

continue to call for the deployment of internationally-mandated peacekeeping forces to provide a significant level of security to the regions and to secure the major transportation routes which are critical to the economic revival of Afghanistan.

The assistance community prefers the expansion of ISAF's mandate to the PRT plan, which is under the command of the Coalition Forces, who remain on a war footing in Afghanistan. Whether the PRTs will have a positive impact in supporting the overall Bonn Process, or will ultimately be seen as an irrelevance or a target for violence, given the formidable constraints faced, remains to be seen. However, PRTs remain a minor component in a deepening security problem which is obstructing the implementation of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) in particular.

We do not dismiss the possibility that PRTs may deliver solid advantages in "soft" security measures, such as assisting in the training of police and may boost confidence in areas where there is not active conflict between the Coalition and other groups. To the extent that PRTs raise the insecurity suffered by the Afghan people to the attention of senior policy makers, their existence is also to be welcomed. Our comments and recommendations on PRTs continue to be part of a continuing engagement with the Coalition and UNAMA, with the paramount interests of the Afghan people, whom the assistance community is here to serve, informing our comments and recommendations below.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recognize that in the long-term, security in Afghanistan must ultimately rest in Afghan hands. But in this fragile transitional period, only the international community can provide the necessary resources to address the security situation and thereby accelerate Security Sector Reform, in particular, Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), *the* pre-condition for the establishment of peace and stability which will allow the reconstruction of the country to move forward on a stable basis. As the security situation cannot be solved by PRTs alone and as agreed by most political, military and civilian stakeholders in Afghanistan:

We continue to call on the international community for the expansion of ISAF's mandate beyond Kabul as a matter of urgency to facilitate the implementation of all Security Sector Reform measures and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration in particular.

- While recognising that PRTs are an evolutionary process expanding on a pre-existing Coalition civil-military affairs presence throughout Afghanistan, the mandate or terms of reference for PRTs have still not been clearly defined. With an increasing number of Coalition partners agreeing to take over or stand up PRTs a clear unequivocal mandate would be helpful to all actors in the field. Funding constraints and overriding military and political objectives have resulted in the three PRTs to date, continuing to favour assistance-type activities, e.g., drilling wells, rebuilding schools and clinics and minor reconstruction/development projects such as rebuilding small bridges. As a

result both Afghans and the assistance community remain confused about the role and purpose of PRTs.

We recommend the development and rapid implementation of plans that will anchor all PRTs exclusively in the area of Security Sector Reform. Specifically PRTs should focus on supporting the DDR process and the training of the Afghan National Army and police. We recommend ending PRT involvement in humanitarian assistance-type projects and a shift to selecting projects that focus on practical measures to strengthen the government's authority provincially, such as the rebuilding of police stations, customs houses and local administrative offices. To this end, we call for a change to the PRT mandate which should be clearly and precisely defined. The name of PRTs should be changed to Provincial Stability Teams for greater clarification.

- The interests of the Coalition's war against terrorism can be opposed to the nation building process outlined in the Bonn Agreement. With regard to PRTs, this gives rise to suspicions that information overtly being gathered to benefit the reconstruction process may also be used in the interests of the wider war against terrorism. In an unpredictable future, the perception of PRTs as intelligence gathering operations has adverse security implications for Afghans working in the NGO sector. The continuing focus of PRTs on quick impact projects such as drilling wells and rebuilding schools to win "hearts and minds" and to secure useful information in the process supports this view adding to the confusion surrounding PRTs and their role.

We recommend a complete and rapid shift by the PRTs away from the implementation of assistance-type projects towards enabling and supporting SSR and practical reconstruction projects to strengthen the central government's authority as previously stated. This will also serve to reduce distrust and suspicion regarding the ultimate purpose of PRTs in the eyes of ordinary Afghans and NGOs.

- The assistance community is willing to access insecure areas as we succeed in doing in many other parts of the world. However, the international community's failure to address the rising levels of violence arising from a number of factors (inter-tribal conflict, inter-governmental/factional conflict, terrorism and narcotics) is a key factor in denying an increasing number of Afghan children, women and men the help they were promised and urgently need. The increase in security incidents whereby NGO personnel are being directly targeted by radical organizations is of grave concern.

In the continuing absence of effective mechanisms to address internal insecurity the international community must accelerate the formation of a non-factionalised, ethnically representative and professional national army and police force. All available resources, including the PRTs should be used to expedite this. PRTs should not act as a conduit for assistance except under those exceptional circumstances where lives are at risk and there is no government or civilian assistance workers willing and able to respond.