



# ENEMY ON THE INSIDE

**ASSESSMENT, AFTER FIVE YEARS  
IN AFGHANISTAN 2006-2012**

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For what it is worth here is my assessment of what is happening in Afghanistan. This assessment is based on five years' service in Afghanistan, 2006-2012. There was a one year gap May 2010-May 2011:

My questions are:

1. What leverage is available to the advisor for ensuring corrective action?
2. What incentive can be used to improve performance?
3. What are the consequences for no change?
4. What about being more forceful to ensure corrective action is taken?

As Caesar said, "experience is the teacher of all things" and one of the benefits of living as long as I have, is you get to see a lot of history in the making and hopefully you learn from what you have seen. Forty-three years ago I fought against an insurgency in a little place called Vietnam. Similarities here in Afghanistan are extraordi-

narily familiar. We are enriching a few Afghans at the expense of many others. This is causing many Afghans to view us, THE BIG US, as part of the problem not part of the solution. Unfortunately, this supports claims made by the insurgents as it did forty-three years ago.

From my perspective, corruption has a death grip on meaningful progress in Afghanistan. Senior Afghan Officers who issue convincingly sincere rhetorical orders and guidance when addressing their subordinates are merely placating the advisors who are the target audience. The words are nice for the advisors to hear but the absence of "real action" and follow-through is nonexistent! Benefactor protectionism "nepotism" permeates and undermines every aspect of what we, the Coalition, are attempting to accomplish. What we have is an "Enemy on the inside" which is worse than either the TB or AQ. This "Enemy on the inside" masterfully manipulates a well organized

pyramid of profit sharing corruption behind an elaborately calculated smoke screen of ambiguity and chaos. All of the maladies which we have so astutely identified are merely symptoms of the "Enemy on the inside." The high AWOL rate, poor leadership, malingering, poor quality food, theft of resources, soldier's pay problems, failure of accountability for personnel & resources, inability to establish a training cycle, "Green on Blue" (ANSF soldiers killing Coalition soldiers) and the inaccurate Readiness Reporting System are all merely symptoms of the "Enemy on the inside." Senior officers within the Afghan system cannot make a difference without suffering the gravest of penalty. They are all prisoners of the monster they have created.

Corrupt officials can and do act with impunity. There are no consequences, there is no incentive and there is no leverage we can use to make changes; therefore, our best efforts are hamstrung but worse of all we are constantly beguiled for more of what they want. What I clearly see is a failure to achieve our objectives because we are ineffective at implementing the necessary reforms which in actual fact would eliminate the profit sharing business that, collectively, they are not about to let happen. Don't misunderstand me I have great rapport with the Afghans, but I have been here long enough to know they see us as a soft touch for whatever they want.

My analogy for this phenomenon is;"the honey is too sweet despite the bee stings, condemnation." As I have learned from experience, it is never too late to make a course correction. As my good friend Col John Ripley was fond of saying, "There is no worst decision than indecision--your best efforts will suffer from indecision!" Early, as COMISAF, General Allen said "I don't want a brief that admires the problem; I want to see what we are doing operationally for a desired outcome." After eight months in this job and fifty-seven months in Afghanistan, all I hear and see during lengthy and laborious meetings is more of the same, "admiring the problem."

We have empowered bad behavior; consequently, what we now have is an in-extremist situation of the gravest proportions!!

I recommend the following:

1. Increasing the oversight (take back direct control) of fiscal matters, ensuring proper delivery of both quantity and quality of goods and services purchased.

2. Relief for cause of incompetent or corrupt officers/officials should not be as difficult as it is when corruption and flagrant misconduct are obvious. Talking about the problem doesn't resolve the problem. A joint Coalition ANSF board should decide this issue for each offender.

3. There must be a shared responsibility at the tactical unit level; advisors must supervise daily accountability of soldiers/policemen present for duty (morning, noon and night); else pay for "phantom soldiers & policemen" who are AWOL will be skimmed-off by corruption.

4. In my view, we need to politically close the opportunity for exit/entry visas to all those who have been involved in corruption. As an incentive for corrective action, this needs to be done immediately not later. Additionally, any nation issuing a visa should have sanctions imposed on them.

5. Most importantly we, collectively, must tighten the screws by ensuring that business is conducted in a more honest and transparent way. In the Middle East, failure to be forceful and failure to pay scrupulous attention to business details are viewed as weaknesses which encourages corruption to flourish. However, they respect those who obviously value the services and goods which are provide when they see them protected with an iron fist.

At the end of World War II, the allies assumed responsibility for managing the affairs of the vanquished Axis powers until they were capable of running their own affairs properly. Many of my most trusted Afghans friends have told me in confidence that we had it right in 2001 and 02 when we maintained control. Being aware of what happened at the end of WWII, the Afghan people had hope for a peaceful and prosperous future similar to the outcome of those former Axis powers. Now the Afghan people vacillate between fear, uncertainty and distrust of the Coalition. We are viewed by many as having installed the corruption and in their view we should eliminate it. The American people, the Afghan people, the Coalition families and loved ones of those who have died fighting this insurgency deserve better than just rhetoric.

Semper Fi, Tom