



KANDAHAR PROVINCE SECURITY PERSPECTIVES

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Research Paper

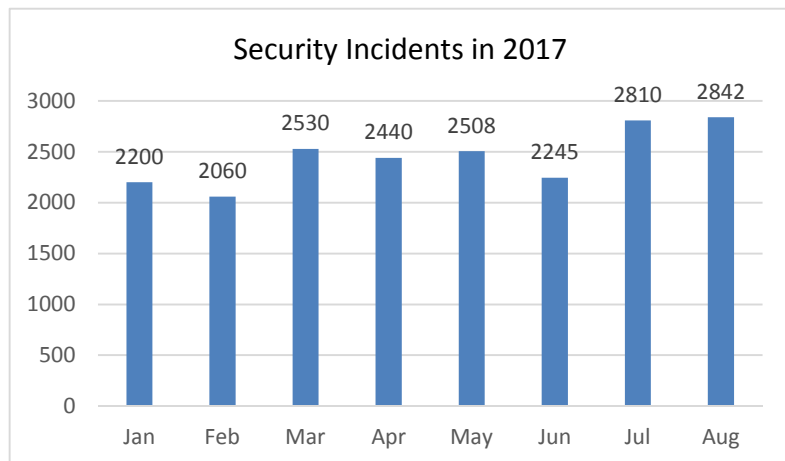
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INTRODUCTION

Since the withdrawal of ISAF mission and forces from the Afghanistan Theater, the overall threat situation in Afghanistan continued to be unstable resulting with significant threats to foreign and national personnel and organizations. Despite the numerous initiatives of Afghan authorities to improve the security situation, it is an unavoidable conclusion that foreign and national personnel and organizations have been exposed to volatile security incidents which have resulted in a high number of casualties and significant destruction of infrastructure and property.

The Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) continue to exist and operate in several regions of Afghanistan where they are able to find safe haven and conditions to form temporary logistics and operation bases. Due to the geographical dispersion of the NSAG operations across Afghanistan, the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) face the challenges of spreading their presence and capabilities in a pattern that does not provide constant and overall control on the entire territory. This in turn results in geographical gaps in which the security situation has deteriorated and continues to be volatile. This is evident

in the above illustration which summarizes that there have been over 2,000 security incidents each month in 2017, with the number of incidents raising close to 3,000 in July and August 2017.



In April 2017 while their annual spring offensive, the NSAGs promised to increase the number of assaults on foreign troops and ANSF, naming their future activities as “Operation Mansour” after the group's late leader who was killed in 2016 in a US drone strike. They also emphasized the fact that they are changing tactics. By August 2017, their activities have resulted 12% increase in incidents.

Keeping their promise about changed tactics, NSAGs shifted from partisan alike operations which were mostly small hit-and-run activities to well-organized combat operations with increased numbers and more strategic goals such as seizure of entire villages and small towns or even entire districts as shown in the cases of Kunduz, Helmand and Uruzgan Provinces.

Despite this shift of tactics, small intensity attacks, kidnappings, targeted killings and improvised explosive devices attacks remain with high probability and occurrence across the country. On the other side of the conflict, ANSF



NSAG celebrating victory over the battle of Kunduz resulting with short-lived but significant overtaking of Kunduz.

remains to be the lead player from the government's side of the conflict. Unlike the period up to the end of 2015, in 2017, ANSF was forced to rely on their organic capabilities due to the minimum participation of international forces and support.

KANDAHAR PROVINCE OVERVIEW

Kandahar Province continues to be one of the most volatile provinces in the country. The combination of desert areas and mountainous regions spread over 54,022 km², the provincial organization to 18 different districts and low rate of urbanization of the territory and the mix of four ethnic groups with Pashtuns being the dominant group, provide favorable geographical, social and political conditions for NSAG operations and presence.

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