop contributors have been inconsistent in their support.

SRSR speech, Tokyo DIAG Conference, 21 June 2007

### ***1.3. Changing directions of DIAG: a focus on weapon management***

Initial DIAG efforts focused on disbanding IAGs on a provincial level. It quickly became clear that disbandment would have to take place on the district level. Centrally, DIAG targeted Government Officials Linked to Illegal Armed Groups (Goliags) with the aim of breaking the link or removing them from their post. While progress was made, in 2006 efforts began to revise the DIAG strategy, policy, implementing procedures and operational design. This Strategic Review was finalized in early 2007 with a corresponding Action Plan and Ten Lines of Effort to implement the recommendations of the Strategic Review.

Two critical developments were formed from the review.

**The first was the creation of a dedicated DIAG unit within the Ministry of Interior (Mol).** This unit, situated within the Counter-Terrorism Department of Mol, focuses exclusively on DIAG whilst simultaneously allowing access to other cells within the Mol in order to coordinate efforts between DIAG, counter-narcotics, police reform, etc.

**Secondly, a new focus on capacity building emerged,** far larger in scope than had been previously envisaged in the DIAG Project Document. The purpose for the surge in capacity building efforts is to ensure the sustainability of the project results when the government takes over full responsibility. In this regard, ANBP created nearly a dozen new temporary posts comprising of both national and international mentors that focus primarily on capacity building and coordination of government parties so the government can fully take over the project in 2010.

However, capacity building takes time: this is a medium-term strategy, and the evaluation does not believe it is possible to achieve the stated objectives in less than three years. **The evaluation finds** that the long-term strategy is sound, but handing over to the Mol in 2009 or 2010 is not realistic.

The strategic plan objectives reflect the changing direction of DIAG, from a disarmament project of ANBP to becoming a governance and development programme for districts that succeed in agreeing on a weapon management programme. However, rather little thought was given to the challenges of governance and development for a team with an essentially military outlook. The 2008-11 Strategic Plan offers new targets for DIAG under the UNDP heading of democratic governance:

- **Objective:** Strengthening accountable and responsive governing institutions: National, regional and local levels of governance expand their capacities to manage the equitable deliveries of public services and support conflict reduction.
- **Outcome:** The democratic state and government institutions strengthened at national and sub-national levels to govern and ensure the delivery of quality public services, including security with special attention to marginalised groups.
- **Outcome:** Law and order institutions at the national and sub-national levels strengthened and physical security of the population improved. Area of co-operation: Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights
- **Outcome:** By 2009, an effective more accountable and more representative public administration is established at the national and sub-national levels, with improved delivery of services in an equitable, efficient and effective manner.

It seems that the Steering Committee is in danger of confusing DIAG with too many objectives and too many expected outcomes, some of which go way beyond what DIAG can reasonably be expected to achieve. If the 2006 BCPR mission was correct to describe DIAG as a 'political and a law-enforcement programme', then it is legitimate to ask how it can then be a weapons-for-development programme and also be transformed into a governance programme. **The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should focus on weapon management. Development and governance aspects should be handled by ANBP, of which DIAG is one project. The 'development' part should be handled by ANBP, which will ensure coordination between DIAG and the development agencies. If donors want to broaden the mandate to 'governance', this should be ANBP's mandate and ANBP should be given the separate means to handle this aspect in a similar way.

For a project like DIAG to succeed, it is important to understand why people joined armed groups and became part of the conflict. This knowledge can also help prevent them joining armed groups again. According to Utrecht University researcher Gert Gompelman's 2007 study of Xcoms, the reasons quoted most frequently by ex-combatants in this research was that they were defending their *din* (religion), *vatan* (country) and *namoos* (honour). Especially former *mujahideen* quoted the Soviet invasion and the subsequent need to defend these values as the most important reasons why they joined armed groups. But the younger former *mujahideen* said there were no other economic opportunities for them than to join the *mujahideen* parties. This is borne out by the fairly low socio-economic and educational status of the ex-combatants. According to the ANBP Fourth Client Satisfaction Survey, they had the following characteristics:

- In general ex-combatants are young: 60% are 20 to 30 years old;
- More than 80% are married, with 70% head of up to 10 family members with about 40% below 10 years old;
- 90% are soldiers without any ranking;
- 56% of those interviewed are illiterate;
- 22% have no or less than five years of work experience;
- 48% have work experience in agriculture, 15% in small business and the rest in different areas (ANBP/DDR 2006).

These, then, are the clients of DIAG, together with their commanders who are smarter and

richer and older than the majority of their group members. It is immediately clear that DIAG, to be successful, needs a strong economic environment. If the Xcoms have no work, they will return to their IAGs.

This is emphasized in the opening paragraphs of Vice-Presidential Decree No 1886 on Re-Mapping, dated 1387 /06 /19 (2008/09/09 - in translation):

1. Although DIAG has remarkable achievements in different provinces of Afghanistan, on the basis of people's consideration and solid realism, we see that in some of the provinces the Illegal Armed Groups are still active and operating. Their operation, in general, poses threat and causes financial and life damages to the people of Afghanistan.

2. On the other hand, the operation of these groups will cause them to ignore and defy the law. In the meantime, from the inception of this Programme, a large number of high commanders, who were leading many sub-groups have been disbanded, but despite the fact that they are disbanded, they are still doing their illegal operations whereas their presence itself put the stability and security of the country in menace and under question.

It is worth noting that the D of DIAG stands not for 'disarmament' (nor for 'disbursement') but for 'disbandment' of illegal armed groups. This is important, because 'disarmament' is no more acceptable in Afghan culture than in Texan culture. Afghans in general, Pashtuns in particular, regard the right to carry arms as inalienable. The rifle is a sign of manhood, like taking a wife and begetting children. However, there is no precedent in Afghan culture for a man having to own a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) or a heavy machine gun. **What Afghanistan needs is not disarmament, but weapon management.**

DIAG is a voluntary weapon management project and this should be its focus. DIAG has been successful in helping the Ministry of Interior with the regulation of private security companies and their weapons. DIAG has been successful in helping provincial governors in certain districts to negotiate the registration of weapons, their surrender and cantonment, and the acceptance of 'DIAG compliance,' which means that IAGs no longer operate in the district and – in exchange for their promised good behaviour – a \$150,000 project (or \$300,000 under the new plans) is offered to the local District Development Assembly for the benefit of everyone: often a school or a clinic, although delivery has been excruciatingly slow and this is one area DIAG and the MRRD will have to improve.

#### **What weapon management involves is:**

- legislation to clarify who is allowed to carry or own what type of weapon, and for what purpose;
- making a clear distinction between 'hunting' and 'military' weapons;
- repression of military weapons, so that private citizens carry only 'reasonable' arms;
- transfer of weapon policing responsibility from soldiers to police forces ;
- training police to ensure they know and understand the rules and legislation on firearms and how they should respond;
- ensuring that military and police weapons are carried only by people on duty and in uniform;
- support of police weapon-management actions by judiciary, politicians and

- military;
- registration of firearms, so that 'illegal' weapons become 'legal';
- major public awareness campaign on the law and on the dangers of firearms;
- repression of illegal firearms through policing (check points, searches, etc);
- strengthening border controls and awareness of customs officers to repress weapon and ammunition smuggling;
- training of border guards, police and other weapon management officials;
- promoting cross-border collaboration and the harmonising of weapon legislation;
- voluntary collection by police of illegal weapons and munitions (periodic amnesties to encourage people to hand over firearms and explosives without fear of arrest);
- destruction by police of illegal weapons (to avoid resale or 'leakage');
- destruction by military of collected ammunitions and explosives (to avoid 'leakage' and accidental explosions);
- licensing and control of all sales of firearms, explosives and ammunition;
- licensing and control of all arms manufacture, including artisans;
- licensing and control of all guard companies;
- licensing and training of all guards approved for carrying weapons;
- background checks / morality certification for all applications for gun licences;
- licenses should be allocated only with signed approval of local village elder and local police chief;
- morality checks should include approval by spouses in case of men with records of violence;
- seizing of weapons and refusal of licenses to men who are guilty of domestic or social violence;
- seizing of weapons and refusal of licenses to men who are guilty of crimes;
- careful management of government armouries and stockpiles;
- regular audits of government armouries;
- destruction of all surplus and outdated stocks of weapons and munitions;
- acceptance that elimination of firearms is unrealistic, that guns cannot be removed from society: so weapons management must become an acceptable alternative, with weapons either licensed, surrendered, buried or hidden, any of which represents progress compared to a post-conflict environment where firearms are used to cause fear and to extort payments from people.

**Conditions for weapon management success:**

- weapon management accepts that society contains weapons, and that they should be subject to reasonable control;
- weapon management requires a political consensus seeking to ensure social harmony and individual safety;
- weapon management must be accepted by the population as a reasonable policy, a trade-off between the freedom (mostly of men) to shoot and freedom (often for women and children) not to be shot;
- weapon management requires rigorous and honest police forces enforcing clear and accepted laws and rules;
- weapon management requires that police actions should be supported by government, politicians and judiciary;

- weapon management can only work if registration and enforcement are applied at the lowest administrative (district) level;
- weapon management involves grassroots participation, for only local people know who can be trusted with a weapon;
- weapon management can be strengthened by regional and national databases, but these will only be effective if the decentralized registration system is efficient, and provides good data.

#### **Objectives of weapon management:**

The primary aim is to reduce the use of firearms, measured by:

- **Objective:** fewer incidences of armed violence, leading to
- **Outcome:** a greater sense of security in the country,
- **Outcome:** freer circulation of goods and people,
- **Outcome:** increased trade and prosperity,
- **Outcome:** greater social and economic development, because violence and instability obstruct development and are among the causes of poverty,
- **Outcome:** improved local governance as leaders and local police accept responsibility for registration and management.

### **1.4. Progress made to end 2008**

#### **1.4.1. Achievements**

Over the past three years, certain modest but concrete results have been achieved by DIAG (April 2009):

- 77,000 'operational' weapons have been handed over so far to the MoD (43,000 collected by the DIAG project).
- 296,346 pieces of ammunition – 30,000 metric tonnes - have been collected and/or destroyed.
- 4,815 weapons have been collected since the inception of DDI in April 2007.
- 502 groups have been officially disarmed and disbanded.
- A new district-level approach has been adopted, known as DDI = DIAG District Implementation strategy.
- 49 of the 104 targeted districts are deemed 'compliant': of the 364 districts in Afghanistan, a third have been contacted.
- 62 development projects are underway, although only five have been completed and fourteen others have started building.

The project has so far disbanded 502 illegal armed groups, a significant milestone even if – according to Vice-Presidential Decree No 1886 quoted above – they are not all weaponless, leaderless, or incapable of committing more crimes and extortion. Is that a failure of DIAG? No, the evaluation considers it a recognition of the reality of post-conflict societies everywhere and in every century. The international community needs to find work for XComs and create the environment that will allow them to earn sustainable incomes. If the men who give up their weapons cannot earn an honest income, they will return to the gun. Crime will always seem more attractive than starvation.

It may seem strange to put so much more emphasis on the responsibility of donors rather

than that of the Afghan government, but this is a reality of recent history. It is not simply the opinion of the evaluator, but a generally acknowledged fact that, belatedly, the West has been forced to recognise the fundamental mistakes of 'Charlie Wilson's War.'<sup>2</sup> Firstly, Western secret services and the Pakistani ISI funded, armed and trained only religious extremists: many of the moderate Afghan leaders were killed, including President Karzai's father who opposed armed religious extremism. Secondly, the West abandoned four million Afghans in the refugee camps of Pakistan and Iran, leaving them in hopeless poverty with only *deobandi medersas* offering medicines, education and ideologies. This failure of policy has contributed significantly to the destabilization not only of Afghanistan, but of Pakistan as well. Thirdly, the West and Pakistan accepted the absurd compromises of the 1992 Rabbani 'government' and then did nothing to stop the fundamentalist armies they had created from tearing Afghanistan apart and destroying Kabul. DIAG is picking up the pieces of that period of failed Western foreign policy making, none of which was created by the present Afghan leadership.

DIAG then has had a significant number of measurable successes, but together they make a very limited contribution to the stated objective noted above: "Strengthening accountable and responsive governing institutions: National, regional and local levels of governance expand their capacities to manage the equitable deliveries of public services and support conflict reduction."

In a pragmatic move, ANBP has moved DIAG into a new partnership with Ministry of Interior, creating a transition phase to the Mol's Counter-Terrorism Unit. This is a coherent strategy but it will not answer the objective unless the transition phase is extended from 12 months to allow time for this 'responsive governing institution' to 'expand its capacities' to develop 'regional and local levels of governance.' **The evaluation is convinced** that the strategy will fail unless DIAG is given time and political support to decentralize the weapon management systems it is trying to put in place. Mol capacity needs to be increased country-wide. Registration of weapons and private security guards/companies must be carried out in every district: there is no point in limiting the Mol transition to Kabul. A 'database' that claims national coverage really exists only if it is rooted in grassroots collection of data.

All this DIAG activity has given birth to five databases as follows:

- Weapon Registration and Licensing (began February 2007; is now in Mol)
- Weapon Reference Identification (in Mol)
- Illegal Armed Groups (four data entry clerks are in-putting this data in the Joint Secretariat)
- Private Security Companies with 20,000 people and 39 companies (+ 26 close behind): data entry clerk not yet hired.

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<sup>2</sup> The name of a book and a film that describes how the CIA obtained billions of dollars for the *mujaheddin* through the support of US Congressman Charlie Wilson. We should not forget the billions more from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf that were spent on weapons, and also from other western powers. They/we all share the blame both for the weapons and for the fact that four million Afghan refugees were left to rot in refugee camps where radical Islam was the only education/ social security/ life solution on offer.

- A monthly database prepared inside DIAG for use by the Operations Unit.

#### **1.4.2. Challenges for DIAG**

**Insecurity** is one of the main challenges encountered in the implementation of the DIAG project. The deteriorating security situation is poor nationwide, with particular instability in the South, East and West. The worsening security situation in some regions inhibits operational activity - negotiations as well as the transport of weapons. Another area of concern is the lack of cooperation between members of the so-called International Coalition. The US army's Operation Enduring Freedom works to its own rules, on a separate mission from ISAF (NATO) forces which have mostly failed to provide physical coercive support to DIAG in its disarmament mission.

**Insecurity has not been noticeably improved by the strategy known as PRT** = Provincial Reconstruction Teams. These are expensive, and in many ways counterproductive, since they invite soldiers to be development agents. American army PRTs are reluctant to do business with DIAG. Some PRTs – like the British – are civilian-led, but the distinction is lost on Afghans who see so many army-led PRTs. Civil society complains that military involvement in development projects is inefficient and also inappropriate since it endangers the lives of civilian development workers (several of whom have lost their lives in the past year) by confusing military and civilian operations. The government complains that the PRTs pay large sums of money to warlord-contractors to build stuff that could have been constructed at less than half the cost by CSOs and/or communities without putting money into the pockets of warlords.

**Government capacity, political will and the rule of law are weak, especially in the provinces.** As a direct consequence, too many security vacuums still exist where the Mol is unable carry out decisions taken by the D&R Commission. As an indirect consequence, commanders of IAGs feel little obligation to comply with Presidential and Vice-Presidential decrees, and many continue to rule their local areas with impunity. The DIAG project constantly feels this lack of political will, as commanders are protected by politicians and provincial governors ignore weakly-stated government policies.

**The Mol is weak**, both centrally and in terms of its influence in the provinces. Many donors consider Mol corrupt and incompetent, and believe that the Mol willingly allows IAG commanders the freedom they need. In short, many donors see Mol as a problem rather than a solution, and do not believe in the DIAG transition partnership. **The evaluation notes**, however, that none of these critical donors has offered a coherent alternative strategy. All observers, Afghan and international, applaud the recent appointment of the effective and respected HE Minister Atmar as Minister of the Interior. ANBP is currently working to strengthen the capacity of the DIAG Unit within Mol to implement DIAG successfully, but capacity building takes time.

**DIAG has not disbanded nearly enough IAGs in the provinces.** This relates back not only to insecurity, but also to the issue of government capacity and political will, where the government is unable to enforce disbandment. Governors do not always carry out the decisions made by the D&R Commission, and since the creation of the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) (which reports to the presidential palace) in 2008, provincial governors and police chiefs report to different ministry bosses. Many Goliags retain their posts, often with police backing, and many commanders have political patrons

in ministries or in the legislature that ensure them impunity. It has been hard to achieve consensus on candidates proposed for positions as for the Chief of Police or other similar posts. For DIAG to succeed, stronger and more unified political leadership is needed.

**DIAG does not have a development strategy, nor any in-house development capacity.** It is difficult to put together a Weapons-in-Exchange for Development programme, which calls for a combination of diametrically different skill sets. While DIAG has all the skills needed for weapon management and disarmament, it has been unable to find the organisation(s) able to deliver development projects to satisfy the needs of the IAG members. The district-level construction projects – five of which have been built by MRRD – have been slow, and they do not offer ‘development’. New approaches need to be explored by ANBP, using NSP and the experience acquired by ANBP of working with Implementing Partners during the DDR project.

**Public information outreach has remained weak.** This is a hangover from the poor performance of DDR publicity. The message of DIAG has increasingly spread into the provinces and districts, but the rate has been slow. Managers claim that “DIAG” is a household name in Afghanistan, but the evaluation was unable to confirm that. The public information campaign has not yet reached all areas in an adequate manner. Staffing has improved recently, and excellent efforts are now being made to strengthen the Public Information section within ANBP and create synergies with government bodies who can serve as conduits for DIAG messages

## 2. Evaluation of DIAG According to Standard Criteria

### Results-Oriented Monitoring

The evaluation has attempted to analyse the full range of established ROM methodology, despite the short time and the security issues that restrict the opportunity for an evaluator to review and assess all the aspects across the country. A single field trip was possible, but the Jalalabad visit was invaluable, and four other ANBP regional offices had been visited in 2007 as part of the DDR evaluation. Standard ROM measures include:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Means of Verification</b>
<b>Proof of action</b>	from reports and discussion with a wide range of observers
<b>Availability of project outputs</b>	judged from reports and discussions with participants and observers
<b>Retrospective view of participants concerning genuine value</b>	from a focus group of commanders, discussion with participants, and questionnaire completed with long-serving staff members
<b>Current analysis of needs</b>	from government and security officials, ANBP staff and observers
<b>Plans for future follow-through of actions by participants</b>	from government and UN officials, donors, ANBP managers and staff
<b>Networking / partnerships</b>	from other projects and ministries, UN, government, diplomats and NGO officials

<b>Types of action that were valued</b>	from discussions with staff and beneficiaries
<b>Impact visibility</b>	judged from reports, press monitoring, government and NGOs

Grading can be useful for purposes of summary and comparison, using the ROM definitions:

- a – exceptional, with elements beyond contract
- b – good with no significant problems
- c – some problems/difficulties
- d - significant problems/difficulties

A summary can appear superficial, and it will always be subjective, but grades for key evaluation elements do supply decision makers with a quick overview of the strengths and weaknesses of DIAG:

<b>ParaElement evaluated</b>	<b>Comment (more detailed analysis is provided in a separate paragraph for each element)</b>	<b>Grade</b>
2.2 Structure	ANBP has an excellent regional network, valuable for monitoring peace and development and for weapon management. ANBP and DIAG management structures must evolve to fit new opportunities as the political situation demands.	B
2.3 Relevance	DIAG is highly relevant to Afghanistan's political and security needs. ANBP and DIAG could also prove helpful for governance and the government's peace and reconciliation process.	A
2.4 Efficiency	Well-run and efficient. New opportunities arise as the ANBP Business Centre brings autonomy. The M&E structure needs to be improved, and local staff contracts should be for one or two years.	B
2.5 Effectiveness	The lack of quick-impact development projects in exchange for compliance, poor political commitment in many provinces, donor confusion, centralization and an uncertain security climate hamper DIAG's effectiveness.	C
2.6 Impacts	DIAG has small impact on weapon collection and destruction, but significant impact on weapon	C

	management in one-third of Afghanistan's districts through the DDI process, and significant political impact through regional offices and public information. Police Mol transition is just starting.	
2.7 Innovations	Flexible and creative teamwork, led by the D&R Commission, has allowed success with ammo and mines, progress on weapon management through PSC registration and Mol, a change to the DDI approach, and working with District Development Assemblies and CDCs.	A
2.8 Risk Analysis	In a high-risk environment, DIAG staff work safely and courageously in 34 Provinces and maintain a high profile in 30, despite armed political opposition and Goliag interference.	A
2.9 Dissenting voices	Criticism is to be expected from commanders who do not want to lose their power, or their weapons. This is normal, although it naturally creates 'difficulties' – and risk - for DIAG staff. While skepticism is justified, American military criticism of DIAG is unconstructive. Many other diplomats are supportive.	C
2.10 Funding	Adequate finding has been provided, mainly through the efficiency and generosity of the Japanese government and UNDP. A few other donors also contribute modestly. A wider funding and political base would strengthen the programme, and commitments for future funding is essential if DIAG is going to work effectively.	B
2.11 Sustainability	It is impossible in the insecurity of January 2009 to judge how sustainable are the gains made by DIAG . Sustainability will be increased by working with communities, CDCs and DDAs, and by working to a five-year	C

	plan instead of funding for six-months.	
2.12 Security	Insecurity hampers DIAG, freezes its work in the south, and discourages armed groups from disarming or disbanding.	D

## **2.1. Terms of Reference and Methodology of the Evaluation**

### **2.1.1. Evaluation scope and objectives**

The main focus of the evaluation is to assess the processes involved in maintaining a government-led, regionally and internationally assisted response to issues related to disbandment of illegal armed groups, collection and destruction of weapons, delivery of community development projects, capacity development of government institutions [namely MoI, district level DIAG compliance (DDI)], favourable public perception of DIAG and other measures aimed at creating an enabling secure social environment for recovery and development.

The strategic objective of the evaluation, to be conducted for a period of 2 weeks, will **be to measure the impact of the DIAG project on the stabilization of Afghanistan and to draw lessons learned from Afghanistan’s experience with the disbandment of illegal armed groups for application in the national poverty and conflict mitigation strategies**, as well as for UNDP global corporate knowledge (taken from the ToR). This is a tall order for an evaluator to fulfill in just two weeks. It also seems to posit unrealistic ambitions for DIAG.

### **2.1.2. Evaluation target groups**

The ToR specifies that evaluation should be based on a participatory approach, utilizing the knowledge and experiences of all relevant stakeholders who played important roles during the process. While using a genuinely participative approach was not possible in the time available and in the prevailing climate of insecurity, the evaluation was able to include a wide range of sources and stakeholders, including:

- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and its institutions involved particularly in security sector reforms (MoD, MoI, MoJ) and development (MRRD; Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyred, and Disabled; Ministry of Education);
- Afghanistan civil society and general public (including Xcoms met during the 2007 DDR evaluation);
- Various other stakeholders: i.e., UNDP, UNAMA, and other UN-system agencies, international humanitarian organizations (governmental and non-governmental, including commercial), and international military forces;
- Donors;
- Communities (including those covered in a variety of field reports from DIAG and other projects, in news articles, and in the ‘literature’).

Additionally, the development community at large, academics and the general public

interested in the area of development are an important target audience in relation to the findings of the evaluation. The evaluation succeeded in meeting a certain number of people from every one of these categories, although it was obviously impossible to meet all the ministries etc. in such a short time.

**Finally** (says the ToR), **the evaluation should be put into perspective by comparing the findings with relevant research and experiences from other conflict areas.** The evaluation shall be undertaken following the five evaluation criteria: **relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.** Each of these is considered in the current section 2 below.

### **2.1.3. The team shall produce the following outputs**

- Progress update/brief: This will outline the team's preliminary findings based on desk review, conducted field missions and meetings with stakeholders to be provided to UNDP Country Office mid-way through the evaluation period. This was done on a weekly basis, twice during the evaluation period (see Annex 2).
- Full draft evaluation report: This report will be presented to the UNDP Country Office at the end of the evaluation period in Kabul. In fact, in view of an imminent meeting between the key players and the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, this step was converted into a shortened form of the report that was completed rapidly before the end of the mission, for use during the Presidential meeting scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Feedback from that meeting informed the final report.
- The draft report was then presented 10<sup>th</sup> February to UNDP and ANBP, and stakeholder comments were invited.
- Final report: The Final Evaluation Report should be presented in a solid, concise and readable form and be structured around the issues in the TOR, within 10 days after the receipt of all stakeholders' comments. These comments were held up in the UNDP office, due mainly to staff turnover and consequent lack of follow-up, and they only reached the evaluator on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2009. The Final Report was therefore due by April 22<sup>nd</sup>. This deadline was respected.

The ToR stated that mission's reports will specifically:

- Assess the overall relevance, impact and sustainability of DIAG in relation to the ultimate goal of supporting security sector reforms towards sustainable peace;
- Assess and document the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of DIAG in relation to the programme's immediate objective;
- Identify "lessons learned" with a view to contribute to improving the future policies, strategies and operational aspects of DIAG, including design, organization, financial management, and implementation with particular reference to assessing the effectiveness of DIAG-Afghanistan's unique initiatives;
- The application of the evaluation's findings and lessons learned to support the improvement of security sector reforms in Afghanistan.

#### **2.1.4. Methodology of the evaluation**

The mission was carried out between the dates of January 12<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> 2009 in Kabul, with a visit to Jalalabad (Nangarhar Province) on January 27-28<sup>th</sup> in partnership with a Scoping Mission from UNDP's Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR). The full programme of meetings and activities is presented in Annex 2.

The evaluation was originally scheduled for September-October 2008, but the mission was only advertised in September with a closing date on 14<sup>th</sup> October. This, together with the inexperience of the contracting staff, made it impossible to arrange the mission before a combination of Eid and Christmas and New Year holidays intervened, and January was selected for the evaluation. There were further considerable bureaucratic obstacles associated with the UNDP procurement process in Kabul, due no doubt to the fact that staff had changed and that the contracting process for consultants had passed from HR to UNDP Procurement. As a result, instead of two international evaluators and one national consultant, the evaluation was carried out by one international evaluator with the part-time assistance of a UN staff member who was not released from her job for this purpose. Only two weeks in-country were allocated for this evaluation.

Fortunately, the principal evaluator was already familiar with ANBP from having led the 2007 evaluation of DDR. Dr. Poulton has been working in and on Afghanistan since 1970, so he has a grasp of the historical and cultural environment, and he wrote his PhD in the 1970s on Afghan rural economic development. In addition, he is a specialist in weapon collection and is one of the creators of the concept of 'exchanging weapons for development'. An impossible task has therefore been completed (the reader who will judge how competently) in two weeks, plus time allowed for drafting and revising the report.

**Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM)** and the standard measures used are presented at the beginning of this section 2. As indicated above, grading has been used for purposes of summary and comparison, using the following ROM definitions:

- a – exceptional, with elements beyond contract
- b – good with no significant problems
- c – some problems/difficulties
- d - significant problems/difficulties

**An adapted 'Results Based' approach was used** to ascertain, as far as possible, linkages between DIAG's strategies, activities and resources and the intended and unintended impact of their work. Examples include study of DIAG reports and statistics, consideration of the interviews with Xcoms carried out by Bhatia in the Southeast and by Gompert in the North of Afghanistan during 2006-2007, and use of the ANBP 'client satisfaction' DDR studies and the CIP-DDR evaluation of 2007 which, although not aimed specifically at the DIAG process, overlap with it in timing and in ambition and offer insights into how demobilized and disbanded former fighters react and what their ambitions are.

**Evidence-based evaluation** is ideal but has been difficult to achieve for DIAG: 'evidence-based evaluation' normally implies generating numbers and reporting on site visits, things that have been impossible for the present mission. An evaluator may be prepared to believe that five development projects have indeed been completed, as DIAG and MRRD reports show – but the current evaluator has been unable to visit even one of the five sites,

so where is his 'evidence'? It is possible to induce 'results' from discussions, reports, focus groups and from indirect evidence (for example from surveys done during the previous DDR phase of ANBP), but it is difficult to claim that the evaluation has been able to generate real 'evidence' for DIAG in the space of two weeks. The 'results' of disbandment are available in the reports, but producing the 'evidence' of successful disbandment and its impact in the field would involve a different level of evaluation commitment from the UNDP (one which might not be possible to carry out in the current state of insecurity). The DIAG team has asked for evidence-based analysis of what DIAG has done, how well it has done things, where DIAG has been successful, and where it has had shortcomings. The evaluator has looked for evidence – for example he has assessed as best he can the strengths and weaknesses of ANBP planning and its 'results' – but frankly speaking this is not what a professional evaluator would call 'evidence' and it would be dishonest to claim so high a standard for the present two-week evaluation.

The evaluation process started with desk research, involving a review of documentation from the 2007 DDR evaluation, as well as additional literature and statistical information in DIAG provided on CD by ANBP. Like the DDR database, the data sets compiled by DIAG are something of a disappointment, but they are new and their quality may improve as (and if) the ANBP programme develops the statistical capacity and analytical capacity of its M&E department.

Team meetings with UNDP, ANBP and UNAMA staff were extremely important for our understanding the evolution of DIAG and for analyzing implementation difficulties experienced by ANBP.

As well as meetings and group discussions, we made use of qualitative interviews with ANBP staff, former staff, and other observers of ANBP. Additional meetings were organised with NGOs (national and international) and with the Embassies of UK, USA, Norway, Canada and Japan. Many of the UN people interviewed have moved to new positions, which brings the advantage of hindsight and removes the need for most staff members to feel defensive about their role.

Participative action-research provides a valuable and scientific method for impact evaluations, bringing into the quality equation a wider range of opinions than can be achieved by other forms of survey. UNIDIR's work on participative evaluation of weapon collection programmes and Weapons in Exchange for Development has been ground-breaking. The evaluation used an action-research methodology in assessing the direct and indirect impacts of DIAG's work, including a search for unexpected impacts as well as planned direct impacts and hoped-for indirect impacts. Using the field experience of UNIDIR's participatory evaluation studies of voluntary weapon-for-development programmes in several countries, the evaluation used 1-on-1 interviews and small focus groups using informal questionnaires: notably for pairs of staff members and groups of commanders. Also included was before-and-after analysis, asking people to recall the situation before DIAG and before DDR, and to compare them with their lives and the situation of Afghanistan today.

An attempt was used to examine DIAG through the lens of Do No Harm Analysis. This approach has emerged from the realisation that many outside interventions have unintentional negative impacts on the populations they are supposed to serve. Borrowed by Mary Anderson from the field of medical ethics, and applied especially in areas of conflict, the approach involves analysis of the risk that any humanitarian programme may

become 'intertwined with the forces that drive the conflicts that prompted the aid in the first place'.

The evaluation also conducted qualitative interviews with government officials in the D&R Commission, the Joint Secretariat, the Ministry of the Interior (on terrorism, disarmament and the Mol Transition), Ministry of Agriculture (for drugs and job creation) and the Ministry of Reconstruction and Rural Development (for development and construction), all officials directly involved with DIAG implementation. All the government officials consulted showed a detailed understanding of the programme and a mastery of the issues that concern their departments.

## **2.2. Structure of ANBP and DDR and DIAG**

ANBP was created in 2003 for DDR, and it grew to have eight different components. The 'Ammo Project' and 'DIAG' were accorded separate project status, and so was DDR, but they could all have been integral parts of a six-year DDR programme. Likewise the Heavy Weapons Cantonment could have been a separate project, but wasn't. Reintegration is so complex that it could have been broken down functionally into a number of different units. Designing a three-year programme proved to be a mistake. The short time-frame led to ANBP being run by military officers working to short, discreet timelines and the 'R' pieces were neglected. Since the end of DDR, this early structural evolution has led to management 'ad-hocism' as tasks were added and deadlines extended.

The flexibility of this management system has had definite advantages for DIAG, as the programme has evolved to meet varying challenges. The disadvantage has been a lack of strategic thinking that has showed in certain areas, including M&E and the development arena. Little has been done to work with civil society organizations, and few efforts have been made to create synergies. These opportunities will be studied under the appropriate paragraphs of section 3.

ANBP and DIAG work under the supervision of the D&R Commission, and in partnership with the Joint Secretariat which brings together representatives of MoD, Mol, NDS, UNAMA and ISAF. This system works very well and there is no reason to disturb it.

The evaluation believes that there is a significant advantage in keeping separate the structures of DIAG and ANBP. DIAG needs to keep its focus on the Weapon Management and Security Sector aspects of Afghanistan's priorities. DIAG needs to develop its development activities, but **the evaluation recommends** that these development activities (both the present projects with MRRD and others that may be created later) should be handled separately by a Development Cell working under the ANBP umbrella. M&E should be improved under ANBP, rather than under DIAG or the JS – which will give the ANBP Director and UNDP a more independent view of results and impact.

M&E has recently been more closely integrated functionally into the Operations Section of DIAG and this is an excellent management decision: but hierarchically M&E should be treated separately in order to ensure objectivity. Other opportunities may emerge in the near future for ANBP intervention in the areas of governance as well as Peace and Reconciliation, and they can be managed as seems most efficient. As the Ammo Project passes over to the Ministry of Defence, ANBP will be left with one large 'project' called DIAG, and a number of 'cells' or 'units' reporting to the ANBP Director: the Business Centre (containing Finance, HR, Procurement), M&E, Reporting and Donor Relations, Public

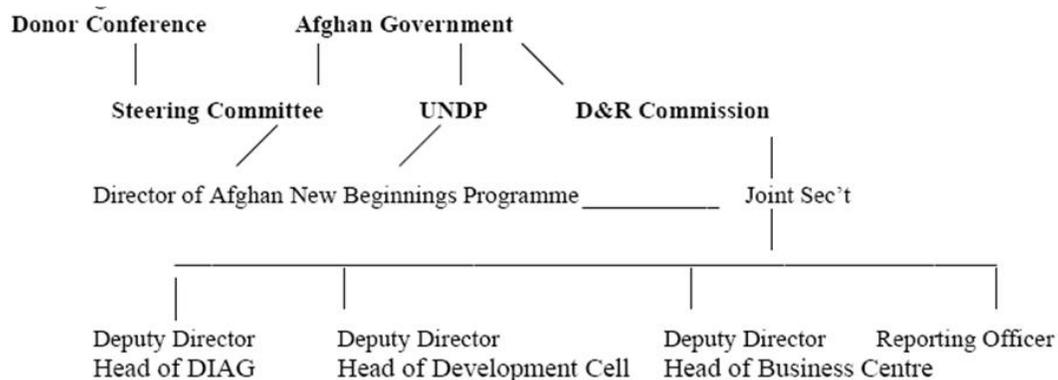
Information, Development etc. This may seem unbalanced in terms of the financial flows, since DIAG will be the biggest, but it seems perfectly pragmatic and sensible management option from the point of view of this evaluation.

**The evaluation recommends** that ANBP should be run by a Director, and that there should be two Deputy Directors at L5, one responsible for DIAG and the second for running the Development, M&E and PI units. The Financial and Management functions (Security, Procurement, HR – shortly to be combined as a Business Centre) should report to the ANBP Director – and if it is intended to appoint a Business Centre Manager, (s)he could also have the rank and title of ANBP Deputy Director, making three. It would also be possible to place M&E under the Reporting Officer.

If there is a significant change in the political situation, DIAG may have a greater role to play in areas such as governance, peace and reconciliation. For each of these activities, a separate project or cell could be created under the ANBP Director.

**The evaluation recommends** that a steering committee and donor conference should be held in December of each year to review progress, fix targets, and approve the content of the programme and the budget for the next three years. Evidently, approval implies commitment.

**Proposed management structure:**



M&E unit must be placed under the manager best able to supervise M&E.

**2.3. Relevance**

In the context of Afghanistan’s post-conflict recovery, and the urgent need for Security Sector Reform (SSR), ANBP was a highly relevant programme. Indeed of the five pillars of SSR<sup>3</sup> identified by President Karzai, DDR and the reorganization of the Afghan army that it facilitated are the two that have worked best so far.

It is important to remember as we look back over five years that ANBP was conceived and implemented in a war zone. It involved bringing into an embryonic political process large

<sup>3</sup> The Five Pillars of Security Sector Reform are: Military Reform, Police Reform, DDR, Judicial Reform, and Counter-Narcotics.

numbers of armed men whose commitment to peace had not been declared. Most DDR programmes are part of a peace process. This one was not, and much of its action took place in a context of rumbling war against Taliban rebels who remain excluded from the Bonn Agreement. Many observers think it was a mistake to have excluded the Taliban.

If ANBP and DDR were relevant, as the evaluation believes, then DIAG was also relevant at the time of its creation in 2004 as the complementary disarmament programme for other armed men. It is easy for an evaluation to look back, with the benefit of hindsight, and criticize other people's projects. This evaluation intends to avoid such a trap. DIAG was a constructive and relevant concept. The security situation has deteriorated since DIAG was created. It is appropriate and necessary, while approving DIAG's relevance in 2004, to wonder aloud whether DIAG is still relevant in 2009.

One of the key targets of the original DIAG design was to 'break the links and command structures' between the commanders and their men. This has not been achieved; but this evaluation doubts whether it was ever really a feasible idea. Virtually all Afghan *qomanders* are tied to their men by the concept of *qawm*. The concept of *qawm* was explained in an annex to the DDR evaluation report of September 2007. Briefly, the link of blood or marriage, tribe, village or language forms a far stronger bond between the men and their leaders than any military command structure. Additionally, *qawm* evolved over a thousand years as an Afghan self-defence mechanism and it appears very unlikely that historical bonds of this nature could be broken at all, never mind in the middle of a war! Even if an IAG is formally disbanded, its members will still drink tea together because they probably all live in the same village as their *qomander* who will be a local farmer or the brother of the *mullah*, or indeed he may be the *mullah* himself.

Where it would be useful to 'break the bond' is in the case of IAGs that have turned themselves into organized criminal gangs, including drug smuggling gangs. Drug smuggling goes along with arms smuggling; they follow the same paths. DIAG has no role here: armed criminal gangs are not susceptible to the offerings of a voluntary weapon management programme such as DIAG. Criminals have to be repressed using other forms of police or military and legal intervention, and that is a problem the State must deal with. This will not be possible for the Afghan State to achieve this unless a new, coherent, consistent and ultimately more successful counter-narcotics strategy is adopted.<sup>4</sup>

These caveats do not reduce the relevance of DIAG. Indeed, the evolving strategies of ANBP, approved by the Donor Conference of December 2008, show that UNAMA and UNDP have integrated DIAG into the future peace and reconciliation process.

Current strategies bring new relevance to DIAG and the programme may become increasingly important, depending on perspectives opened by an optimistic reading of the US 'surge'. The imminent arrival of 20,000 or 30,000 new US troops to 'take and hold' areas of southern Afghanistan that are currently insurgent areas, may offer DIAG new opportunities to extend the geographical range of its activities. It is certainly true that DIAG is accused of being 'irrelevant' in the troubles areas of southern Afghanistan, and this

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<sup>4</sup> US efforts are also vital: the Washington Post reported 12 February 2009, that the General Accounting Office of the US Government fears US weapons are supplying the Taliban: "inventory controls were lacking for more than a third of the 242,000 light weapons donated to Afghan forces by the United States -- a stockpile that includes thousands of AK-47 assault rifles as well as mortars, machine guns and rocket-propelled grenade launchers. There were no reliable records showing what ultimately happened to an additional 135,000 weapons donated by other NATO countries, the report said."

is something DIAG and UNDP should address. Whatever the perspectives, the evaluation judges that DIAG's weapon management programme is highly relevant to Afghanistan's needs.

"People in Panshir think, 'They are taking our weapons from us, and then how do we know what will happen tomorrow? Will we need our weapons?' That is their view of DDR. Taliban are distributing money to people- and GoA is not. Taliban pays \$200, and ANA pays \$70. The Taliban have force and they have money. How is that? How does the International Coalition allow that? Where does this Kuwait and Saudi and other money come from? Thank God, they are not in Panshir yet. Not yet."

Afghan member of the PRT in Panshir

## **2.4. Efficiency**

### **in terms of cash (value for money) and delivery (value for people)**

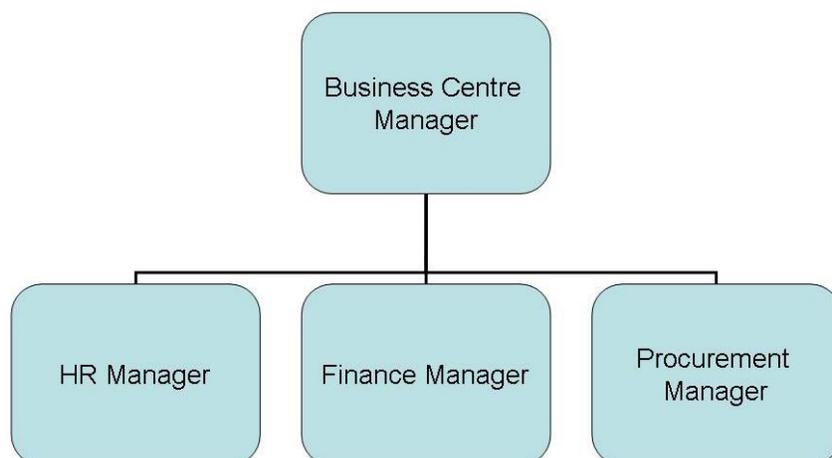
The 2007 evaluation of DDR judged that ANBP has given good value for money, and good delivery. Its donors had reason well satisfied with their investment. Nevertheless, certain aspects of the DDR design were poorly thought through, and the DIAG programme has benefited from that experience. The D&R Commission and the Joint Secretariat are small and efficient government organisations that respond effectively to the needs of the Afghan people, they are well-led and they provide efficient political leadership to the processes in which DIAG is involved.

An innovation announced by the new UNDP Country Director concerns the creation of a Business Centre inside ANBP. The Business Centre will work as a one-stop-shop for the clients, providing to ANBP – and also to other projects such as LOFTA – the services that are currently performed for too many different projects by the UNDP office. Delegation by the UNDP Country Director to the ANBP Business Centre should provide a quicker and more efficient management service, and also serve to promote synergies between ANBP and other projects working in related fields. The clients will send in their requisitions for various goods and services, such as requests for products, payment and travel, human resource requirements, personnel or consulting contracts, along with their approved Annual Work Plan. The Business Centre Manager will sign her/his approval of the requisitions, which will be handled on the spot by the relevant Finance, HR, or Procurement department according to UNDP rules and regulations. This should cut at least one week off the delays currently experienced by ANBP when dealing with UNDP Kabul.

The management details have not yet been announced, but based on examples with which the evaluator is familiar (Mali, Bangladesh<sup>5</sup>) the structure is likely to be along the following lines, which would coincide with perceptions of efficiency:

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<sup>5</sup> The evaluator is grateful for discussions on this subject with Clifford Rodrigues and Kerry Munting of ANBP, Sandeep Kumar of LOFTA, and Marc Wajnstock of UNDP Bamako.



The Business Centre will provide services to their clients (finance, procurement, HR, travel, asset management, audit) and ensure compliance with the regulations and procedures of UNDP Afghanistan Country Office.

### **Finance**

The Business Centre's Finance Unit will manage, monitor, analyse programme resources in line with UNDP systems, policies and procedures, and make direct payments. It will monitor donor funds, contributions and expenditures; liaise with UNDP HQ and partner donors, and support development projects in their formulation, implementation, and monitoring (focusing on budget/finance related, costing, etc.). It will also help with preparing financial reports, accounts, and expenditure controls.

### **Procurement**

The Business Centre's Procurement Unit will manage procurement of goods and services: procure travel authorizations and tickets etc; liaise with project personnel on specifications for goods, delivery/payment terms and funds availability; identify procurement method (RFQ, RFP or ITB as appropriate), procurement approval (submission of data to contract review committees such as CAP and ACP) ensuring access to favorable prices, reliable transport, insurance, impartial advice and recognition of environmental and safety considerations. The unit will also maintain a roster of suppliers and assist with general administration issues including customs clearance of goods, registration of vehicles, building and equipment maintenance and others.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

The Business Centre's Human Resources Unit will provide personnel support: Terms of Reference preparation, vacancy announcements, recruitment, issuance of contracts, payroll, performance evaluations, assessment of training/learning needs, and development of training schedules. It will also be responsible for accreditation of international staff, obtaining foreign visas for official missions of UNDP, etc.

New opportunities for efficiency will arise as the ANBP Business Centre brings autonomy. This will remove ANBP from some of the confusion that is sometimes noticed in the UNDP Procurement Office, and reduce delays imposed on ANBP by the UNDP Finance Office. There is room for greater efficiency in other areas: for example, the M&E structure needs to be improved, and this will be discussed in Section 3 (the Supplementary Report).

Many local staff contracts are currently limited to three months (some are six months). The present system of ANBP three-month staff contracts creates masses of unproductive administrative work, and weakens the programme as staff seek more permanent employment elsewhere. Staff contracts should be signed for one or two years. This problem can only be solved through donor medium-term commitment to a five-year life for DIAG. **The evaluation recommends that** UNDP needs to be aggressive in seeking guaranteed funding for ANBP, while donors need to be more responsive to the medium-term and also need to be better organised in the planning of their objectives. As one donor official remarked to the evaluation, "We really took our eye off the ball. Our office stopped funding DIAG last year, and now we are racing around searching for emergency funds for DIAG, because we really need DIAG to vet candidates for the elections."

**The evaluation recommends** that ANBP and DIAG should continue for at least five years, because the donors and the government all agree that they need DIAG. The programme needs assured funding for three years until end 2011, within a medium-term plan of five or seven years that will ensure optimum efficiency. Unless this timescale is respected, the haemorrhage of staff will continue and DIAG will be condemned to ineffectiveness. At the end of 2009, when the first round of elections should be completed, a three-year budget should be approved until end 2012; otherwise donors and the Afghan government should decide clearly that they do not want DIAG or ANBP to continue.

In terms of implementation and delivery, the evaluation is impressed by the efficiency of ANBP management, its clarity of purpose and its control systems. The evaluation finds that ANBP is serious in its approaches to security and risk-management. The mechanisms ANBP created for regional structures continue to represent a major asset for UNDP and for Afghanistan's peace efforts. DIAG has people in every province, working with the governors in favour of negotiation with IAGs and promoting weapon management.

No comparable programme has been run anywhere else in the world against which price and cost comparisons could be made. A political judgment will determine how DIAG will be viewed by history. The ANBP system is well-run and the evaluation finds that the accounting, procurement, management and supervisory efficiency levels of DIAG are good, with no significant problems noted.

The secret of good management is developing clear lines of authority, with each professional manager having autonomy within the area of his or her competence.

## ***2.5 Effectiveness***

DIAG will set up and manage mechanisms for weapon management and regulation across Afghanistan until these responsibilities are handed over to a strengthened Ministry of Interior. The MoI DIAG Unit is now established, and private security companies are in the process of being registered. This represents a significant achievement for DIAG and its weapons management objective. Weapon licensing and registration for private citizens has also begun. The process is, however, embryonic: the evaluation visited the offices built by DIAG in the MoI compound, saw the equipment, and learned that the offices were empty because brand new staff were undergoing their first computer training.

It is too soon to know how effective the system will be, but the evaluation sees evidence that the data collection design is flawed: a data-entry system has been created before the data-collection system has been invented. To be effective, weapon management must be carried out at district level (in the places where the weapons are). Numbers entered into the new computers will have no value, unless and until manually-maintained decentralized weapon management systems are set up and functioning in every province and every district. There is no electricity and no computer maintenance capacity in most district *uluswalis* where the skill levels of many clerks are barely adequate to maintain hand-written record cards. Many of the *uluswali* offices do not even have clerks! UNDP and ANBP management need to be realistic about what is possible, and so does the Afghan government.

Here is an area where the evaluation is able to draw on relevant experience right across Asia. Most notably the Cambodian example of computerized management of weapons and ammunition in official government armouries provides a model of perfect planning and execution of centralised data collection and management put in place by the EU-ASAC project, hailed as one of the most successful SSR programmes in the world. It is now in dire trouble because there was no system for follow-up. Less than three years after the European Union declared victory and closed the project in June 2006, the data management system has stopped functioning, and the computers are silent. Learning from such experiences elsewhere, the Steering Committee needs to insist on some realism in this area. The D&R Commission and Joint Secretariat leadership need to set up systems that will still be working in five and fifteen years time – and that does not include putting computers in every *uluswali*.

The evaluation believes it will take at least five years (and seven years is more realistic) to train the staff in all the *uluswalis* in every district of Afghanistan – and that assumes that the necessary staff in every *wali and uluswali* will be recruited by government within the next two or three years, soon enough to receive the necessary training, supervision and follow-up training. **The evaluation finds** the present 12-month time-frame for the Mol transition is unrealistic and **recommends** an Mol transition of at least five – and preferably seven - years.

Databases and computer systems worldwide suffer from a common and universal disease called GIGO: 'Garbage In, Garbage Out, meaning that if the manually-collected data at district level is not meticulously collected and maintained, the national database will simply produce rubbish. If DIAG abandons the Transition Phase before the manual registration and data-collection systems are tested and working properly at the district level, and being fed effectively to the national database that is now being created, the whole system will be ineffective: government and Joint Secretariat effort, and DIAG and donor monies, will be wasted.

Interviews with government officials suggest that the GIGO disease has not been recognized by the Joint Secretariat or by Mol, and neither UNDP nor ANBP managers seem to be aware of the risks. The DDR programme of ANBP created a database of 65,000 Xcoms that proved worthless and was never even used to monitor the progress of DDR. The signs are not positive: DIAG and the Joint Secretariat seem poised to reproduce a similar GIGO mistake with the national registration of weapons and PSCs. **The evaluation recommends** that the weapon registration and data collection strategies should be revisited by UNDP and ANBP, that a new process of recruitment, training and data

management should be negotiated with the Mol and the Joint Secretariat.

Five hundred and two IAGs have declared themselves 'disbanded' and several dozen districts are supporting this process, which means that fewer firearms are in public circulation. Five hundred is a magic number, a success although it is less than 30% of the IAGs already identified. This is positive proof of DIAG effectiveness in some areas, but 'disarmament is a political programme' and it cannot be judged by numbers whether or not they seem disappointing. Nevertheless DIAG's future success will be measured partly by national statistics, and the onset of GIGO disease risks DIAG being remembered as a failure despite its successes.

DDR was carried out in 2002-06 during a window of opportunity that may now have closed. DIAG was a daring follow-up concept and has been politically quite effective: its results have been positive and important for Afghanistan. Some people may judge that the hoped for disbanding armed groups during an ongoing war was illusory. Disappointing or successful, one third of Afghanistan's 364 districts have been targeted, 27% of the 1,800-2,000 identified illegal armed groups have been officially disbanded and the magic 500<sup>th</sup> disbandment was formally achieved in February 2009.

Not all the indicators are as positive as the 500 disbanded IAGs, but the lack of a structured M&E process makes it impossible for DIAG to follow and measure its progress elsewhere. Donor confusion, government over-centralisation and an uncertain security climate hamper DIAG's effectiveness. Weapons are increasing, rather than decreasing, because the international coalition has been unable to produce a coherent strategy for their joint intervention in Afghanistan. DIAG has suffered from a lack of quick-impact development projects in exchange for compliance, and a poor 'development' strategy in exchange for 'disbandment'. DIAG's effectiveness is also hindered by feeble political commitment from governors in many provinces.

The re-mapping process currently underway will update the DIAG database on IAGs. If there had been a systematic monitoring system for IAGs, the re-mapping would have been carried out systematically over the past years as part of DIAG's work in every province. **The evaluation recommends** that re-mapping should be carried out as a regular part of DIAG and ROM activities: if the data for one province is updated every month, the whole country will be re-mapped on a rolling basis every three years. Of course that cannot happen as long as DIAG has funding for only 3 or 6 or 12 months at a time.

It is embarrassing for DIAG to be told that, "Commander X died three years ago." If he died, someone should have heard about it and the regional office should have recorded the fact in the database. Updating the data needs to be a Regional Office Manager's responsibility, and bringing new information to the ROM should be done regularly by the Provincial Development Coordinator working in each governor's office. This requires capacity building and supervision. If the ROM does not have the capacity to carry out this task (as has been suggested by some DIAG staff) and if the provincial staff cannot handle it either, then the evaluation must conclude that DIAG is ill-equipped to succeed with the mission it has taken on. If training is a solution, then let it be provided, and if recruiting more or better staff is needed, so be it: but the Steering Committee should insist that the functionality of ROMs and their staff is vital for DIAG's impact and effectiveness and this is where the main emphasis should be put.

In commenting on the draft evaluation report, the DIAG staff wrote that, "There is a danger

in ANBP/DIAG biting off more than it can chew. ANBP/DIAG needs to be wary of trying to do too much, especially for things in which we lack an obvious comparative advantage.” That is clearly a risk, but the re-mapping exercise is fundamental to the core activity of DIAG, its *raison d’être*. This is an activity it must do, and do well if it wishes to be effective.

The number of weapons collected by DIAG has been small, but ammunition and explosives continue to be collected and destroyed. A weakness has been the failure of ANBP to convince the government that it would be cheaper and better, and safer, to destroy collected weapons rather than to store them. Why is this an ANBP concern? The evaluation believes that it is a major concern for any and every disarmament programme. Leakage of collected weapons is always a problem, and ‘disarmament’ needs to include ‘destruction’ simply to be effective.<sup>6</sup> So long as weapons are surplus and stored, they will leak into the black market. **The evaluation recommends** that a public weapon destruction ceremony should be organised and filmed, to remove the problem of leakage and to promote public confidence in the weapon management process. Weapon destruction would be a significant indicator for DIAG’s increased effectiveness and a major public relations coup.

Some of the key contributions of DIAG to Afghan governance include the vetting process of senior government appointees and of election candidates, thereby eliminating certain warlords and known armed criminals from public office.<sup>7</sup> This is seen as very positive. DIAG can help make the coming elections more than a fiction. None of this has yet happened on a significant scale.

The vetting process itself should strengthen DIAG, by turning certain commanders away from violence and bringing them into the political process. DIAG’s carrot-and-stick policy suffers from the international coalition’s inability to adopt a common approach to weapon management, and from ISAF commanders’ reluctance to enforce DIAG’s disarmament aspect. The ineffectiveness of ISAF as a ‘stick’ clearly reduces DIAG effectiveness, but the evaluation is unable to propose any way that DIAG can improve this. Every embassy in Kabul, including the American embassy, is frustrated at their inability to influence the behaviour of ISAF (NATO) or Operation Enduring Freedom (US army). The appointments of Mr Richard Holbrooke as President Obama’s Special Envoy to the region, and Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, a former top military commander in Afghanistan, as US Ambassador in Kabul, provide an anticipated opportunity to bring much-needed coordination to coalition policies.

**The evaluation recommends** greater use by ANBP and DIAG of District Development Assemblies and Community Development Committees (including women’s committees) to improve the impact of the ‘carrot’, which purports to offer development projects as an incentive for disbandment and weapon management, the surrender and/or registration of weapons. The development aspect has been weak until now, and recommendations are made in Section 3 for its strengthening.

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<sup>6</sup> Almost 100% of South African criminal weapons can be traced back to the UN disarmament programme in Mozambique, which registered weapons and left them to the Mozambican army because the UN Security Council refused to pay for destruction.

<sup>7</sup> A high profile example involved the former Deputy Minister of Defence, Excellency Dr Ahmad Yusuf Nuristani, being vetted and cleared before he could be confirmed in his new appointment as Governor of Herat Province. And the Minister proclaimed his satisfaction in the process.

Some members of the ANBP team feel that DIAG has been ineffective because its focus on 'development' has not benefited commanders. The DDR process was successful, it is argued, because there was a parallel Commander Incentive Programme (CIP) that offered local warlords some salaries, some residential training, some elements of nation building and reconciliation – not much but anyhow, more than just 'a good conduct medal, a bag of rice and some cooking oil.' Should DIAG be involved in development at all? The evaluation believes that the main source of DIAG ineffectiveness in this area lies in the programme design and execution, rather than in the concept. Afghan commanders may love money (and some do) but most Afghans love honour more than money. For the majority of *qomanders*, their prestige is local not national, and finding ways to bring them honour and respect within their *qawm* will go a long way towards solving the DIAG 'commander problem'. It will be argued in Section 3 that a different approach should be taken to incentives: 'construction' is not 'development' and greater use should be made of CDCs where commanders have some influence, and where implementing development projects will bring them prestige.

DIAG is more efficient than it is effective. The evaluation finds that there are clearly problems in DAIG's field effectiveness, although they are often not the fault of the programme itself. The circumstances of insecurity under which the programme functions, and the lack of collaboration from some partners, makes it difficult to claim any very great impact from DIAG so far.

In Uruzgan Province the Dutch PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) decided after much hesitation to move against one significant warlord who had been defying attempts to bring him into compliance with DIAG and Afghan government regulation. They found just one pistol in his house – presumably he has hidden his stockpile elsewhere.

The very next day, by chance, US soldiers from Operation Enduring Freedom visited the same warlord, and gave him 10 pistols and 80 Kalashnikov automatic rifles. So much for coordination between members of the coalition! This confusion between allies does nothing to help DIAG's mission to disband illegal armed groups and register their weapons.

## **2.6. Impacts - strategic overview of impacts (positive and negative)**

An attempt was used to examine DIAG through the lens of Do No Harm Analysis. In the humanitarian and post-conflict field, the first rule for international staff should always be to 'do no harm'. It is too easy to make things worse, through maladroit actions or poorly designed interventions. Although the evaluation has concluded that DIAG's positive impacts remain moderate, it has found no evidence of serious negative impact. In the 'exchange for development projects' area, the slowness of the development exchange may have had some negative impact by increasing frustrations, but this can be overcome.

The 'development unit' in JS is small and understaffed. The five 'development projects' that have been finally completed (i.e., built) have taken a year longer to complete than was originally planned. ANBP teamed up with the National Area-Based Development Programme of the MRRD: this would have been a good strategy if the MRRD had been able to deliver the required services. Now that an additional eight engineers have been hired, DIAG hopes that the district construction will take place much faster than before.

These delays have caused enormous frustration at the district level. The evaluation was not able to visit the five districts, nor the rest of the 62 districts for which discussions have begun for 'development' - it is therefore unable to say whether frustrations at the slowness have had serious deleterious effects on relations between IAGs and the authorities, or between local people and DIAG. However, months of delay can do nothing to improve relations. These are 'unintentional bad impacts' that the programme could do without. The evaluation concludes that there are significant problems in proving positive impacts for DIAG, made all the more complex by the lack of coherent monitoring data.

There is an obvious risk in a conflict zone such as Afghanistan that DIAG could become 'intertwined with the forces that drive the conflicts'. The evaluation believes this has happened to the US army, ISAF and the PRTs, and finds that the latter represent a failed development strategy. The foreign military units stay only six or nine months, have very little idea about the meaning or nature of 'development', and much of what they do simply reinforces the wealth of the 'bad guys'. It is far from certain that PRTs 'do no harm.' By confusing soldiers with development workers and by working unconsciously with strongmen, PRTs may in fact 'do harm.'

DIAG has had a small impact on weapon collection and destruction and can claim a more significant impact on weapon management in up to one third of Afghanistan's districts through the DDI process, and significant political impact through regional offices and public information. The DDI process is said to be having a positive impact on security and local governance, although the present evaluation was unable to observe it in the field. Police Mol Transition is just starting and in terms of positive impacts, there are hopeful signs in the Mol training, in the successful imposition of registration on a first cohort of PSCs, and in the vetting process for officials, that DIAG is having a positive impact on certain Afghan institutions. The evaluation concludes, however, that is too early to claim any lasting impact on the Mol for DIAG.

According to the hand-written witness of an RVC (Regional Verification Commissioner) DIAG has been very successful in the following areas, for none of which any quantitative elements are available:

- IAG conflicts have been reduced in number, and so have their depredations against the general public;
- Influence of high commanders has been reduced;
- Violent land disputes have lessened;
- Party, tribal and linguistic disputes have gone down;
- Government authority has been enhanced by the weapon collection;
- Illegal checkpoints and private jails have been eliminated.

The RVC points out in his written submission that many commanders remain recalcitrant, sometimes because they are protected by governors or politicians, or by Goliags. Where they have kept their weapons, commanders remain 'top dog'; in fact, they continue to impose their own will on the people and violate the rule of law.

## **2.7. Innovations**

ANBP is running a difficult programme in a high-risk environment, and in that context it deserves to receive top marks for DIAG innovation – a holdover from the previous innovative spirit that allowed the DDR project to take out ammunition and heavy

weapons. The evaluation finds that flexible and creative teamwork, led by the D&R Commission, has allowed success with the ammunition and mines through the appalling acronym APMASDP: Anti-Personnel Mines and Ammunition Stockpile Destruction Project (mercifully known as the “Ammo Project”). Innovative management has brought progress on weapon management through PSC registration, the start of weapon registration, and creation of the Mol Transition Unit. Frustration with slowness at the provincial level brought a change to the DDI approach, and the concept of ‘compliant districts’, which has brought movement, even if it is slower than DIAG would have liked. Another innovation has been working with DDAs and CDCs. The evaluation awards top marks for the innovative attitudes of the DIAG project.

**Weapons management:** the PSC registration and weapon registration initiatives have evolved as a natural progression from the initial DIAG design, but this was not automatic. Credit needs to be accorded to the creative nature of the approach that has allowed ANBP to find new ways to promote the restriction of weapon abuse in the cause of peace. DIAG now seeks Presidential support to generate the political will needed for these approaches to move forward.

**Police reinforcement and Mol:** This activity, which is another logical-yet-innovative expansion of DIAG’s work with weapon management, expands UNDP’s potential impact in security sector reform, and opens areas for further ANBP contributions in security and governance. The Mol collaboration provides interesting opportunities to create synergy with other programmes, notably the impressive LOTFA that is paying police salaries (as well as prison staff salaries) and provides funding to expand police capacity with equipment and training. This is an additional, generous and farsighted contribution by the Japanese government to security sector reform and building stability in Afghanistan. As will be noted later in section 3, there are interesting potential synergies for DIAG and LOTFA in the area of gender, as well as cost efficiencies to be made through sharing the ANBP business centre.

**DDA – the District Development Assembly** is already an exciting innovation. Learning that there are women DDAs as well as men’s DDAs, and that in the district of Mandanara (frontier of Pakistan) at the DDA, a group of 15 Pashtun women came to the ANBP regional office in Jalalabad on 27 January 2009 to meet with a UNDP delegation, there is no denying that something innovative is happening. These are women who would normally never leave their village, some would seldom even leave their house, yet they are participating in a form of democratic governance. The evaluation was unable to establish how, if at all, the women’s voice is able to impose itself on the men’s DDA, but the mere existence of women’s DDAs is remarkable. In the north there are even some mixed DDAs; in Kandahar there are none. This phenomenon is not entirely to the credit of DIAG: the MRRD’s National Solidarity Programme emerges as one of the truly inspiring success stories of post-war Afghanistan, and – provided it is supported by donors and with real political will by the Afghan government - NSP provides one of the development opportunities of which DIAG can take advantage to expand its weapon management impact.

### **Gender and women’s rights**

Issues of gender and women have not been central to DIAG planning – if fact it is doubtful if they have ever been discussed in this very military and masculine programme. Yet the women’s DDAs provide one innovative gender story that DIAG could report on to its advantage, and that the Public Information unit could follow. Domestic violence is

endemic in Afghan society. Life is tough behind the veil, much poverty and other forms of misery are hidden behind the walls. Women are victims of Afghan society, and never more so than when weapons of war are involved. Women are therefore central benefactors of DIAG's weapon management programme and this is not something that DIAG has noticed, or much thought about. Yet when searching for impact, DIAG should certainly be looking at the benefit that its programmes are bringing to women – something the evaluation is unable to measure. The issue will be raised again under Section 3.8.

### **Community and Area-Based Development**

This innovation results from a synergy between DIAG and NABPD, and it is the latter – another MRRD programme - that should take a lot of the credit for DDAs. Both DIAG and NABPD are UNDP initiatives, and this is clearly a success for the UN. The synergy needs to be taken further, through CDCs, into the communities, taking advantage of the innovative NSP in order to reach the men who actually have the weapons, and their mothers who may be able to influence them to register their weapons, or abandon them. The potential for this mechanism will be discussed further in section 3.5.

### **2.8. Risk analysis**

Risk is inherent in every profession. ANBP is very conscious of the physical risk inherent in its business, and it needs to be. The evaluation gives DIAG top marks in this category. The evaluation was impressed with the seriousness of the risk management strategies of ANBP, the attention to security, the supervision and regular revision of security in regional offices. Collecting and destroying ammunition, landmines and explosives is about as high-risk an activity as you can get! Dealing with armed warlords is risky – they are not a happy bunch of people, and kidnapping has become an increasingly remunerative business in Afghanistan. Traveling in Afghanistan is risky, and Standard Operating Procedures advise UN and other staff to give a wide berth to military vehicles that are the most likely targets for IEDs (improvised explosive devices), rocket attacks and suicide bombers. Even walking in Afghanistan can be risky, for many places still have mines, and even places that seem to have been demined may still be risky - as many unhappy Afghan farmers and children have discovered.

Risk assessment precedes risk analysis. The UN security system is strict, and the ANBP response appears to be serious and rigorous. Assessments and analyses are regular and well-informed, and inter-agency cooperation seems to be excellent in the security arena. Checks on adherence to security procedures are carried out regularly in ANBP regional offices; the radio call-in system is rigid and efficient. The DIAG evaluation visited Jalalabad, traveling in a MOSS-compliant convoy combined for efficiency purposes with an international BCPR scoping mission: for every two vehicles (armoured vehicles obligatory) an armed police escort was hired consisting of two vehicles (one in front and one behind) each containing four armed police officers. It is clear that every effort to avoid risk is being made in a UN Security Phase III country.

There is a possibility, of course, that too rigid security may hamper the functioning and success of the project. DIAG deals with weapons: it is not a project for planting potatoes (even in a potato field there is a risk of back injury or self-inflicted cuts from a spade, or irreversible damage from a forgotten anti-personnel mine). Some observers feel that the UN is overly timid in some areas, and that DIAG should be innovating in places like Kandahar where it is not obvious to the evaluation that 'disbanding armed groups' will be enthusiastically received by community leaders as a relevant priority. Nevertheless, this issue needs to be addressed. Sometimes a bold strike may be called for. DIAG needs to

find ways to reach out to southern communities, if only to discuss development priorities and to explain weapon registration. UN officials in New York are criticized for hampering the initiatives of UN officials in Afghanistan through timidity.

### **Should DIAG accept the risk of working in Kandahar and Helmand?**

The evaluation would be presumptuous in the extreme if it recommended starting work immediately in Kandahar and Helmand: in the most dangerous provinces, a war zone by any definition, it is not clear that DIAG risks would be justified. The options should definitely be studied (and indeed, a mission from Kabul visited the Kandahar office in late January while the evaluation was in Jalalabad). Only the officer in the field can assess and analyse levels of risk, and sometimes these judgments have to be made quite rapidly. ANBP could consider a new, innovative strategy reaching out through the mosques to assist handicapped ex-combatants. **The evaluation recommends** that in terms of generating good will, this could be a strategy to attract support in 'swing' districts and in places like Kandahar and Helmand, where security is frankly bad, and it would also provide a helping hand to families and communities who missed DDR because the injured were not included on MoD lists. It would also require new resources.

The decision for such an innovation lies squarely with the Steering Committee: what do they want DIAG and ANBP to do, and to achieve to be? They should hear the criticism of DIAG's inaction in the South and adopt a firm policy decision in favour of, or against, innovation. If the Steering Committee – some of whose members and potential members are critical of DIAG's inaction in the South – wants DIAG to broaden its innovations and its areas of activity, then the decision must be taken clearly and the resources must be made available. For this type of action, ANBP is not equipped to deliver services. DIAG should not attempt to become a social services unit. Outreach through mosques, aimed at opening dialogue with communities that are under influence or threat of the 'Taliban' or foreign fighters, should be handled by using NGOs as implementing partners with the MRRD's NSP and the Ministry of Haj.

### **The risk of collecting weapons and explosives**

When dealing with commanders and weapons stockpiles, how far should a DIAG officer go to bring in the booty? Unregistered weapons are a risk, hidden stockpiles are a risk, and collecting weapons that are not destroyed is also risky. Even storing weapons is a risk: experience on every continent shows that collected weapons will probably leak into the black market if they are not destroyed. It was suggested to the evaluation by more than one serious source, that the presumed assassination attempt on the President made during a parade in April 2007 was carried out using weapons collected by DIAG.

The Government of Afghanistan recognizes these risks, just as the UN and ANBP recognise them. In the case of weapon destruction, the 2007 evaluation of ANBP's DDR project recommended reducing risk with a public awareness 'coup' to build confidence in the peace process by burning collected weapons and including the Flame of Peace in a film about DDR and disarmament. **This recommendation is renewed by the present evaluation.**

**Another risk is that DIAG may take on too many tasks.** Pressure on DIAG from government and donors risks pushing managers to address areas for which it is ill-prepared. There is pressure on DIAG to work in Kandahar and Helmand, and the evaluation offers a possible strategy for this using mosques and handicapped Xcoms as an entry point: but if such a strategy is adopted for political reasons, new skills and resources

will be needed. 'Scope-creep' or 'mission creep' has already taken DIAG into 'development' and data-collection and M&E, all of which are areas in which little real conceptualisation has taken place (see Annex 4 for an introduction to the concept of Weapons-for-Development). 'Governance' is an area where DIAG runs a similar risk of over-reaching, for a point will come where DIAG will run into trouble if the necessary experience and skill-sets are not available inside the team. The evaluation sees value in flexibility – an area in which ANBP has excelled – but believes the Steering Committee must set parameters. If ANBP or DIAG are asked to take on a new mission, the right additional resources (personnel, research, partners, training, equipment or whatever) must be provided and paid for. Since some of these risks have been undervalued in the past, the reputation and performance of DIAG have suffered as a result.

**Other risks are inherent in the management of any project**, including personnel issues, personal and environment safety, cash flow, and honesty in financial management. **The evaluation finds** that ANBP staffing is professional, aware of the physical risk elements in their core mission work, and committed to its success. If there are any **recommendations** to be made in this area they would be two. Firstly, management should ensure that staff are reminded constantly of the physical risk inherent in DIAG, to avoid complacency: there is no sign of it, yet it must be avoided. Secondly, staff contracts should no longer be issued for three months at a time, especially for Afghan staff. These short contracts act adversely on morale, reducing the commitment and efficiency of staff, and this adds to risk. Annual contracts are the shortest that should be issued, and two-year contracts would be better.

A BBC journalist was visiting southern Afghanistan to report on opium production and counter-narcotics strategies. One farmer pointed to his poppy crop and said, "I plant poppies in my field and they make opium to feed my family. I sell it to Europeans and Americans who want to buy it. What do Europeans and Americans plant in my field? They plant mines and cluster bombs. Your people want to buy the product of my seeds, but I never asked to buy your seeds."

With that, the farmer lifted his trouser leg to reveal a prosthesis. BBC reporters are not known for their silence, but the silence that followed the farmer's gesture was deafening.

## ***2.9. Dissenting voices and stakeholder satisfactions***

The American embassy and the US military are frankly unconvinced of the value of DIAG. Since this is a political programme, we have to assume that theirs is a political judgment. They criticize DIAG for its lack of 'force', a factor they believe is essential for collecting arms, but they agree that DIAG relies for the forceful back-up of its work on US and ISAF forces which have been unwilling to provide DIAG with any back-up force. For this reason, DIAG can offer 'carrots' but has seldom been able to apply any 'stick'. US military and diplomatic staff are refreshingly frank about the reluctance of US military forces to coordinate or collaborate. Their honesty is helpful, but their analysis can be frustrating when they are not able to draw the conclusions that others draw. Afghan officials and a majority of international donors see considerable value in ANBP, and most are disappointed at America's lack of interest.

NGOs are pretty indifferent about DIAG. Those that are aware of the project see it as

doomed to fail in the current climate of insecurity. What is the point, they ask, of collecting arms and disbanding armed groups, when the others are undermining the effort by doing the precise opposite: distributing weapons to armed groups? NGOs are antagonistic to the APPP, and also to the PRT strategy that they see as ineffective, expensive, and dangerous for their own staff. None of that antagonism seems to be directed at DIAG. Many see DIAG as simply a project (without understanding the political dimension) and dismiss it as a waste of money.

The other major dissenters are many commanders from whom DIAG is demanding compliance. The evaluation spent some time listening to a sizable group of Pashtun notables – including some famous commanders and a district sub-governor *uluswal* – complaining that the authorities are squeezing them for weapons they do not have. According to these commanders, the original DIAG identification process and the current re-mapping process are being abused by political rivals who put their names on the list for no good reason: they are identified as having weapons, yet they claim that their weapons were removed forcibly during the Taliban era and they have not re-armed since.

It is hard not to be struck by the fact that the commanders in this meeting were all active *mujaheddin* under *Hizb-Islami* or *Jamiat-Islami*, parties that can be considered in opposition today. "*Hizb-Islami* is not Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is not *Hizb-Islami*," comes the indignant reply from a well-known commander, when reminded that Hekmatyar has been a very disruptive influence in post-war Afghanistan and continues to promote terrorist attacks.

There is no way that the evaluation can judge the rights and wrongs of a re-mapping exercise: every opportunity exists for people in power to exclude their own comrades from the IAG list and to include their enemies. That is a part of the political process. The DIAG and Joint Secretariat system of verification contains a sufficient number of steps for imbalances to be corrected, but not all will be found. It is upsetting on several levels to be told that a commander was forced to use the money he had saved for the education of his children to go to Pakistan to purchase six AK rifles to give to DIAG since he had none in his home. It is also a story that seems unlikely to be true.

Pressure from the political and security authorities, and from ANBP officials, is the only way that DIAG's objectives can be achieved. Sometimes pressure will be put on the wrong people, but mostly those who have had weapons probably still have them. If they are buried, let them lie, for burying weapons can be also a part of weapon management. The more pressure the owners feel, the less likely they are to dig up their stockpile – and that is one way in which DIAG's weapon management objectives will be met.

Other critics point to the small numbers of weapons that have been collected by DIAG. Certainly, 43,000 weapons is a drop in the bucket of presumed Afghan stocks. However, ANBP is not a programme set up simply to collect weapons, and counting guns would be a very shallow and misleading method for judging DIAG success. Collecting illegal weapons and registering legal weapons are only two out of several weapon control mechanisms: what the government and its friends should want is to stop weapons from being used in an aggressive fashion. Once they are buried, arms are not immediately available for use. In fact, many commanders will feel able to join the DIAG process only if they have the comfort of knowing that they can access (if necessary) their hidden, secret security weapons stock. Burying weapons, in this case, may better achieve DIAG objectives than ceding them to the authorities. In a project as complex and as sensitive as DIAG, there will

always be plenty of critics. **The evaluation recommends** that it is good to hear the critics attentively, and to think carefully about what they say: but in most cases it is probably not wise to follow their advice.

## 2.10. Funding

ANBP has been fortunate to receive funding from a variety of donors led by the Japanese government, which took the lead in DDR and continues to accept lead responsibility for the next stages. In the past DIAG and its sister ammunition project, APMASDP, have received funding from no fewer than 10 donor countries and UNDP, although the current situation is that DIAG is funded mainly by Japan. A donor conference was held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 and several donors have expressed their intention to contribute. A new multilateral funding strategy is envisaged in order to reduce the burden on any one donor, and this is strongly endorsed by the evaluation. Clearly the Afghan government and the international community potentially have much at stake with the DIAG project, and many of the bilateral assistance programmes will benefit directly from an extended DIAG.

### Funding situation until December 2008:

DIAG donors	\$ US mil
Japan	10.2
Canada	5.1
UK	4.7
Switzerland	1.5
Denmark	1.4
Italy	1.3
Netherlands	1.2
Norway	0.7
UNDP	0.5
USA	0.2

Further verbal commitments have been made since the above figures were issued, from Japan, Italy, and Norway. Italy and Norway provided funds in late 2008, but these were for previous pledges and not linked to the proposed extension approved at the December 2008 donor conference.

The ANBP Strategic Framework document proposes extending ANBP from March 2009 to March 2011. It was presented to the donor conference in December 2008. In year 1, an estimated \$17.4 million is required for implementing the strategy. From March 2010 to March 2011, the estimated budget is reduced to \$7.7 million, as staff are reduced and activities at the central and regional offices are scaled back.

March 2009 - March 2010	\$17.4 million
March 2010 - March 2011	\$ 7.7 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$25.1 million</b>

The evaluation does not believe that the proposed programme as conceived can be completed by March 2011. Delays in recruitment and training of personnel are already predicted, while the Afghan electoral programme remains extremely fluid and its calendar will strongly influence DIAG. In addition, the US troop surge is just beginning. **The evaluation recommends** to the Afghan government, to donors and to UNDP, that a 7-

year commitment should be made and a 5-year programme should be approved, with a budget between \$30 and 35 million for the first three years. Since the projected increase of US military intervention will change perspectives, **it is recommended** that this 5-year programme, and 3-year budget, should be prepared in July 2009 for consideration by the relevant authorities. **The evaluation recommends** further, that an updated 3-year budget and programme should be approved each year in December by the Steering Committee meeting as an Annual Donor Conference.

At end January 2009, ANBP had sufficient funds to cover its operations and other expenses until 31 March 2009. ANBP's DIAG project had approximately \$4.9 million in hand as of the end of October 2008, and APMASD held approximately \$1.36 million. APMASD was closed in early 2009, leading to DIAG assuming all administrative and operational costs of ANBP.

Cash-flow can be a problem for any project, a part of risk management, and ANBP is no exception. During 2008, UNDP was obliged to make a loan to ANBP in order to cover salaries and other costs. **The evaluation recommends** that donors should not only pay on time, but should budget their contributions in such a way that ANBP can build up a six-month cash-flow cushion.

### **2.11. Sustainability**

It is impossible in the insecurity of January 2009 to judge how sustainable are the gains made by DIAG. How can anyone know today which groups will take up arms tomorrow, given the insecurity that reigns in large parts of the country, in neighbouring Pakistan, and the virtual state of war in the south? Any form of disarmament or 'disbandment of armed groups' is bound to be problematic in such circumstances. The evaluation allocates a grade C to this area, since there are clearly some problems and difficulties. A 'D' might have been justified, but a 'C' was preferred since the ambient problems are not of DIAG's making, and measures could be undertaken by DIAG to improve sustainability, even within the current, difficult Afghan context.

**The evaluation recommends** that decentralisation improves sustainability. The desire of so many donors to "strengthen central government" has been counter-productive, as a morass of foreigners has overwhelmed with a mass of contradictory demands the small number of competent, anglophone civil servants living in Kabul. In addition, few donors seem able to understand that Afghanistan in 2009 is ruled – as it always has been – by a court. Courtiers may have the title of 'Minister' or 'Governor' but they respond as courtiers. In the history of Afghanistan since Ahmed Shah Durrani was crowned in 1747, there have never been 'ministries' providing services to the citizens. Those Americans and Afghan-Canadians who think they are 'rebuilding' the Afghan state are wrong: they are trying to create something entirely new. It is entirely possible that a new 'nation state' will be constructed with functioning ministries, but it will take thirty years to establish.

The inevitable conclusion from this analysis is actually very positive for sustainability: capacity building should take place in the provinces. Although Afghans are extremely proud of their state and their history, each language group lives this pride in a very different way. Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Nuristanis, Pachtas and Kuchis all have a different relationship with the Afghan state. What they have in common is a history of invaders since the arrival of Alexander the Great in 333 BC, and a shared experience through two millennia that strangers bring nothing but war, rape and pillage.

Afghans therefore are proud to be Afghan, but they are defensive and insular in their

outlook. History has taught them that they can rely only on their neighbours and cousins: their *qawm*. Sustainable development, sustainable disarmament, sustainable disbandment of armed groups, sustainable anything in fact, will be possible only if it is built among *qawm*, and built from the bottom up in the communities of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

Building governmental capacity in the provinces is a desirable objective. Building local government capacity may convince communities that the government has something useful to offer them. But in the Afghan context, building private sector capacity is better still. Afghans have been traders and entrepreneurs since the days of the Silk Road, the trading route that brought travelers together in places like Kabul and Jalalabad, Kunduz and Balkh and Herat, people who came from as far away as Rome, Venice and Constantinople, from Damascus and Baghdad, from Delhi and Lahore, from Kashgar and Beijing to exchange goods and news and ideas.

Decentralisation is critical for the success of all of DIAG's actions. The attraction of computerized records and compiling a national database – which may prove unusable in practice - must not block the objective of achieving realistic management of weapons in every community across Afghanistan's 34 provinces. For development to reach former IAGs quickly and effectively, contracts need to be signed with Community Development Committees to avoid the cumbersome procurement procedures of central government. For PSC controls and district re-mapping to work, the government must push aside the obstacles posed by influential security and business interests. Provincial governors must support the process actively. For weapon registration to be successful, it cannot be done in Kabul: gun permits should be issued in the district with the signatures of an elder, a police officer and the district governor *uluswal* who actually see the weapon, know the gun owner, and can vouch for his good character.

Thus the evaluation believes that government veterinary clinics are good, but training private veterinarians is better still. Having government vehicle repair shops may be useful, but private sector garages are better and more effective at delivering to Afghans the services they need and want. Giving communities and entrepreneurs access to credit, to tools and equipment, to vaccines and cold chain systems are the mechanisms that can help Afghanistan climb back into sustainability.

For DIAG, sustainability will be increased by working with communities, CDCs and DDAs who are composed of local people from the *qawm*, rather than with contractors who have been hired through Byzantine government contracting mechanisms that may seem 'transparent' to Western accountants but which will appear suspiciously remote and corrupt to Afghan villagers whose millennial experience is that strangers bring only trouble and theft.

In the Afghan context, 'government' is a stranger, and therefore a threat. Sustainability can be nurtured only through the community, using local institutions such as village mosques or the CDC structures created through the MRRD's rather successful National Solidarity Programme.

In the 1970s, the author of this paper lived in a village in Balkh Province. The *malek* was not the 'leader' of the village: he was appointed jointly by the elders of the community and the *uluswal*, or district governor, to collect taxes and act as a link between the authorities and the community. In the view of the elders, the *malek's* main function was to act as a screen, keeping strangers and government away from the community.

One day in April, as the snows were melting on the mountain peaks around our village, an official came from the government. He was from the Ministry of Agriculture and he was looking for locusts. He asked the *malek* to give him two men with spades, who could take him around the hillsides looking for places that locusts might be hatching. We chatted while he waited. Instead of finding two men, the *malek* walked around the village collecting cash contributions. Then he came to the locust specialist and said, "Here you are. This is all we have. Now, please, go away and do not return."

This story illustrates the relationship that always existed between Afghans and their governments.

## 2.12 Security

Insecurity hampers DIAG, freezes its work in the south and discourages groups to disband. This is the single area to which the evaluation has given a Grade D = significant problems/difficulties.

There is nothing that DIAG can actually do concerning the political environment, which is centred on the relationships between the governments and armed groups of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the NATO coalition and the United States of America.

There is hope that the bilateral *Jirga* led by Dr Abdullah Abdullah from the Afghan side and co-led by the Governor of North West Frontier Province for the Pakistani side, may bring the beginning of a peaceful solution between the Pashtuns who live along the Durand Line on both sides. But there remain the problems caused by foreigners who are fueling the conflict under the label of *Al Qaeda*.

Inside the country, the matter of political will remains crucial. Although finance is needed for development and disbandment, a greater priority is political commitment from the Afghan authorities. Military objections must not be allowed to obstruct the destruction of unused weapons. A presidential decree is needed to reinforce DIAG in every area of its actions, since decrees signed by the Second Vice-President do not have sufficient political weight to convince certain provincial governors to respond to DIAG's needs, and bring all commanders to heel. Even the re-mapping exercise has been blocked in certain provinces, allowing commanders to spread insecurity. The special interests of influential Goliags cannot be allowed to undermine the weapon management objectives of DIAG. Insecurity has a geo-political dimension, but it also concerns the serious exercise of power in favour of DIAG, weapon registration, re-mapping and vetting by the government in Kabul.

The DIAG team has pursued its work creatively despite the insecurity that surrounds it. In every province there are DIAG people working alongside the governors and strengthening the influence of the Mol. Even in war-torn Kandahar province, the evaluation believes some DIAG progress can be made if resources are provided and the political decision is taken. Better monitoring and evaluation is essential, linked to a more coherent development approach, and this M&E needs to be integrated into the regional office

systems that are the heart and soul of ANBP's success. DIAG shows how men and women of courage and good will can achieve progress, even in the face of serious risk and insecurity.

### **3. DIAG and other ANBP activities in detail** – see Supplementary Report

The essential evaluation report appears in section 2. Section 3 – which is presented as a separate Supplementary Report, offers more details and recommendations that may be helpful for managers and decision-makers in putting management decisions into practice.

## **4. Recommendations for GoA, UNDP, ANBP and DIAG**

For reasons of length, it was been decided to take section 3 out of the main report and to present it as a supplementary report aimed principally at managers. Not all of the recommendations in section 4 flow from the arguments in section 2. The assiduous reader will find a few recommendations below that have not been seen before, unless (s)he takes the trouble to read section 3 in its new format.

### ***4.1. To the Government of Afghanistan***

**The evaluation commends** the creation of the Ministry of Interior DIAG Unit and the transition strategy, but does not believe that the necessary training and capacity building can take place across 34 provinces and 364 districts in one year. Strengthening the decentralized capacity of Mol is critical to success of the government's weapon management strategy. **The evaluation recommends** therefore that ANBP and DIAG donors should agree with the Government of Afghanistan for an extension of the programme for seven years, and that a more realistic transition phasing should be designed with follow-up training to ensure that police capacity really is developed in every province.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG objectives should be expanded from the disbandment of armed groups and arms collection to a wider ambition of weapons management – of which disbandment and registration are just two aspects – and the promotion of governance, development and peace as part of the Afghan government's strategy to promote long-term security and stability. These objectives demand a longer time-scale: the adoption of a five-year programme is recommended, with a three year rolling budget commitment.

**The evaluation finds** that the APPP experiment, especially the re-arming of communities, runs counter to the objectives of DIAG and that it should not be expanded beyond one or two test districts. Negotiation offers a far better outcome for the Afghans than further escalation of the conflict. If, however, the APPP experiment is expanded, **the evaluation recommends** that a weapon exchange system should be imposed: for every weapon delivered to the APPP, an older weapon should be taken in, registered and destroyed.

**The evaluation recommends** that a presidential decree is needed to support DIAG's objectives and to mobilize political will at ministerial and especially provincial governor

level. Provincial governors must support DIAG actively, otherwise the excellent progress made in Kabul with the registration of 39 PSCs will go no further than the confines of the capital. In that case, weapon management and registration will not happen. Political will must be demonstrated by the highest authorities in the land if DIAG's efforts are going to bring some change in the provinces.

**The evaluation has judged** DIAG against political objectives and measurements. Critics who point to the small numbers of weapons that have been collected by DIAG, or cite the large number of districts that are not 'compliant' are missing the bigger picture concerning the progress that has been made in difficult circumstances and the potential future impact of DIAG in promoting peace and reconciliation and weapon management (which is not the same as collecting arms). **The evaluation recommends** that it is good to hear the critics attentively, and to think carefully about what they say: but in most cases it is probably not wise to follow their advice.

**The evaluation recommends** that the emotional dependency of the Afghan nation on firearms – and the acceptance of huge weapon stockpiles - should be challenged in a dramatic way with a major public and symbolic destruction of Soviet era surplus weapons that tells Afghans, 'Owning one rifle may be fine, but we must put the national terrorism of firearms behind us.'

**The evaluation recommends** that all collected and surplus weapons should be destroyed to reduce the risk of leakage and to build confidence in peace by raising public awareness, with a public bonfire of collected weapons. This Flame of Peace should be included in a major public relations film about the success of DDR and disarmament, mine and ammunition destruction, DIAG and the Afghan peace process. The film should be shown at the United Nations in October 2009. Weapon destruction would be a significant indicator for DIAG's increased effectiveness and for government control of firearms.

**The evaluation recommends** that weapon registration should be carried out manually, and should be decentralized to the district level. A central database should be subordinate to the district-level process and should depend upon it.

**The evaluation recommends** that weapon licenses should be issued in the *uluswali* using manual technology, with three signatures of people who know the gun owner and can vouch for his nationality, residence and good character: an elder, a police officer and the *uluswal*. In addition, the ministerial signature can be pre-printed on the license. Computerized back-ups that may be used, or a national registration database, should be considered only as 'back-ups' and they should not replace the legally mandated manual system in every *uluswali*.

**The evaluation recommends** that by presidential decree, the district-level manual records should be kept carefully and updated regularly at the local level as the primary source of verification, and lodged in the *uluswali* where they can be used and consulted.

**The evaluation recommends** that the creation of a national database should be re-evaluated from the point of view of cost and utility. If the D&R Commission and UNDP agree to decide that the national database really is useful, the database must be created from the bottom up: in any case it can only be created from well-constructed manual records. The intellectual attraction of computerized records and compiling a national database must not be allowed to block the objective of achieving real hands-on weapon

management by the police officers in every community across Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

**The evaluation recommends** that weapon registration should not be made renewable: any attempt at the present time to force gun-owners to renew their gun license every three or five years would put an intolerable burden on both gun-owners and on the administrative system, and it would make the database more (and not less) unreliable. If a permanent license is unacceptable to the government, **the evaluation recommends** that individual firearms licenses should be valid for at least ten years.

**The evaluation recommends** that individual weapon registration licenses should be issued free of charge.

**The evaluation recommends** that the Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs should be made primarily responsible – in partnership with the Ministry of Information and Mol - for distribution of information about gun registration.

**The evaluation recommends** that re-mapping should be carried out as a regular part of Mol and DIAG activities: if the data for one province is updated every month, the whole country will be re-mapped on a rolling basis every three years.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should consider extending its Mol partnership to the issues of border control, cross-border collaboration and weapon smuggling (which are integral parts of successful weapon management), when the Mol transition is further underway and after the first round of training has been completed in every province and district.

#### ***4.2. To the DIAG Steering Committee***

**The evaluation considers** that DIAG offers good value for money and, together with the ANBP regional office network, DIAG provides a precious advantage for Afghan development and a valuable opportunity for sustainable peace building.

**The evaluation recommends** that ANBP and DIAG should continue to have separate identities, with ANBP being the overall umbrella structure that manages DIAG and a number of other activities.

**The evaluation commends** ANBP and DIAG donors for the generosity of their contributions, the breadth of their vision, and the timely nature of their payments, and **recommends** that donors should not only pay on time, but should contrive to collaborate and budget their contributions in such a way that ANBP can build up a six-month cash-flow cushion. At the time of the evaluation, DIAG had enough money for only three more months.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should not be overburdened with secondary objectives, and should focus on weapon management. Development and governance aspects should be handled in parallel by ANBP, of which DIAG is one project. The 'development' part should be handled by a professional ANBP development unit, which must ensure coordination between DIAG and the development agencies. ANBP should not 'do development' but create partnerships with MRRD and other ministry units in the provinces, with other UN projects and professional NGOs and involve them as partners of

DIAG. If the Steering Committee wishes to broaden the DIAG mandate to 'governance', this should also be a part of ANBP's mandate and ANBP should be given the means to handle this aspect in a similar way.

**The evaluation recommends** that the Steering Committee and Donor Conference should accept that DIAG is needed for peace building during the next seven years, and a five-year programme should be adopted with a budget between \$30 and 35 million for the first three years. A three-year budget and work plan 2009-2012 should be prepared in July for approval by December 2009. The principle of a five-year programme should be supported so that DIAG's objectives can be achieved realistically and so that DIAG can remain a useful tool for donors to support the Afghan government's work in weapon management and armed group disbandment, district pacification, national peace and reconciliation.

**The evaluation recommends** further that an updated 'rolling' 3-year budget and programme should be approved each year in December by the Steering Committee meeting as an Annual Donor Conference.

**The evaluation recommends** that the Steering Committee will get better value for money if it sets up a coherent 5-year transition of ownership to the Ministry of the Interior, with a strict six-monthly process of repeated, reinforcing training and progress monitoring in every province and district. The present 12-month transition is simply inadequate for the task.

### **4.3. To UNDP**

**The evaluation commends** UNDP and ANBP for creating synergy between ANBP and ELECT programmes. ELECT has received substantial support from ANBP. Regional offices are being used for the election, and a substantial number of ANBP staff have been transferred to ELECT. This is efficient, effective and creative.

**The evaluation recommends** that ANBP and DIAG should be extended for a further seven years.

**The evaluation recommends** that the UNDP Country Director should take a personal interest in fundraising and friend-raising for ANBP and DIAG management, and that he should become DIAG's ambassador to the donors.

**The evaluation recommends** that decentralisation of DIAG activities to the provinces and districts improves sustainability, and that the importance of decentralisation to the district level should be pushed on every issue. Sustainable development, sustainable disarmament, sustainable disbandment of armed groups will be possible only if it is built among *qawm*, and built from the bottom up in the communities of Afghanistan's 34 provinces.

**The evaluation finds** that DIAG has given good value for money, but the project has been weakened by a lack of political support on all sides. PSC registration, successful re-mapping, mobilizing provincial governors to support DIAG, and the organisation of a coherent and successful weapon registration system, all require the mobilisation of serious political will, UNDP and donor support, and a presidential decree. UNDP and UNAMA must push urgently for this presidential support.

**The evaluation recommends** that if the necessary political will cannot be mobilized for DIAG, the programme should be closed.

#### ***4.4. On creating synergy with other programmes***

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should focus on its mandate for security issues and not become involved in legal matters; while development issues should be handled by a separate Development Cell or Unit.

**The evaluation recommends** that ANBP and DIAG should not 'do development', but that they should seek to mobilise existing projects and funds to bring development activities to support 'compliant' districts, especially through UN, NSP and NGO programmes.

**The evaluation recommends** that specific quick-impact project funding could be raised by ANBP, but its disbursement should be organised by CDCs and/or NGOs who would implement the micro-projects. ANBP should be a development coordinator, animator and evaluator (and maybe a funder) but should not try to get into implementation of development programmes.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should try innovative approaches through rural mosques for micro-development projects and helping handicapped veterans, if it is decided that DIAG should intervene in highly insecure areas.

**The evaluation recommends** that the training of women police officers through LOTFA should be integrated into the concept of 'DIAG Reinsertion' for IAG members so that respect for police and respect for women become two of the key elements of DIAG compliance. Specific fund-raising could be envisaged for this partnership between LOTFA and DIAG.

**The evaluation recommends** that by working with NGOs and CDCs, DIAG should make better use of rural radio to reach women and mothers, and arrange women's listening groups to hear regular DIAG-sponsored programmes concerning weapon management, weapons as a public health issue, mines and explosives, governance and DDAs, and other relevant subjects that promote both the objectives of DIAG and the promotion of women's issues. Distributing wind-up radios could be one of the quick-impact DIAG projects.

#### ***4.5. On internal ANBP and DIAG organisation***

**The evaluation recommends** that ANBP should be run by a Director, and that there should be three Deputy Directors at L5, one responsible for DIAG; the second for running the Development and M&E and PI units; and the third running the Financial and Management functions (Security, Procurement, HR – shortly to be combined as a Business Centre). Governance could be run with Development. M&E could be managed separately, provided it is properly managed.

**The evaluation recommends** that ANBP should develop a professional M&E system with adequate and appropriate data collection and analysis. It would be possible to place M&E under the Reporting Officer, if not under the Deputy Director for Development &

Governance. M&E should be under ANBP and should not be managed under DIAG or the JS – this will give the ANBP Director and UNDP a more independent view of results and impact.

**The evaluation recommends** that, despite the programme's excellent attention to security and risk management, staff should be reminded constantly of the physical risk inherent in DIAG to avoid complacency: there is no sign of complacency, yet it must be avoided.

**The evaluation recommends** that staff contracts should be at least one year, preferably two years and should no longer be issued for three months at a time.

**The evaluation recommends** that more efforts should be made to recruit and train and promote women staff members in DIAG and ANBP.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should seek ways to reach out to southern communities and open dialogue about the future. At the very least, a review could be held with NGOs and NSP leaders who are currently working in these zones.

#### ***4.6 On D, D and information strategies for DIAG***

This section contains some detailed proposals that may improve programme delivery, or that encourage innovative approaches to solve DIAG problems.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should focus on its core mission, which concerns the weapon management and security sector aspects of Afghanistan's priorities.

DIAG needs to develop its development activities, but **the evaluation recommends** that these development activities (both the present projects with MRRD and others that may be created later) should be handled separately by a Development Cell or Unit working under the ANBP umbrella.

**The evaluation recommends** that the existing Development/Governance Unit should be doubled in size and in ambition, with the addition of a senior Development Manager having ANBP Deputy Director status, and two additional staff of whom at least one should be a woman and one an expatriate: making a total of six permanent staff.

**The evaluation recommends** the recruitment of a Development Advisor for a maximum of two visits per year lasting six to eight weeks each, to launch the development process and then to help it along and keep the team on message during the next two or three years. The Development Advisor should be of D1 or L5 level, with detailed political and cultural experience of the region, 20 years of experience in the field with NGO or UN rural development programmes, possess a spirit of synthesis and creativity, and have the ability to gain respect from government and development partners.

**The evaluation recommends** that the current PI budget should be doubled and staff should be increased in order to promote both the current DIAG objectives and the future ambitions of ANBP in the areas of governance, security sector police reform, peace and reconciliation. A comprehensive communication strategy should be developed targeting a more specific and tightly defined range of decision makers, including mothers. Journalists,

civil society organisations, CDCs and other projects, and all ANBP regional offices should be enrolled to spread the DIAG message. Some CSOs should receive sub-contracts to promote specific DIAG objectives. In particular, a major investment should be made in creating radio programmes and ensuring that women and men in targeted districts can hear them, and do listen to them.

**The evaluation recommends** that the innovative DIAG District Implementation strategy is a good one, and that it should continue with greater attention to CDCs and the needs of communities where disarmed Xcoms are actually living.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should pursue the innovative 'swing district' approach, but good results require greater access than hitherto to the proposed benefits of quick-impact development. Links with NSP, NGOs and other development delivery services therefore become urgent. DIAG should experiment in one or two swing districts the effects of bringing community-level benefits to see what are the critical elements for success.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should 'buy into' community mosques in highly insecure areas, and find ways to use them for peace and development. The evaluation notes with satisfaction that good contacts have been established with the Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs, particularly in terms of public information outreach. There is more that can be done, however, and village religious leaders could be mobilised more actively for 'compliance' negotiations, to help deal with the drug problem, and for development of alternative livelihoods.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should consider a strategy to use the mosques for reaching out to handicapped ex-combatants in insecure regions. In terms of generating good will (although it would require additional resources) this could attract support in swing districts and in places where security is frankly bad, by gaining support for DIAG objectives from families whose men missed DDR because they were injured and were not on the MoD lists. DIAG is not equipped for humanitarian action, and NGOs should be used as implementing partners if services are to be provided to Xcoms.

**The evaluation recommends** that the ANBP Development Cell should include concern for the handicapped among its focus issues when promoting livelihoods, and that at least one of its staff members should have capacity and specific knowledge in this area.

**The evaluation recommends** that some elements of reinsertion should be included as a form of transitional assistance to IAG members moving into 'compliance', and that this should include some medical services along with training on gender and human rights issues.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should support the Focused District Development (FDD) process wherever possible – recognizing that the FDD system is applied in insecure areas. DIAG should bring into the FDD districts whatever DIAG access is available for micro-project funding, so that the idea of disbanding and becoming DIAG compliant can become a spin-off benefit from the FDD approach.

**The evaluation recommends** greater use by ANBP and DIAG of District Development Assemblies and Community Development Committees (including women's committees) to improve the impact of development incentives for disbandment and weapon

management, the surrender and/or registration of weapons. Using rural radio could reinforce the development aspect, which has been weak until now.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should create a network of supporters across the full range of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, a range of civil society people who support the weapon management aims of DIAG and who can influence IAGs to join the 'compliance movement'. The ANBP Regional Office Managers need to become PI people and advocates, as well as managers. This network of DIAG supporters does not yet exist and it cannot therefore be evaluated.

**The evaluation recommends** that the PI unit should identify, and then fund as an outreach partner, local civil society organisations which would be capable of acting as centres of an outreach network advocating for the control, management and registration of SALW.

**The evaluation recommends** that more use should be made of CSOs and NGOs, especially for the purposes of outreach. DIAG information and development units should work intensively with all types of CSOs, including CDCs. Through the NSP, and because of the decentralised way in which they work, NGOs are working in every province in Afghanistan including Kandahar, Uruzgan and Helmand, where DIAG has trouble making inroads.

**The evaluation recommends** that a meeting with interested NGOs should be held at least once every year in Kabul, and also at least once each year in every single one of ANBP's regional offices, to open DIAG minds to new ideas and to open new partnerships that have never yet been envisaged and to build this new network of support for weapon management.

**The evaluation recommends** that ANBP micro-development funds could be raised with advantage to improve the impact of DIAG, but that these funds should be spent through NGO or NSP mechanisms that already exist in the provinces. ANBP and DIAG should not try to implement development projects.

**The evaluation finds that** a presidential decree is needed to help DIAG boost its strength and prestige in a number of areas, including contracting with CDCs.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should take advice from specialists concerning the problem of drug addiction in Afghanistan, and consider whether it would be advantageous for the programme to include screening and treatment for drug addiction among its criteria for judging the likelihood of compliance becoming successful, and to avoid IAGs falling back into armed violence.

**The evaluation recommends** that the DIAG Public Information Unit should be strengthened both in staff numbers and in its mandate, so that it can lay the groundwork for DIAG expansion into peace and reconciliation when the time is right. Two areas in which it should seek to innovate right away are Peace Education and Peace Journalism. Afghan journalists should be encouraged to produce radio programmes and dramas that promote the DIAG message: maybe competitions could be organised for writers and for producers, for radio stations and for the people who adapt and translate the ideas of others into the languages and poetic patterns of others. Musicians should be encouraged to compose songs, and poets to produce poems that promote the DIAG message in the

multiple languages of Afghanistan.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should hire an appropriate local institution to investigate the reality of rural radio, and make recommendations to DIAG managers about the utility and feasibility of investing in making radio programmes and of distributing wind-up radio sets as a part of the outreach and information-sharing about peace and reconciliation, about IAGs and weapon registration.

**The evaluation recommends** that the DIAG quick-impact projects should include distribution of radios to rural communities, in both compliant and swing districts, and that radio programmes should be created to build up a DIAG awareness at the community level. These should be programmes aimed at men and at women.

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG should take greater advantage of the government's liberal view of education and invest more heavily in radio information, and that a specific radio campaign should be generated to target mothers as peacemakers.

**The evaluation recommends** that market research should be carried out (unless this has already been done by other organisations) to determine the colours best suited for rural radio sets: colours that promote peace on the one hand, colours that distinguish on the other hand between radios belonging to men and those that belong to women. The sets should be distributed separately and their ownership should be clear from the beginning. Where possible, NSP and NGO outreach should be mobilised to organise the women into Radio Listening Groups, so that the DIAG radio programmes become the centre of discussion and debate in every Afghan community. The impact in 'swing districts' could be dramatic.

**The evaluation recommends** that the current efforts of the PI unit should be encouraged and supported by management, and that the films that are currently in production should be widely distributed across the country and followed by more of the same. Since the computer is becoming increasingly ubiquitous in Afghanistan, DVDs should be made in large numbers and distributed widely, as well as music CDs and tapes of peace music and poetry. Mixing music and propaganda films on the same DVD may create a successful peace message.

**The evaluation recommends** that copies of all PI outreach elements should be supplied to donors, and that on each occasion, at least three should be delivered (and addressed separately) to the Ambassador, to the embassy official responsible for DIAG, and for the Afghan country desk officers in the relevant ministries back in the countries of origin.

#### ***4.7. On monitoring, evaluation and database management***

**The evaluation recommends** that the senior DIAG development manager, appointed at Deputy Director level, should have a mandate to develop the development and decentralised governance aspects of DDI and to develop an M&E strategy based on regular updating at provincial level of selected monitoring data.

**The evaluation recommends** that a professional M&E manager should be appointed to execute the M&E strategy, with the conceptual and computing skills needed to build the databases into the tool that UNDP decides is needed and can afford: linked to the length of UNDP's commitment to DIAG and its plans for using databases thereafter. Additional

consulting expertise should be hired as needed. The reporting functions of the M&E manager must be decided by UNDP.

**The evaluation recommends** that the M&E system should be set up with a view to creating a long-term monitoring tool, generating data that will facilitate evaluation of results and impacts in 3 and 5 and 10 years from now. This is not simply a project activity, it must be seen much more as a development and peace building tool that will allow UNDP and MRRD and the D&R Commission to appreciate the medium-term success of ANBP and DIAG. ANBP is not creating this monitoring tool for itself, but for UNDP and for the Government of Afghanistan.

**The evaluation recommends** that decentralisation of data collection should be the standard rule for DIAG, with responsibility delegated to ANBP regional offices where the data can actually be checked, collated and exploited. Any national aggregation of the data should be considered as a secondary and supplementary benefit, to be carried out for a specific and well-defined purpose. If the national database is not going to be used in each province for M&E and properly maintained over time through a network of well-supervised local data sources, there is no point in creating it.

**The evaluation recommends** that in the future, re-mapping should become a part of DIAG programme monitoring, and it should take place in three districts every month so that there are 36 districts done per year (there are currently just over 100 districts targeted out of 364 in the country). Later the re-mapping rhythm should be increased to ten districts per month (120 per year), so that the whole country will be updated every three years.

**The evaluation recommends** that ANBP Regional Office Managers should take on responsibility for updating the DIAG database weekly, throughout the year, by introducing into the database every and any piece of information they glean through their work. If a commander dies, this fact will be widely known locally and the information should be introduced at once into the DIAG database.

**The evaluation recommends** that the data sets should be collected at the level of the district, or not at all. Creating a national, computerized database makes no sense unless the district manual database is its building block.

**The evaluation strongly recommends** that most data should not be collected by ANBP, but collated by ANBP from sources such as police chiefs, MRRD, taxmen, market managers, clinics, the women's bureau, and *uluswali* district officials. DIAG should focus on its core mission, avoid creating any large in-house data-collecting capacity, and become a catalyst for the better performance of other agencies by insisting on collating good-quality data collected by them. Simply by demanding these figures each week, ANBP will strengthen local government services by encouraging them to do their jobs successfully. Separate DIAG studies should be organised to explain the data.

**The evaluation recommends** that the secret to M&E success is integrating the monitoring database and the data collated on the key indicators into the work of ANBP. The regular data sets should be augmented with occasional specific surveys and focus groups carried out in certain districts, which will allow ANBP to check how well the members of IAGs (and even beneficiaries of the previous DDR process) are doing – as well as their wives and families – and whether their opinions confirm or deride the findings

analysed from the regular M&E data. As a target, every district should probably benefit from a specific survey once every four or five years (with recent critical, swing districts being a special focus): that makes roughly 100 surveys or focus groups per year, or two per week across the country: this is a reminder to UNDP that creating one or more useful national database(s) is a big undertaking, and it should not be adopted lightly.

**The evaluation recommends** that a limited number of very specific indicators should be the focus of M&E: instead of recording large quantities of information that are difficult and costly to manage, managers need to select key indicators and proxy indicators that can provide indicative answers to the key questions. When selecting proxy indicators of developing regional peace, indicators should be chosen that already exist: for example, ANBP should use numbers generated by the Ministry of Transport for movements of vehicles and trade, and numbers generated by the Ministry of Agriculture for livestock and crops.

**The evaluation recommends** that Joint Secretariat and UNDP project managers, as well as the ANBP leadership and Regional Office Managers, should be trained in the use and collection of monitoring data, so that they are able to participate in the success and supervision of the programme, and profitable exploitation of the ANBP database(s).

**The evaluation recommends** that delegation to project managers should continue, considering that to be a strength of the UNDP portfolio; yet its delegation does not absolve the UNDP managers of responsibility. The present lack of M&E means that UNDP has no objective indicators by which it can follow the progress and successes of ANBP.

## **5. Recommended Timetable for DIAG and Lessons Learned from DIAG**

A quote from the Strategic Plan document presented by ANBP programme director to the Donor Meeting in December 2008; "...the DIAG benchmark under the Security Sector Reform (SSR) programme of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Afghan Compact (benchmark 1.4) runs to March 2011, and aligning ANBP with the benchmark would greatly support the Government's achievement of this target." (p1) At the time, funding and UNDP policy was to phase out the DIAG project in March 2009, and those staff who were not leaving to seek more permanent employment were working with 3-month or 6-month contracts. A programme living in uncertainty cannot achieve effective results. The Steering Committee of ANBP in recent years has failed to match the programme's ambitions to the overall Afghanistan's strategies for SSR and ANDS, donors have not coordinated with the government or with each other, and this is clearly not an efficient way to work.

### ***5.1. Three phases for implementation of the recommendations***

The following is intended as a general guide to decision-makers for implementing the evaluation's recommendations.

#### **5.1.1. The next eight months: a programme for 2009**

**Strategic decisions need to be taken quickly** to determine the directions for DIAG and illustrate the level of commitment that exists for DIAG continuation and ANBP restructuring. If the following ideas are not broadly supported, then DIAG does not have a

rosy future:

- **The evaluation recommends** that DIAG **objectives should be expanded** from the disbandment of armed groups and arms collection to a wider ambition of weapons management – of which disbandment is just one aspect – and the promotion of governance, development and peace as part of the Afghan government’s strategy to promote long-term security and stability.
- **The evaluation recommends** to the Afghan government, to donors and to UNDP, **that a 7-year commitment should be made for DIAG and ANBP, and a 5-year programme should be approved, with a budget between \$30 and 35 million for the first three years.** Since the projected increase of US military intervention will change perspectives, and Afghan presidential elections are looming, this 5-year programme and 3-year budget should be prepared in July 2009 for decision by the relevant authorities in December.
- **The evaluation recommends** that the **updated 3-year budget and 5-year programme should be** discussed by government and international community partners during the fall and **approved in December 2009** by the Steering Committee meeting at an Annual Donor Conference.
- **The evaluation recommends** that political will should be demonstrated by the Afghan government to strengthen DIAG during 2009 with a presidential decree, followed by active pressure on provincial governors to make DIAG a political and practical priority, particularly with regard to re-mapping. Without this political support from the top, DIAG cannot make progress.
- **The evaluation recommends** that surplus stocks of weapons – and all collected weapons- should be destroyed on July 9<sup>th</sup> to celebrate International Weapon Destruction Day and demonstrate publicly the GoA’s commitment to DIAG’s objectives. Weapon storage is an expensive Afghan problem that needs resolving, and the alternative to destruction is leakage to criminal gangs. Such a July celebration will show political commitment, and remove a thorny security issue at one and the same time.
- **The evaluation recommends** the rethinking of the DIAG development strategy, a process in which ministries, NGOs and UN technical agencies should be involved and begin to design local proposals. More staff should be recruited: during the summer, a Deputy ANBP Director of Development and Governance should be hired, and a Development Advisor with the experience and mandate to make quick-impact projects and decentralised development outreach a success.
- Initial discussions should take place with the Ministry of Haj, for approaching rural mosques.

#### **Management priorities for 2009:**

- If the Steering Committee accepts the recommended 5-7 year plan, a **new strategic plan should be drawn up by end July 2009** for the next five years, and funding commitments should be requested for three years.
- **A new management structure for ANBP is proposed**, with three Deputy Directors running DIAG, Development and Business Centre.
- Decisions must be taken rapidly about **what are the core functions of DIAG**: does it maintain the ‘weapon-in-exchange-for-development programme’? If so, the development programme should be redesigned to add a new – (in addition to the district construction programme) focus on quick-impact activities that reach the IAGs, and donors must agree to support appropriate levels of expenditure and

adequate commitments for at least the next five years.

- Ministry and NGO partners must be brought together to discuss quick-impact project design during the fall, and the new focus should begin in and around the swing districts from January 2010.
- **Regional Offices of ANBP are a real asset, but they have been allowed to 'run down'** as top staff members have left for more certain employment. Rebuilding staff and training are priorities for 2009, and this will run over to next year. If the Steering Committee is serious about DIAG, two-year renewable contracts must be issued to attract and keep good staff.
- **Decisions must be taken concerning the dangerous areas where DIAG is not currently working:** both in terms of 'swing areas' and in 'no-go' areas. If US and other criticism of DIAG is accepted, new strategies should be adopted (such as using rural mosques and handicapped Xcoms as a non-political and uncontroversial entry point), and the design for these new initiatives should take place during 2009 so that the experiment can start in certain districts in January 2010. If it is decided that DIAG will not work in these zones, it should be clear and publicly stated.
- **If the Mol transition is to be a success, it must be decentralised** and the transition must be extended to five or seven years.
- **The evaluation recommends** therefore that ANBP and DIAG donors should agree with the Government of Afghanistan for an extension of the Mol transition for five years, and that a more realistic transition phasing should be designed with intensive scheduled follow-up training to ensure that police and administrative capacities really are developed in every province by 2010-2011 and in every district by 2011-2012.
- **Recruitment must be completed by Mol before end 2009** of national and provincial staff, and before the end of 2010 for district staff who will handle PSC and weapon registration, so that they can be trained and supervised in their work.
- **Further investment in any national database should be frozen** until recruitment is completed.
- **The Steering Committee should also agree to certain strategic changes** in ANBP and DIAG:
  - The ANBP Business Centre should be fully running by mid-2009.
  - **The evaluation recommends** the Public Information staff and budget should be doubled, meaning a new PI strategy must be conceived and staff recruited during 2009.
  - **The evaluation recommends** the redesign by UNDP of the ANBP M&E unit, with recruitment of new staff, and a commitment to making it useful. An M&E manual exists, but it has not been implemented.
  - UNDP managers should be more involved in the design and exploitation of M&E, which ought to be providing UNDP with the data it needs to supervise and assess ANBP and DIAG activities.
  - UNDP managers should be more involved in generating political and financial commitments for DIAG's and ANBP's activities.

### **5.1.2. The next eighteen months: from now until December 2010**

At the recommended Steering Committee-cum-Donor Conference in December 2009, ANBP should present a review of progress in the main areas of 5.1. above:

- Mol transition
- Re-mapping
- Weapon storage
- Weapon destruction
- DDI and swing district strategy
- Strategy proposed (or not) for no-go areas in the South
- Development strategy options and progress
- Public Information
- M&E redesign

**The evaluation recommends** that DIAG's objectives should be redefined for 2010 in the medium term according to changing political and security circumstances in terms of the GoA's APPP strategy, and with relation to the new US Af-Pak strategy which will be clearer by end 2009.

A new police strategy is envisaged to emerge during 2009. DYNCORP should be replaced with a new US and NATO approach to police training and expansion which may affect DIAG's role and approach.

The main DIAG priority for the first half of 2010 should be on capacity building and training:

- DIAG and ANBP regional staff
- Mol provincial and district staff
- Re-training stage 2 for Mol national staff

If the proposed new development strategy is implemented, NSP and NGO projects need to be prepared during 2009 and should be ready for funding during the first six months of 2010 in at least 100 districts.

Experimental projects with rural mosques should be launched in ten districts in early 2010, and results of the experiment should be assessed before the end of 2010.

PI initiatives during this period should include training for journalists, prizes for peace writing, decentralised actions, and greater outreach to inform government and other partners.

Involving local mosques and local NGOs in the PI campaign should be ongoing by the beginning of 2010 and an assessment should be carried out at the end of 2010.

New M&E recruitment and procedures should be in place by end 2009, based on the existing ANBP M&E manual, and preliminary results can be assessed at end 2010.

**End 2010 should be a time for re-assessment of achievements** from 18 months of restructuring and re-orienting the DIAG project, and these assessments will inform the December 2010 meeting of the Steering Committee-cum-Donor Conference.

### **5.1.3. The next five years: from 2009 until 2014**

There is a deliberate overlap in the proposed timing. Stating the third period as 2009-2014 is intended to emphasize that the revisioning, restructuring and re-energising of ANBP and DIAG is not a linear process. While decisions on new timescales and orientations need

to be taken very quickly by the Steering Committee, it will take much longer for provincial and district officials to be recruited and to assimilate and take ownership of ideas involved in weapon management and registration of people and firearms.

The same is true of the international community. The Public Information department of ANBP and the Reporting Officer should be involved in producing materials for all these partners and for each new recruit: for donor staff turnover is one of DIAG's greatest vulnerabilities. It is also true that provincial governors and their teams, district officials and police, and also soldiers and teachers and doctors, need to know about DIAG and understand its objectives. Staffing instability is a weakness in the Afghan administration just as much as it is for donors. All of these people, and for employees and partners (governmental and non-governmental) of DIAG, need to receive regular updates on the objectives and achievements of DIAG.

It can be argued that ownership will be and should be acquired slowly, as the systems are understood and used at the district, provincial, and national levels. Full ownership may only arrive when the full complement of Mol staff is both recruited and trained, and supervised and re-trained – which is why the evaluation favours a commitment for seven years, a plan for five years, and a rolling budget for three years. Building peace and managing weapons in post-conflict societies takes a lot of time and patience.

## ***5.2. Principle lessons learned***

### **5.2.1. Disarmament, disbandment and peace building: there is no quick fix**

ANBP was originally conceived in 2002 as a three-year DDR project. Seven years later we can look back and see that DDR is not a project: it is a long-term programme and the whole concept of DDR would have worked better if it had been conceived as a seven-year programme.

A second lesson concerns the design of the peace process itself: you cannot have successful disarmament (as DIAG struggles show) unless there is a peace agreement. By excluding from the Bonn agreement the ruling political party, known as Taliban, the negotiators ensured that the peace process would be bedeviled by armed conflict. The refusal to deal with Taliban in December 2001 alienated a crucial part of the Pakistani political and military establishment, especially Pashtuns and radicals in Inter-Service Intelligence who supported and armed the Taliban, and who are convinced that 'strategic depth' through control of the regime in Kabul is essential to Pakistan's security.

Third under lessons learned has been that the failure of the international community to build a peace economy in Afghanistan has left peace building in tatters. A DDR programme cannot create jobs. The absence of growth in the peace economy leaves Xcoms with the alternative of peaceful poverty and starvation, or survival by reinvesting themselves into the war economy.

None of this is the fault of ANBP or DIAG, but all this has undermined their chances of making a significant impact in favour of Afghan peace.

### **5.2.2. Planning and timing actions to fit the objectives**

ANBP has learned the lesson that it is not easy to plan in a time and atmosphere of armed conflict. UNAMA and UNDP, ANBP and DIAG deserve great credit for achieving everything they have achieved. Likewise, the Government of Afghanistan is broadly criticized in the Western press, but by people who are not confronted by the difficulties of management of warlords and survival in a conflict zone. A great deal has been achieved by the Karzai Government in circumstances of risk and danger that are impossible for non-participants to imagine.

This is not the first conflict zone, of course, where some people do not want to end the conflict: but in Afghanistan, the centre of the Great Game, a lot of small games are being played that hinder the progress of DIAG and make it impossible for DIAG to match achievements to ambitions.

Everything that happens in Afghanistan is undermined by the failure to take a realistic view of the drug problem. Western allies are slow to learn this lesson since 1971, and are destroying their own chances of success by blind insistence on maintaining a failed policy of repression, by refusing to address the needs of opium farmers to make a living, and by their reluctance to address the demand side: opium is supplied because there are growing demands for opium products in Western Europe, in Russia and China, in Central Asian cities and (increasingly) in Afghanistan itself. While most opium exports are smuggled out by Afghan warlords, significant quantities of opium are exported by western military personnel. Tackling the demand side would change policy emphasis, and might even reduce demand. While turning some of the Afghan opium into morphine would damage the monopoly of a few French and Australian drug companies, it would also allow the authorities to create Afghan jobs, generate legal export revenues and get a handle for the first time on some of the drug production – not all of it, but some of it and that would be progress!

These issues are very relevant to ANBP. DIAG's objectives of disbanding armed groups run directly counter to some of the interests just mentioned above. There are Afghan Goliag politicians with interests in the drug business, and yet others who are making a fortune supplying the war business. What is true for Afghans is equally true for international companies, whose sole interest in Afghanistan is financial profit – and most of the financial profit goes overseas.

The DIAG team works in good faith, meanwhile warlords or Taliban insurgents undermine the mission. UNDP invests time and reputation, risks money and the lives of its staff in the dangerous areas of negotiating with warlords, and there are plenty who believe it is a hopeless mission. Yet DIAG remains a really valuable tool for those who believe that peace is worth fighting for.

### **5.2.3. Political will is needed from both donors and from government**

In the difficult and dangerous circumstances of Afghanistan, people of good will need to rally around the peace mission and use the tool for weapon management and disbandment of armed groups that DIAG provides. Every success outlined in this evaluation report represents one step towards peace. Every weapon collected, or buried, or destroyed is one weapon that will not kill or maim a child. Yet the evaluation is left with

a sense that the forces of evil are better marshaled than the forces of good.

The International Coalition is disorganized and its members are myopically self-absorbed, leaving the UN in a constant struggle for political support and to maintain a coherent political direction. Nowhere is this more evident than in the lack of support for DIAG, where the Japanese have remained constant supporters of a long-term ambition while Western donors vacillate and others – why should we not mention in our Lessons Learned the Islamic oil states? – are absent from the effort to forge a peace process.

Sometimes the UN is too modest. Good and well-intentioned people are not always sufficient to bring good results. Charismatic leadership was offered and refused<sup>8</sup> and ANBP is only one of the programmes that suffers from the consequences of confusion.

**The evaluation recommends that** UNDP needs to be more aggressive than in the past in seeking guaranteed funding for ANBP, while donors need to be more aware of their medium-term objectives, and better organised in the planning of their objectives. As one donor official remarked to the evaluation, “We really took our eye off the ball. Our office stopped funding DIAG last year, and now we are racing around searching for emergency funds for DIAG, because we really need DIAG to vet candidates for the elections.”

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<sup>8</sup> In January 2008 the high-profile British politician Lord Ashdown, who was the UN's high representative in Bosnia from 2002 to 2005 and a former soldier, refused to become the UN "super envoy" in Afghanistan after being criticised by the Karzai regime. Around 200 people protested outside the UN HQ in Kabul this against him with placards proclaiming, "No to a new viceroy". His nationality was historically unfortunate, but he might have provided the personality and political clout needed to bring leadership to the Coalition.