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(U) Complex Environments: A Sociopolitical Assessment of Corruption in Afghanistan

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(U) Purpose

(U) This assessment introduces an alternative way of thinking about corruption in Afghanistan. Corruption is explained both as a habituated, systemic outcome of the sociopolitical environment and as a deliberate strategy of governments and governed. This assessment is intended to help improve operations in theater by introducing an anthropological framework for recognizing and understanding the different conditions, causes, and forms of corruption in Afghanistan and their effect on society.

(U) This assessment addresses various National Intelligence Priority Framework (NIPF) topics and CENTCOM Priority Intelligence Requirements. For details, please contact the author.

(U) Key Points



- (U) Afghan government officials currently have little incentive to eliminate corruption. Because public opinion is the ultimate constraint on corruption, greater accountability to the public is the ideal incentive to eliminate corruption. International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) should assist the development of public accountability through population-driven anticorruption policies and practices in order to create a more legitimate government. (High confidence)^a
- (U) Population-driven anticorruption policy targets corruption that antagonizes and oppresses the population and that has attracted public attention and popular anger. Guidelines for U.S. and ISAF forces that prioritize population-driven anticorruption efforts and practices would be helpful for U.S. and ISAF interaction with Afghan government officials and for assisting and cooperating in governance-building and development projects. This assessment is a first step in developing such guidelines. (High confidence)
- (U) Some instances of corruption in Afghanistan may also result from private individuals and communities using bribes and other extralegal financial means to exert control over local government officials and/or to avoid oppressive laws and government regulations. Interfering with these instances of corruption will probably antagonize the population and drive them away from the government. (High confidence)

(U) Source Summary Statement

(U) This assessment is based on a large body of unclassified information, including published books, academic studies, and news reports, not all of which are directly cited. The authors of the academic studies used in this assessment are recognized experts in their fields with field study and other experience in Afghanistan and with access to primary and secondary research. Most of the open-source material used in this assessment is intended to give the reader examples and illustrations of the points and analyses contained herein.

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(U)
Introduction



(U) Corruption is a major impediment to the improvement of Afghanistan's security, economy, and government. Transparency International^b concisely defines corruption as the "misuse of entrusted power for private gain." Unfortunately, this definition (and its inferences) fails to explain the phenomenon or prevalence of corruption in Afghanistan.

(U) *Misuse* implies a clear and widely agreed-upon definition of public authority and its proper application. But Western governments and international observers do not understand "government" in the ways that Afghan government officials do. Perhaps more importantly, Afghan officials often disagree with rural Afghans and the ethnic groups, tribes, and communities of Afghanistan about the purpose and operation of government. The result, when it comes to solving a problem like corruption, is that all three groups end up working at cross-purposes.

(U) This assessment will distinguish between the deep sociopolitical context and more proximate causes^c of corruption in Afghanistan. In any effort to reduce or prevent corruption, the sociopolitical context should be recognized and adapted to. Change in this area will occur only gradually. Typical proximate causes, on the other hand, if understood, can more readily be dealt with. Most actual instances of corruption will originate from some combination of context and proximate causes, and it will be very difficult to concretely identify and differentiate the relevant sources/causes. Nevertheless, placing the sources and causes of corruption on a continuum, with proximate causes on one end and the deep sociopolitical context on the other, should improve both the theoretical understanding of corruption and the practical efforts to deal with it in Afghanistan.

(U) Context



(U) The concept of political corruption assumes that the corrupt official or activity is an exception and a deviation from the normal practice of government—that is, that the corrupt will not be common. In this model, the corrupt activity and/or official can be explained by reference to the problems and immorality of the corrupt individual and not to the broader structure or operation of government: "Governor X used government money to buy a sports car because he was greedy and ignored the law." The prevalence of corruption in Afghanistan belies this model. Such prevalence cannot be understood merely as a depressing coincidence that nearly every Afghan official is a dishonest and narrowly self-interested individual. A broader explanation of corruption is needed.

(U) It is a long-recognized maxim of politics that every government is ultimately reliant on the consent of its population. A corollary is that the final restraint on government, and its officials, is public opinion/consent. Any reasonable account of corruption in Afghanistan must recognize that public opposition to and protest against corruption there is minimal.^d An explanation for this general consent that should be considered is that corruption is not always considered abnormal or unsatisfactory. Those aspects and instances of "corruption" that emerge from the sociopolitical culture and history of Afghanistan are unlikely to outrage the Afghan population sufficiently for them to persistently demand its end, especially since their demands may provoke the violent resistance of the government.

(U) The following sections of this assessment consider a few general sociopolitical aspects of Afghanistan that seem able to partially account for corruption. The population of Afghanistan is incredibly diverse; however, these general characteristics describe the majority of the groups and communities in Afghanistan.

(U) Kinship and Power

(U) Traditional political structure in Afghanistan is kinship based. Political leaders' claims to authority are made primarily over family and tribal relations, and family and tribal members compose a leader's power base. In turn, political leaders use their authority and power to further their kin's interests. This role and importance of kinship extends into government, and government officials typically perceive their power as dependent on the support of their family and relatives.

- (U) After acceding to the throne of Afghanistan in 1929, King Nadir Shah's government was primarily administered by his three brothers and more broadly by members of the Musahiban (his) lineage.¹
- (U) After the 1978-1979 communist revolution and until his departure in 1987, President Babrak Karmal governed through a family group that included his mistress, his half-brother, his son-in-law, several cousins, and other extended-family members.²

(U) Since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001, President Hamid Karzai has placed family and tribe members in important positions of government. At the regional and local levels of government, kinship is just as, if not more, relevant.

(U) The evident and pervasive results of the continuing importance of kinship in Afghanistan are interpreted by foreigners as "nepotism" and "patronage" and are broadly labeled as corruption. Perhaps kinship is an inappropriate element of the governance of a modern, democratic central state, but as long as the officials and population continue to regard kinship as a natural and important feature of government, practices resembling nepotism will continue.

(U) Power is Personal and Fluid

(U) In Afghanistan, authority is also primarily personal and relatively unconstrained by objective or delineated universal laws, rules, or regulations. This is especially true in a country with low literacy rates. In tribal politics, as the British anthropologist Max Gluckman noted, a leader "depends on his industry, his enterprise, and his skill in exchanges to get followers in his own community and strategic partners in other communities."³ A leader's authority and power will be curtailed by his own personal integrity, values, and objectives, and his intuitive sense of how far his legitimacy and support extends among his followers, not by an impersonal, exacting job description.⁴ Beyond that, only the withdrawal of his followers' support, the successful competition of a rival, or his defeat by a neighboring power will limit or end his rule.

(U) This individualized and personal nature of power carries over to the practice of the central government in Afghanistan. The legal separation of powers and division of responsibilities rarely constrains senior officials. As illustrated in the tone box below, government is seen as a family affair, and duties and responsibilities are informally delegated to trusted individuals.⁵ Traditional practices of political power persist in Afghanistan despite the official structure of the state, introduced by little more than fiat and external force.⁶

(U) Personalized Power and Corruption: A Contemporary Illustration

(U) A prime example of the personal nature of politics is the cabinet reorganization employed by President Karzai in October 2008. The Minister of the Interior, Zarar Ahmad Muqbel, was made Minister of Refugees and Repatriation. The Education Minister, Mohammad Hanif Atmar, was made Minister of Interior. The Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Chief of the Cabinet Secretariat, Farooq Wardak, was made Minister of Education. The new Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs was filled by Assadullah Khaled, and the new Chief of the Cabinet Secretariat was filled by Najibullah Sadiq Mudaber. Muqbel, Atmar, Wardak, and Khaled are all political supporters of President Karzai. According to Open Source Center analysis, while the shuffle was apparently a response to accusations of corruption, "by merely shifting around his political allies rather than sacking those who performed poorly, Karzai may have also been trying to maintain a balance between preserving his political allies with the need for removing potential obstacles prior to proposed new security and political initiatives."⁶

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(U) Given this, it should not be surprising that government officials loosely interpret and refuse to be strictly bound by the legal limits of their office.⁷ An official in a Western government who exceeds the codified bounds of his authority is usefully characterized as corrupt, for he breaks what are codified and popularly accepted rules. A corrupt official will (at least in theory) be removed from office by his peers or by popular

demand. An official in Afghanistan, on the other hand, knows that his peers are engaged in similar activities. More importantly, he knows that within limits it is very unlikely that popular demand could be strong enough to effect his eviction from office. As the anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu wrote, "The ethnologist would doubtless gain if he assumed, as a general rule, that people obey rules (when they exist as such) only in so far as the interest in obeying them is significantly stronger than the interest in disobeying them."⁸

(U) Government Office is a Source of Wealth

(U) The relationship between power and wealth is intuitive. In tribal societies, wealth is a prerequisite of political leadership. The relationship, however, is not one-way. Power is also a source and means of acquiring wealth. This blunt fact of the interdependence of power and wealth is fully recognized by the people of Afghanistan. In fact, without a cash economy, and given its limited technological development, wealth in rural Afghanistan has historically been of little use other than for the pursuit of power. Leaders will amass wealth in order to gain followers and then redistribute it among the community to shore up their support (see the tone box below for a contemporary illustration). Thus, for the population, as the anthropologist David Edwards noted for Swat Pathans, "the decision as to which leader to follow was generally determined by a rational calculation of which party could produce more goods."⁹

(U) Government Office, Wealth, and Patronage

(U) The personal nature of power applies even to high-level officials directly accountable to the central government. In 2001 after the Taliban were pushed out of Herat, Ismail Khan (a former military commander and governor of Herat Province) was chosen as governor by the elders and religious leaders of Herat (and received the wary approval of Kabul and the United States). According to journalist Nicholas Schmidle, who spent time in the province, Ismail Khan's "style of ruling was personal and dictatorial." In 2004, Ismail Khan was removed from office and was made Minister for Water and Power in Kabul. But Ismail Khan maintained a degree of authority and power in the province through the same personal redistribution of favors and patronage in the community that marked his time as governor. In 2008, Schmidle visited Ismail Khan's house/compound in Herat and described the scene: "A crowd waited for him. Grown men clutched his hand, bent their heads, kissed 'the amir.' Khan's turbaned guards stayed close. Baqi (a close aide) communicated on the walkie-talkie. The women in burqas had made their way inside the compound; Khan stopped to greet them, too. Javed (Schmidle's translator) leaned over and whispered to me, 'Almost everyone here has gotten some favor from Ismail Khan and they are here to thank him.' Javed reminded me that Baqi ran a one-truck transportation company before Khan named him head of the Transportation Department in Herat. Now he owns a fleet of trucks and has a big house."¹⁰

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(U) At the local, tribal, and village level, this cycle of wealth between leader and followers remained predominately spontaneous and voluntary. The central government's acquisition and utilization of wealth has historically been far less benevolent. A government official is appointed by and is dependent on primarily the state and, consequently, is less reliant on the approval of the community he rules. Therefore, while he will continue to extract wealth from the community, through taxes and bribes, he will be less likely to redistribute the wealth back into the community. Under the militarization of political authority of the last 30 years (since the 1978-1979 revolution against the communist government), and with the increasing costs of military power, wealth is more likely to be distributed among soldiers, spent on weaponry, paid to private military

units, and used for other items.

(U) According to many academic experts, religious leaders in Afghanistan traditionally "did not consider themselves accountable to the public but only to God. For this reason rebuilding civic institutions, i.e., health, education, and culture, as well as maintaining a cleaner environment and stimulating economic development held no meaning for them."¹¹ This mainly holds for central government officials as well.¹² In turn, local communities (especially rural groups) have had low expectations of the central government. As long as taxes and demands for bribes were kept reasonably low, the money was handed over and nothing was expected in return.¹³

(U) History is both illustrative and explanatory. The evidence is irrefutable that bribery has served government officials throughout Afghanistan's history. Of course, no one is more aware of this than the peoples of Afghanistan. This is a major reason why they are generally antipathetic toward the central government. According to the anthropologist Nazif Shahrani, "Even village headmen, whether chosen by the villagers or appointed by the government, were, by virtue of their association with the administration, opportunistic, self-interested, and considered dishonorable."¹⁴ Corruption is such an ancient practice of the state/central government that it is viewed as natural and is expected.¹⁵ People do not rise up against what they perceive as natural, and officials are likely to continue to do what officials (their predecessors and historical examples) have always done.

(U) Constant Competition

(U) Because of the individualistic and egalitarian nature of Afghan tribal societies, competition over leadership is continual and leaders must be ever vigilant to preserve their positions. Even among the family, strength is requisite for survival in the political struggle.¹⁶ Because success is based on a reputation for self-assertiveness and callous defense of self-interest, pacific and rule-bound individuals are rarely able to maintain power.¹⁷ The successful leader will be one who is able to acquire the most wealth, reward his followers, and defeat his enemies. The political leader who refuses bribes and acts only within the strict limits of his office will have a difficult time keeping his followers from abandoning him for a more enterprising and capable leader.

(U) The historical persistence and continuity of local political competition was described effectively by Professor Thomas Barfield. On the political battleground in Afghanistan, "as individuals seized power, lost power, and plotted to regain power, the patterns of authority differed very little from that practiced several centuries earlier: rivals for leadership were all members of a large dynastic house that was more concerned about coups from within than by displacement from without. Legitimacy meant seizing power and displacing relatives, not competing with other groups."¹⁸ Political competition has opened up somewhat, so that individuals outside of powerful families are able to enter the game, but it is still competition from within (Afghanistan) that is foremost in officials' minds, not the agendas of foreigners or the accusations of journalists. The case of Kandahar since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, described in the tone box below, is a pertinent example.

(U) Competition for Power in Kandahar

(U) A case from Kandahar Province clearly illustrates the reality and importance of constant political competition. At the end of 2001, the key political players were as follows:

(U) "Gul Agha Shirzai, who came out on top initially thanks to American and Pakistani support; Mullah Naqibullah, an Alkozai [sic] strongman who had supported the Taliban initially and then switched sides in the last days of the regime; Ahmad Wali Karzai, the President's brother who rapidly emerged as the leading Popolzai strongman in the province. This uneasy alliance rested on a precarious equilibrium. In the distribution of spoils, Gul Agha took control of the administration and customs, Mullah Naqibullah and his associates took the police and much of the Ministry of

Defense-sanctioned militias, while Ahmad Wali initially contented himself with minority shares in the administration and in the militias. ...American support for Gul Agha started weakening during 2002, leaving him exposed to the pressure of the two other leading local members of the alliance. Ahmad Wali, able as he was to rely on Kabul's support, was patiently maneuvering to sideline his rivals and emerge as the expatriates' favorite Kandahari. Mullah Naqibullah...was left without much foreign support and was unable to exploit Gul Agha's decline."¹⁹

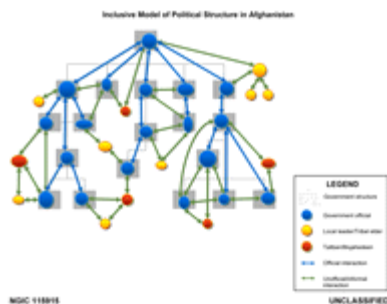
(U) This was only the beginning of the fight for local control in Kandahar and is just one example from one province of Afghanistan.

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(U) The anticorruption and good governance agendas of the West and of high-minded Afghans cannot evade this volatility of power. Neither the elite nor the population of Afghanistan is naïve. Through many centuries of experience, they developed effective defensive mechanisms to protect themselves from the outside world. Villagers deal with foreign development workers, for example, by eagerly accepting recommendations for technological change, because they know that then the 'developers' will leave.²⁰ As with suggestions for technological change, government leaders are likely to "willingly accept" suggestions for corruption reform with the knowledge that the sooner they accept the sooner the reformers and regulators will leave. Corruption is thus perceived locally as simply the common-sense precaution (or the regular work of the political leader) of accumulating wealth and resources against present instability and possible or probable future conflict.

(U) Mapping the Political Context of Afghanistan (Refer to Diagram Below)

(U) The political/governmental structure in Afghanistan—at the local, regional, and central levels—will be confusing for foreigners. Personalities (circles), rather than office, are primary, and they will vary in ability, charisma, and other characteristics. Individuals' power and position within the structure will depend on the "size" and "shape" of their "personality." Government (blue circle) officials do not hold a monopoly on power or authority; instead, they interact (green arrows) with unofficial (yellow and red circles) leaders (e.g., local/tribal figures, religious figures, warlords, Taliban). Relationships between individuals are not fixed and unidirectional with power running from superior to subordinate. Instead, individuals exert pressure on their superiors, compete with peers, and struggle to restrain ambitious subordinates (arrows go both ways). Finally, government positions (the government structure) are not firmly or clearly defined and usually do not entirely constrain the officials who hold them.



(U) An Inclusive Model of Political Structure in Afghanistan (click to enlarge)

(U) Proximate

(U) Proximate causes of corruption are those which are not necessarily derived from local custom and culture but rather are more cross-culturally and universally relevant and rational responses to particular problems and

choices. As seen above, practices labeled "corrupt" can be the unintended outcome of the sociopolitical context. But corruption can also be a deliberate tactic, analyzable simply as a rational choice among available choices. In cases where corruption is a deliberate tactic of the population or of government agents, anticorruption efforts will be more productive if they understand the motivations and aims of the "corrupt."

(U) Corruption as a Deliberate Tactic of the Population

(U) It is a common mistake to think of corruption solely as a means of oppression used by the powerful. This simplistic model assumes a government official using his authority and power to enrich himself and a helpless population with no choice but to submit to depredation and robbery. Contrary to this model, the peoples of Afghanistan have experienced oppression and external rule for centuries and have developed sophisticated ways of avoiding government authority or of keeping it at arm's length.

(U) Corrupting local officials is such a tried-and-true tactic. Rural populations will often pay off the local government official to remain passive so that the community can maintain its autonomy and traditional political structure.²¹ For instance, a local village may bribe an official so that they can use "public" land (e.g., when the use of that land is illegal because of central government regulation). Bribing government officials could also be an efficient way of avoiding interference with and punishment of criminal activities. For example, a nomad caught stealing sheep would use the services of an *arbab* (village leader) to bribe the police to avoid punishment.²²

(U) In his account of the neo-Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, Antonio Giustozzi gave two contemporary examples of civilian-driven corruption: "Nangarhar's border police reportedly allowed smugglers and insurgents to cross the border during 2006" and, throughout Afghanistan, "widespread bribing of police to save the poppy fields was also reported in 2006."²³

(U) Central government officials are, and were historically, often posted to areas unfamiliar to them so that the initial relationship between them and the communities they ruled/administered would be one marked by tension and suspicion. Bribery could improve their relationship. As bribes constituted an important part of local officials' livelihoods, they attempted to preserve favor with the local population. Thus, interdependence developed between government representatives and the communities they interacted with.²⁴

(U) In these situations, the population sees bribery as a useful tool and will not want to be deprived of it. According to anthropologist Lincoln Keister, this was how the people of Darra-i Nur (in Nangarhar Province) reacted to anticorruption efforts made by communist government officials in the early 1980s: "To the inhabitants of Darra-i Nur this meant that government officials would no longer be dependent on bribes and thus would have no reason to respect local customs or accommodate indigenous political leaders. The local population felt threatened with the loss of a particularly effective means of controlling government policy in its area."²⁵

(U) Corruption as a Centralizing Tactic of the Government

(U) Historically, the state in Afghanistan has exercised limited control over rural areas. But every central government of Afghanistan has tried to strengthen itself against regional and local power structures. Corruption is an important tactic in this effort.

(U) Local political leaders are tied closely to their communities and kin. In order to prevent rivals from within the tribe and village from undermining their position and luring away their followers, leaders must maintain an active local presence. Recognizing this, the central government has sought to separate leaders from their communities by recruiting them into official positions. Their official status lowered their credibility as local leaders and many communities turned to new leaders.²⁶

(U) Bribes in the form of relatively large salaries (compared to local standards) have been a primary incentive for local leaders to accept official positions despite the risk of losing local support. Official government status also offers certain initial advantages to local leaders, who are not faced with an immediate loss of local prestige (loss of credibility typically occurs gradually). The local balance of power is often so tenuous that leaders accept government status fearing that refusal will allow another local figure to accept it and then overthrow them.

(U) Using official funds to co-opt regional and tribal leaders and to pay for their support was a tactic of the

British Empire, as well as of every Afghan government that has held Kabul. Corruption in these cases, from the government's perspective, is simply the cheapest and least troublesome way of dealing with the reality of factionalism and the limited reach of the state.^{27 28}

(U) Foreign Aid

(U) There is minimal hierarchy within the traditional political structures of Afghanistan. One consequence of this is that a balance usually develops between leaders and their followers. Because their authority is fragile, leaders tend to be sensitive to the needs and opinions of their communities. As we have seen, even when the central government has attempted to create a wedge between local leaders and their followers, new authority structures/figures develop to restore the balance. Where government officials have been stationed, microstrategies like bribery serve to create the balance between communities and officials.

(U) But with the professionalization of the mujahidin and other armed groups, foreign aid has facilitated a new type of imbalance that communities have thus far found difficult to correct. In the early years of the war against the Soviets in the 1980s, contributions from the population formed an important part of a commander's resources; in other words, he was dependent on civilians. According to Afghanistan scholar Gilles Dorronsoro, in the 1980s, "with the growth in foreign aid...popular contributions were sidelined, at least in the case of the major commanders, who relied on external humanitarian and military aid." The result was that "in many regions the population found themselves deprived of a bargaining counter and unable to exert pressure on the commanders."²⁹ In other words, commanders could make money by maintaining armed forces and did not need to get it from the poor population. Freed from the (undoubtedly limited) control of local populations³⁰ and operating in an intensely competitive environment (with peers and subordinates eager to take their place), commanders are unlikely to pay close attention to the stipulations or official purposes of foreign aid.

(U) Because the funds and resources provided by foreign aid are not taken from the population, the population will exert less control over the use of the aid. When a government official uses money he has taken from a village, the village will want to know where and how it is used. When a government official uses money he has received from outside Afghanistan, the people have no way of knowing how much the official has. Moreover, to a certain extent, since the official acquired the money, it is perceived as his to distribute as he sees fit.

(U) The dominant explanation for political corruption is insufficient for Afghanistan. This framework begins with the formal (legal) structure and function of government and then defines and assesses corruption on a case-by-case basis as the infringement by an individual official or group of officials of that legal interpretation of government. Corruption is thus understood as little more than the instance of a government official abusing his power and breaking the law. Applied to Afghanistan, this framework leads to the unsatisfactory and awkward conclusion that nearly every Afghan official is a criminal.

(U) This assessment introduces an alternative way of understanding systemic corruption in Afghanistan. To a significant degree, systemic corruption could be one of the following:

- (U) The result of extensive and widespread disagreement over the purpose and operation of government.
- (U) The unintended consequences of activity based on traditional sociopolitical customs and norms, which conflict with the legal structure and operation of the Afghan state.
- (U) A deliberate and systemic strategy of nonstate and/or state actors aimed at dealing with social, economic, and political difficulties.

(U) Because the population is the ultimate constraint on corruption, ISAF anticorruption policy should be population driven. This means, first of all, scaling back and specifying expectations of corruption-free governance. It does not mean general tolerance of corruption. ISAF should not replace universal condemnation of corruption with universal tolerance of corruption.

(U) Population-driven anticorruption policy targets corruption that antagonizes and oppresses the population and bypasses or delays action on corruption that is accepted and customary or that does not directly affect the population.

(U) The primary guideline for combating corruption should be to prioritize efforts according to the sector of government. Those sectors of government that have historically fulfilled functions important to the population should be targeted over sectors with less traditional importance. Thus, a corrupt court official or police officer should be prioritized over a corrupt transportation, health, or education official because the population will be, on average, more concerned with "justice" and "security" than with health or education policy.

(U) A secondary guideline is the primary victim. Anticorruption policy should focus on combating corruption that directly victimizes the population. Thus, funds stolen from international aid are less important to the population than money taken through bribery and/or extralegal taxation of the population. Similarly, bribes demanded from local businesses and citizens should be more important for anticorruption policy than bribes taken from international organizations and contractors.

(U) A final guideline is the beneficiary of corruption. Population-driven anticorruption policy targets an official with houses in Kabul and Dubai over an official distributing favors and patronage in the local community because only the official is benefiting in the former scenario, whereas some portion of the community and population benefits in the latter.

(U)
Intelligence
Gaps



(U) This is a macrolevel assessment. It does not include the detailed, microlevel information necessary to explain or understand specific instances of corruption. The sociopolitical perspective provided in this assessment, however, could be applied to better understand corruption in particular provinces, regions, towns, and villages. Such an assessment would need detailed information about the region/area and the relevant officials/leaders involved.

Footnotes

- a. (U) *High confidence* generally indicates that judgments are based on high-quality information and/or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment. A "high confidence" judgment is not a fact or certainty, however, and such judgments still carry a risk of being wrong. *Moderate confidence* generally means that the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a high level of confidence. *Low confidence* generally means that the information's credibility and/or plausibility is questionable, or that the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or that there are significant concerns or problems with the sources.
- b. (U) Transparency International (TI) is a global civil society organization dedicated to combating corruption. TI is a global network including more than 90 locally established national chapters and chapters-in-formation.
- c. (U) Proximate causes of corruption are those which are not necessarily derived from local custom and culture but rather are more cross-culturally and universally relevant and rational responses to particular problems and choices.
- d. (U) Of course, a population's toleration or consent is not the same as a population's approval. In any power play between a government official(s) and an individual(s), the individual will consistently lose. Thus, officials will be able to do things that are not in the public's favor, but which will not cause them to rebel or even vigorously protest because of the disadvantages of such action.
- e. (U) The open and fluid (as opposed to delimited and codified) character of rules in Afghanistan can be seen in two other aspects of society: warfare and religion.

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