

THREE YEARS LATER

A socio-political assessment of Uruzgan Province from 2006 to 2009



A schoolgirl participates in an accelerated learning program implemented by Save the Children Netherlands in Uruzgan Province

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1 Introduction¹

Despite initial scepticism from larger NATO powers when the Dutch took command of Uruzgan in August 2006, the troubled Province is now widely seen as one of the only positive developments in Afghanistan's increasingly insecure South.² Even the United States, once sceptical of the Netherlands-led mission, is now considering the integrated "whole of government" approach combining military might with development followed by the Dutch in Uruzgan, worth replicating.³ However, the security, development and rule of law gains made in Uruzgan over the past three years by international civil-military actors (mainly Australian, Dutch and US) are both fragile and limited. A main problem is transferring responsibility over to an Afghan government that many citizens see as unrepresentative and either unwilling or unable to offer basic service provision or security to the population at large.

Using an assessment of Uruzgan Province conducted by The Liaison Office (TLO) at the beginning of the Dutch civil-military mission in Uruzgan as a baseline, this assessment evaluates the impact that the Dutch comprehensive '3 D' approach (development, diplomacy/governance, defence/security) has had on the Province over the past three years. The assessment draws upon approximately 190 interviews conducted through district surveys in Chora, Tirin Kot (2007), Gizab, Shahidi Hassas, Chenartu, Khas Uruzgan, and Deh Rawud (2008/9), an area media study (2008), and continuous informal discussion with a cross-section of individuals from Uruzgan (tribal elders, government officials, business owners). The surveys and discussions covered economic, development, security, and governance issues. Additional information was gathered in 4 focus group discussions and 11 individual interviews in Kabul, Tirin Kot, Deh Rawud, and Chora from 1 May to 7 May 2009, as well as 10 informal interviews conducted in Uruzgan during the first two weeks of September 2009.

Three years later, security has increased in Uruzgan, the provision of basic services is improving, and the economy is beginning to show initial positive changes. This is most noticeable in the three populous districts of Deh Rawud, Tirin Kot, and Chora (about 50%⁴ of the total population in Uruzgan) where the Dutch have focused their 'ink-spot' counterinsurgency strategy and 'under the radar' development efforts (this also extends to areas of Taliban-dominated Khas Uruzgan).⁵ In these districts the Dutch comprehensive approach of 'reconstruction where possible, military action where necessary'⁶ has had a measure of success, and the local communities are gaining strength through the re-

¹ The Liaison Office is grateful for funding provided by the Royal Netherland's Embassy in Kabul, however, the views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the Dutch government.

² See for example, 'The Dutch Model', *The Economist*, 12 March 2009; http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13279199

³ See for example, 'U.S. takes Dutch Military as Role Model in Afghanistan', *The Wall Street Journal*, 4 May 2009; <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124105482098871505.html>

⁴ We acknowledge that Dutch official sources claim these districts constitute 70% of the provincial population. However, our estimates suggest a different picture: Tirin Kot (100,000), Shahidi Hassas (84,000), Khas Uruzgan (80,000), Deh Rawud (78,750), Chora (72,000), Gizab (59,000), Chenartu (30,000).

⁵ This strategy, devised by NATO when it took over command of southern Afghanistan, focused on setting up secure zones, from which they could slowly expand outwards like "ink spots" on blotting paper. Rachel Morarjee, 'Taliban hinder NATO 'ink-spot' strategy', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 4 August 2006; for the Dutch this meant focusing on gaining control in the central districts of Uruzgan where the majority of the population lives.

⁶ <http://www.cgvancover.org/files/pdf/AfghanistanFactSheet2.pdf>



emergence of vital grass-roots *shuras*. In the rest of Uruzgan, the situation has remained stable yet under the control of insurgents or other autonomous local forces (Gizab, Shahidi Hassas) or else contested (Khas Uruzgan).

In 2006 security was provided largely by international forces and militias commanded by local strongmen. Today, Dutch efforts to promote an 'Afghanisation of security' are beginning to bear fruit, with the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), increasingly fighting alongside international forces. Moreover, the integration of auxiliary police forces into the state security structure, though far from complete, has begun to lessen the influence of strongmen and is slowly increasing accountability. This process has been gradual and is still fragile. The reach and capacity of the state remains limited, with certain strongmen and their militia still dominating the scene.

One negative aspect is that locals still see the state as reliant on foreign aid, and controlled by the same tight group of power holders that existed in 2006. Though the Dutch and Australian Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT)⁷ has successfully supported large-scale and village-level reconstruction projects by coordinating more closely with district-level decision-makers, in the opinion of the local population, the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) is almost invisible. As a result, local community leaders now prefer to work around the state if possible. Areas under insurgent control (Mehrabad, Darafshan, Gizab, north-eastern Chora, much of Khas Uruzgan and Shahidi Hassas) see no benefit of pledging allegiance to a state that offers them at best nothing and at worst marginalization or repression.

In light of the above, the sustainability of the Dutch comprehensive approach is limited if the Afghan state cannot free itself from the influence of political entrepreneurs, participate constructively in the development enterprise, and win the confidence of the people. The issue of transferring responsibility not only in the area of security, but also governance and development, needs careful consideration a year before the planned end of the Dutch commitment to function as lead nation in Uruzgan, when they will likely scale down their security operations.

2 Background

Uruzgan province is strategically positioned in the centre of the so-called Pashtun tribal belt, linking the west (Herat and Ghor), the south (Helmand and Kandahar) and the southeast (Zabul and Ghazni), as well the central highlands of Day Kundi. The province is mostly mountainous and rural. The main water source is a two-river system (Helmand and Tirin Kot) that joins in Deh Rawud and flows to Kajaki in Helmand.

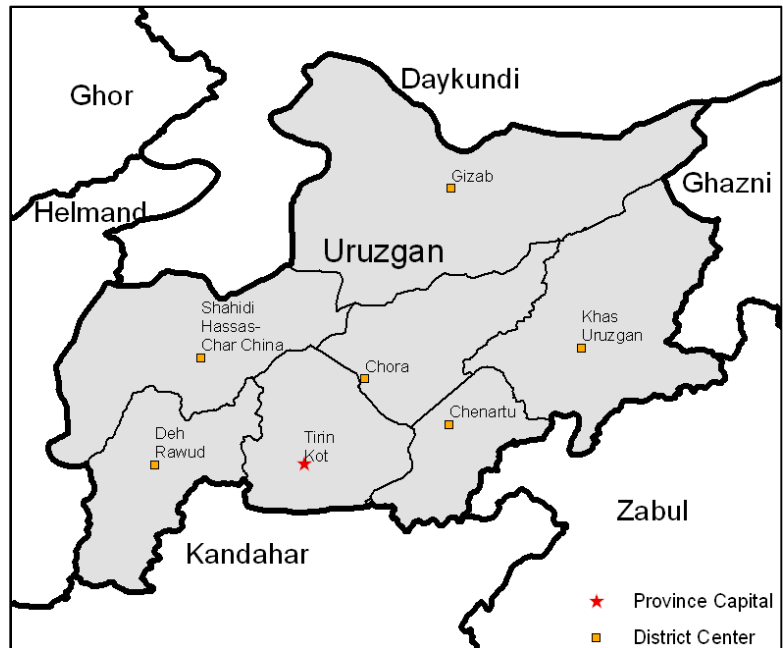
Present-day Uruzgan is the result of population policies carried out as part of the statebuilding strategy of Durrani Pashtun rulers that began in the late 18th century and continues today. Historically Uruzgan was inhabited predominately by the Hazara ethnic group. They were expelled northwards by Ahmad Shah Durrani (late 18th century) and Amir Abdur Rahman (late 19th century) in two waves:

- **1st wave:** Deh Rawud, Tirin Kot and parts of Shahidi Hassas

⁷ The mandate of Provincial Reconstruction Teams is to 'assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable Security Sector Reform and reconstruction efforts'. For the purpose of this paper the activities of the PRT itself, and the development and outreach activities steered by the Netherlands's embassy in Uruzgan through other channels, are treated as one in order to reflect/capture the combined effort of a country (with the support of the local government) in a province.

- **2nd wave:** Chora, Khas Uruzgan, Gizab and remaining parts of Shahidi Hassas

In the first wave, mainly Ghilzai Pashtun tribes⁸ settled in Hazara territory; however many of these Ghilzai were later given land north of the Hindu Kush so that out-migration would weaken their power in the South and increase Pashtun influence in the North. In the second wave of population shifts, the state facilitated new settlement of Zirak Durrani tribes in Uruzgan that displaced much of the remaining Hazara population in the peripheral areas of the present-day province.



Map 1: Uruzgan and surrounding provinces

A more recent reshaping of ethnic territory was the creation of Day Kundi province a few months prior to the 2004 presidential elections. Here the Hazara majority districts in Northern Uruzgan were carved out from the Pashtun-dominated ones in the South in order to create a Hazara-majority province. Today, only two Uruzgan districts (Gizab and Khas Uruzgan) have sizeable Hazara-minorities. Though Gizab was made part of Day Kundi in 2004, it has since been returned to Uruzgan. After forced out-migration in previous centuries, the Hazara now constitute an estimated 8 percent of the provincial population. Though they have worked out a mutually beneficial *modus vivendi* with the Pashtun majority based on trade and a common interest in stability, there are lingering disputes between the two groups over land/resource allocation dating to Pashtun settlement of Hazara territory in the mid-18th and late-19th centuries.

While local politics in Uruzgan are partially shaped by these tribal and ethnic alignments, it has become increasingly clear since the 2006 survey that ethnic (Pashtun/Hazara) and tribal (Durrani/Ghilzai) rivalries are just one element in a complex environment.

2.1 Tribal and Ethnic Relations

Today, politics, conflict and violence in the Province are driven by a growing polarization between a tight network of mostly Popalzai (Zirak Durrani) power holders—linked to one former governor of Uruzgan—and most of the rest of the population.

From 2002 until 2006, the provincial government was largely responsible for creating and deepening tribal rifts to weaken potential challengers, consolidate the government's

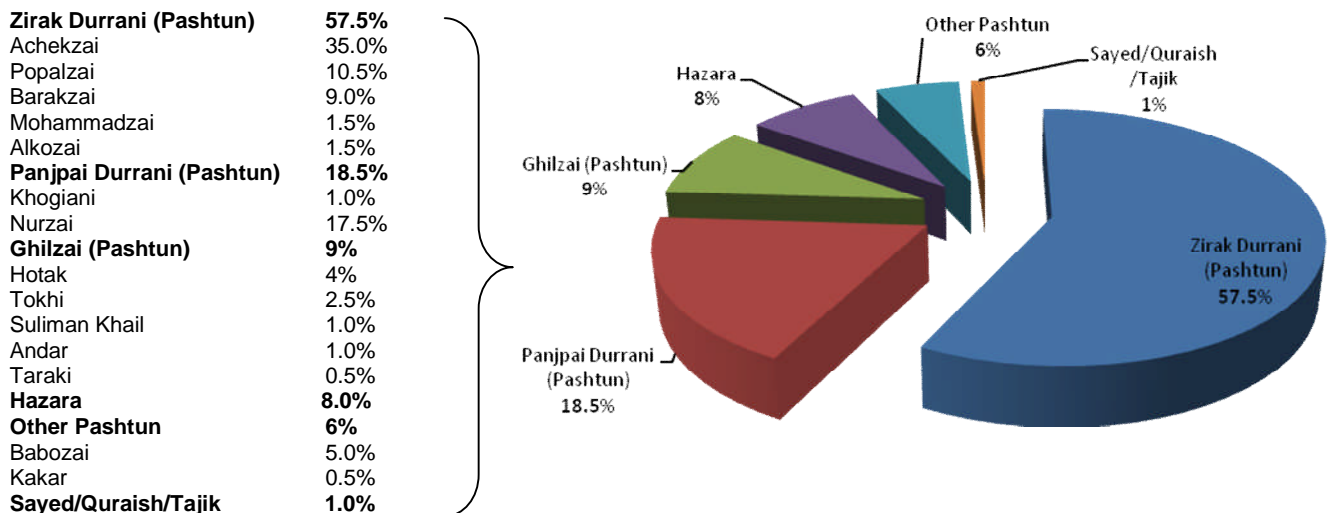
⁸ The two main Pashtun confederations in the South are Durrani and Ghilzai. From 1747 until the 1978 Saur Revolution, Afghanistan has been ruled almost exclusively by individuals from Durrani confederation (Popalzai and Mohammadzai tribes). Though no tribe or ethnic group was clearly dominate during the communist or *jihad* era, Ghilzais and ethnic minorities such as the Tajik had a greater power presence. After the predominately Ghilzai Taliban rule, the Afghan state is once again headed by the Durrani.

influence, and establish Popalzai rule, though the tribe constitutes only a small minority (about 10%) in the Province. For instance, the provincial government was instrumental in carving out the new Popalzai-majority (75%) district of Chenartu from southern Chora, essentially as a 'tribal enclave' that would allow a greater share of resources to flow directly to the area, instead of through Chora as before.

These 'divide-and-rule' policies generated conflict by revitalizing the latent Durrani/Ghilzai conflict and dividing individual tribes internally. During this period, a greater share of foreign aid and other external resources were channelled to the Popalzai community, but also to selected individuals from other tribes (e.g., Nurzai), which exacerbated intra-tribal tensions and weakened tribal cohesion. Most importantly, the provincial government used resources, threats and other political manoeuvres to divide the two largest tribes of Uruzgan (Achezkai and Nurzai) along sub-tribal lines, as these were the only tribes that threatened its power.

Moreover, there was no reconciliation in the post-2001 government in Uruzgan, even though this found some practice in other provinces and the principle was later endorsed by the Karzai government. Instead, the office of the governor initiated a 'witch hunt' against everybody who had been even marginally associated with the Taliban government (e.g., the Ghilzai in Tirin Kot, and Durrani tribes in other districts).

Figure 1: Estimated Ethnic and Tribal Composition of Uruzgan Province⁹



⁹ Percentages from the 2006 survey are slightly revised, e.g., downward adjustment of the Ghilzai Pashtun from 10-15 percent to 9 percent of the population. The correction reflects more detailed tribal mapping and categorization of individual tribes as between the two confederations, e.g., Babozai and Kakar are represented here under "Other Pashtuns". Some Babozai consider themselves a subtribe of the Nurzai (Panjpai Durrani), while other tribal elders say they are a subtribe of the Hotak (Ghilzai). The Kakar are considered as belonging to the Ghargasht confederation.

2.2 Service Delivery

Energy

In 2009, fundamental impediments to service provision remain. The GoA is still unable to access any independent revenue source in the form of customs or taxes, and the province has yet to be connected to the Afghan electricity grid. Nevertheless, the government Department of Power is providing electricity in areas of Tirin Kot and Deh Rawud (10% of population) through diesel-powered generators. In Tirin Kot, electricity is mainly provided to government offices and some shops. Power runs about 10 hours per day, and the cost is 30 Afghanis (0.60 USD) per kilowatt. Additionally, a private entrepreneur has set up an energy business that supplies electricity to a large number of people in the city. Although he charges 57 Afghanis (1.15USD) per kilowatt, the majority of people (including some government offices such as the ANP) prefer this power supply as it offers 14 to 16 hours of electricity daily. In all other districts, electricity is mainly supplied by private individuals, and only a very small percentage of the population has access. In Khas Uruzgan, the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) has provided ten large generators in the Hazara area and charges 1 USD per light bulb/month, and a Dutch-funded project has provided hydro-dynamos that locals say are an important source of electricity for 30-35 villages.

Health Care¹⁰

Access to medical care and education overall (and especially for girls and women) has shown improvements (↑) since 2006 due to international reconstruction efforts (European Commission [EC], Dutch, Australian, US) and increased security in some districts. The only exception is Gizab (→) where health care provision remained the same after the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)/EC shifted responsibility for implementation of the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) to another NGO as Gizab district was transferred back and forth between Uruzgan and Day Kundi.

Table 1: Comparison of operational health facilities¹¹ and schools¹²: 2006 and 2009

District	HEALTH FACILITIES (Hospital, CHC, BHC)			OPERATING SCHOOLS		
	July 2006	Sept 2009		July 2006	Sept 2009	
Tirin Kot	2	3	↑	9	33	↑
Deh Rawud	1	3	↑	< 8	21	↑
Shahidi Hassas	0	1	↑	1	0	↓
Chora	1	2	↑	4	10	↑
Khas Uruzgan	2	3	↑	<12	22	↑
Gizab	3	3	→	unknown	15	
Chenartu	0	1	↑	unknown	0	

¹⁰ See Annex III for detailed information on medical facilities, staff, and health indicators

¹¹ These are operated by the Afghanistan Health and Development Service (AHDS). There are six additional private clinics in the provincial centre.

¹² Not all open schools have buildings

- In **Shahidi Hassas**, a new Comprehensive Health Clinic (CHC) was added to the existing military clinic, but the last open school recently closed.
- In **Khas Uruzgan**, one sub-clinic¹³ was added, and about five schools opened.
- In **Chenartu** one BHC was established.
- The most noticeable improvements occurred in the three focus districts of **Tirin Kot**, where one BHC was upgraded to a CHC, one BHC was added and the district hospital was upgraded to a Provincial Hospital; **Chora**, where one BHC was added; and **Deh Rawud**, where two BHCs were added. The Netherlands have supported healthcare through the NGO Afghan Health and Development Services (AHDS), even in areas of insurgency control; this has increased health awareness in the local population, especially among women.
- AHDS and the Dutch support healthcare activities in the other districts of Uruzgan Province as well.

Though health workers say that lack of knowledge about maternal health and family planning is still a problem, and that a basic awareness raising/education campaign is needed, the following has been achieved in the provincial health care sector over the past three years (See Annex III, Uruzgan Health Performance Indicators):

- **In 2006, there was no provincial hospital, and no surgeons or gynaecologists. Today, these positions are filled, and the Tirin Kot district hospital has been upgraded to a provincial hospital (with a separate women's ward) by the Netherlands and Australians in support of AHDS.**¹⁴ Furthermore, a new outpatient clinic, blood bank, mortuary, and cholera ward were added, facilities required for the upgrading to a provincial hospital. An ambulance was provided for Chora district.¹⁵
- **The number of functional BHCs in the Province increased from one to six, and CHCs from four to five.** The Dutch are currently supporting the construction of 6 more BHCs and one CHC. In 2006, only 59 health posts existed in Uruzgan, a figure that had nearly tripled by August 2009, when AHDS finished a further 106.
- **In 2006 there were only three female health workers, today there are**



Photo 1: A doctor advises a female patient during daily consultations at the Mental Health Ward of Uruzgan Provincial Hospital, Tirin Kot, Uruzgan. credit: Gitta van Buuren

¹³ Sub-clinics are not represented in Table 1

¹⁴ This project was funded by the Australians, with the Dutch Military hospital providing initial and ongoing training.

¹⁵ <http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/en-pdf/afghanistan-pdf/maart09/fact-sheet-healthier-uruzgan-march09.pdf>

17 (including one female physician, four female nurses, and 12 new midwives trained in a Dutch-funded program). In particular, the community midwife education (CME) has increased the number of women now willing to make use of the health care centres, which will slowly contribute to women's health and life expectancy. Currently, 12 girls from Uruzgan are enrolled in the Tirin Kot CME program and another 15 are in midwifery school in Kandahar City. According to AHDS, there have been small yet encouraging increases in the attendance to female patients, such as the first caesarean births in the Province. Today about 60 percent of pregnant women receive pre-natal tetanus shots, up from only 26 percent three years ago.

- **The overall number of total medical staff in Uruzgan has more than doubled to 115,** which also includes for the first time two surgeons. In addition, there are 147 male and 67 female community health workers.
- **Immunization for children under age one has increased from 37 percent in 2006 to 91 percent in 2009.** Polio vaccinators now have access to all parts of the province except for the Mehrabad and Charmestan areas of Tirin Kot district, where the department of health reports three cases of polio.

Education

As the security situation has improved, schools have begun re-opening in Chora, Deh Rawud and Tirin Kot districts. In Khas Uruzgan schools are open in the district centre and in Hazara areas. However, in Gizab, schools are only open in Hazara areas. One resident of Tamzan—a mixed Hazara/Pashtun village in the north of Gizab—recounted how, after insurgents burned down Pashtun schools, some residents began sending their children to Hazara schools. When the insurgents found out which Hazara schools the Pashtun children were attending, they burnt these as well. The following other noteworthy achievements in education can be highlighted:

- **Operating schools have more than doubled over the past three years,** with one new girls primary school built in Tirin Kot since 2006, and two additional girls secondary schools and one girl's high school opened in the provincial capital.
- **Around 43,000 children in Uruzgan are currently registered in primary school, including more than 4,100 girls.** A further 7,000 attend secondary or higher education, including around 260 girls. There are currently 1,481 male and 45 female teachers working in the province.¹⁶ While the number of female students may look dismal, it reflects the first small achievement in opening up Uruzgan's conservative society (one of the most conservative in Afghanistan) to accepting girls' education.
- **In addition to formal schools, the Dutch (via Save the Children) have set up one hundred and thirty accelerated learning classes, providing education for 3,671 pupils (including 956 girls) that had missed education during Taliban years¹⁷.** Again, the number of girls, while small, is an encouraging sign, as such classes are provided in rural villages, which tend to be more conservative.¹⁸

The impact of efforts to increase women's literacy rates, much like the push to promote girls education, have been gradual and are difficult to accurately assess at this point. The

¹⁶ <http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/en-pdf/afghanistan-pdf/maart09/fact-sheet-healthier-uruzgan-march09.pdf>

¹⁷ Data provided by Afghan National Construction Coordination ANCC, the implementing partner for Save the Children Netherlands.

representative of the Department of Women's Affairs so far only notes literacy programmes for women provided by USAID via US Contractor Development Alternatives Inc (DAI) as the first visible achievements.



Photo 2: Schoolgirls participate in an accelerated learning program, implemented by Save the Children Netherlands

Media/Communication

There have been small improvements in the area of communication and media over the past three years. In 2006, Uruzgan had very few media outlets, and the government-controlled radio station was able to broadcast on the AM band for only a few hours each day. One of the initial efforts of the Dutch was supporting the first local weekly newspaper and attracting Kabul-based Radio Nawa to Uruzgan. Today, Radio Nawa broadcasts to all districts of the province except Gizab through FM relay stations established with Dutch funding.

Radio Nawa informs the population about development activities and the political situation of the Province. The 24-hour broadcasts in Pashtu and Dari regularly feature interviews with the public and are based on surveys of people's interests. The station also broadcasts many educational programmes, such as soaps on the dangers of using drugs and thematic programmes covering subjects like the rights of the child or international women's day. The radio station has also set up a network of local correspondents, which helps it respond to the needs, wishes and grievances of local people.¹⁹

Despite its near province-wide reach, Radio Nawa was only mentioned as one of the preferred radio stations in Tirin Kot, Chora and Deh Rawud in a 2008 TLO media survey. According to a 2007/8 Uruzgan listener survey conducted by Afghan Management and

¹⁹ <http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/en-pdf/afghanistan-pdf/maart09/fact-sheet-on-air-uruzgan-march09.pdf>



Marketing Consultants (AMMC), Radio Nawa consistently was rated as the second most popular station in many districts of the Province, behind either the BBC or Voice of America (Ashnaa). According to the AMCC survey, Radio Nawa's most listened to program is *Jawanana* (youth) which, as the name suggests, targets a younger audience. Going forward the main challenges facing Radio Nawa include: increasing Pashtu-language programming; hiring radio broadcasters that can speak the local dialect of Pashtu; finding ways to encourage listeners to call in more regularly to express their opinions on air; and broadening the audience to include older (and often more influential) members of the community. This last point is especially difficult, as one Saba Media official noted: "It is true that a few elders are cynical about what we do in Uruzgan. We are not liked fully by some conservative elders because we are talking about issues which are taboo for them: female education, violence against women. ... To us some criticism, especially from these individuals, is a sign of our effectiveness and a sign [we are] producing the impact with the masses, including women."

Overall, the local population listens to BBC, Voice of American (Ashnaa), and Radio Free Europe for independent news, and Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA) for government news. Radio Iran, Radio Qetta, and Radio Saudi Arabia are also listened to.

Also, the provincial government has set up a local radio station—Radio Uruzgan—with assistance from Radio Nawa and the PRT. While these efforts have increased media activities in Uruzgan, not all people see Radio Uruzgan or the newspaper as independent, but consider them a propaganda tool of the international military forces and Afghan government; especially as Radio Uruzgan provides regular airtime for the provincial governor, provincial directors, elected representatives and NGOs working in various sectors. TLO interviews also suggest that locals are confused about the difference between Radio Nawa and Radio Uruzgan.

In general, the 2008 TLO media study found that many Afghans still have a fundamental mistrust of FM radio, because prior to the international arrival in late 2001 Afghanistan only had AM frequency. By default FM is seen in many areas as something that is fundamentally foreign sponsored (and motivated). Though locals listen to music on FM frequencies, they still prefer to get their news from AM radio.

Uruzgan residents say they want radio programming that offers open discussions and forums in a roundtable format, as well as 'confrontational' live discussions rather than recorded messages or pre-recorded informational programmes. Those interviewed especially valued interactive radio and TV programs where the microphone is given to common people and where listeners or viewers can express their opinions and ideas. A majority of those interviewed appreciated informative dramas, as long as they were entertaining. When asked if they believed that radio dramas would be a good medium to convey accessible and efficient messages to the people, 83% of Uruzgan participants answered positively.

In 2006, Uruzgan had no mobile phone coverage, and the Ministry of Communications digital telephone system was only installed in Tirin Kot (mostly serving the needs of the government). As of 2009, Tirin Kot is now covered by two different mobile networks: the Afghan Wireless Company (AWCC) and Roshan, which recently expanded its network to Deh Rawud. The Afghan Telecommunication Company provides services to a few landlines, internet and email services to the provincial centre, and has recently set up their first communications tower in Khas Uruzgan, but the rest of Uruzgan remains outside telephone access except for satellite phones.

2.3 Reconstruction and Development

In the 2006 TLO Provincial survey, we observed that *"Reconstruction in Uruzgan is hampered by insecurity and lack of implementing capacity. Insecurity makes the challenge of implementing any reconstruction project particularly daunting. In this respect, the situation has significantly deteriorated in the last 2 years [2004-2006], with the operational space of traditional reconstruction actors and of the government continuously shrinking, as a result of which international and credible national NGOs are practically absent from the province."*

With their approach that sees the provision of security as a precondition for development, which in turn contributes to long-term stability, the Dutch have begun slowly to turn around parts of Uruzgan, especially Tirin Kot, Deh Rawud and Chora. In overall per capita donor spending, Uruzgan places 8th²⁰ (and 3rd for PRT spending²¹) among all 34 Afghan provinces. While in 2006 only five NGOs²² were operating in the Province, today there are over 50 national and international NGOs, organizations, and governmental (Afghan and international) development actors operating throughout Uruzgan; many supported by the Dutch, but also by the US and Australia. Residents say that on the whole reconstruction and development has improved in Uruzgan and is more equally distributed today than in 2006, with more services reaching non-Popalzai communities.

However, fundamental obstacles remain. Residents say the main problem confronting the Province is not a lack of development, but the continued weakness of the government. Locals see development/reconstruction as something done by 'foreigners', with the state largely unresponsive to their needs. Moreover, development initiatives continue to be plagued by corruption. This is especially problematic in large-scale construction projects such as the resurfacing of the Chora-Gizab road, funded by the US, where hundreds of thousands of dollars are currently being swallowed in bribes and kickbacks. While US aid in the Province has been especially known for its use of multiple sub-contractors, the Dutch and Australians have attempted an approach that emphasizes direct and local contracting in Uruzgan, rather than putting out national tenders. This approach appears to be reducing corruption and resulting in a higher-quality end product.

Infrastructure

Locals point to a continued lack of security along the Mehrabad road as an obstacle to development in the south and east of the province, but say that increased security between Deh Rawud and Tirin Kot, as well as the new Choto Bridge spanning the Helmand River in northern Deh Rawud, is having a positive impact in the West. More specifically, the bridge has allowed the GoA to increase its presence in northern Deh Rawud, while also making it easier for individuals in insurgent-controlled areas of Shahidi Hassas to get sick family members to Deh Rawud and Tirin Kot. Recent security improvements in Darafshan have allowed the pavement of the Tirin Kot to Chora road to begin. Residents in Deh Rawud point to a newly built retaining wall as a key factor in mitigating the impact of seasonal floods and increasing arable land. Other important infrastructure projects include:

²⁰ It is only surpassed by Kabul, Nimroz, Helmand, Zabul, Farah, Jawzjan and Kandhar; Matt Waldman, *Falling Short: Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan*, ACBAR Advocacy Series, March 2008, http://www.oxfam.de/download/ACBAR_Aid_Effectiveness_Paper.pdf, p.15 (figures are for 2007-8)

²¹ It is only surpassed by Panjshir and Badghis; *ibid*, p.14 (figures are for 2007)

²² Only two which locals considered "real NGOs" because construction NGOs are often seen as private for-profit companies

- Paving of about 10 km of city roads (funded by USAID and MRRD)
- Cast retaining curbs in Tirin Kot city (funded by USAID)
- Construction of a bridge (Surkh Morghab) connecting Tirin Kot with Chora and other districts such as Gizab, Khas Uruzgan and Ajiristan (Ghazni), jointly built by the PRT and the government in 2007. The bridge has meant a significant improvement in transportation infrastructure. Before its construction a rise in the river could block the road for days or weeks.
- Construction of two suspension bridges over the Helmand River in Gizab to facilitate communication and economic development (funded by Netherlands).
- Construction of government buildings (completed in the fall 2007). This included buildings for the high court, the provincial council building and the city hotel (which is currently used by ANA) and was funded by MRRD/United Nations Development (UNDP) under the National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP).
- Construction of the police headquarters, funded by the US Military (Army Corps) and built by a local contractor is nearly completed.
- The PRT has donated four garbage trucks and one water tank truck to the municipality. The PRT has also funded the municipality for the construction of 280 concrete garbage containers on the streets and the distribution of more than 900 garbage cans to houses in the city.

'Mini-NSP'

The Dutch have also developed an 'under the radar' approach which is working even in the volatile district of Khas Uruzgan. This approach can be considered as a 'mini-National Solidarity Programme', with the difference that the Dutch work with existing village *shuras* and ask them to come up with project lists. Villages receive instalments of \$1,000 per month for a maximum of four months, with each additional instalment only paid if progress is shown in project implementation. So far the approach has been successful as communities feel that they have a measure of autonomy and decision-making capacity (and responsibility) in the development process. The program has also benefited the local economy through short-term job creation.

The programme is currently implemented by five NGOs (one per district) trained on the participatory approach. Though many of the villages that have benefited from this programme are in contested areas (i.e., no stable government or insurgent control), representatives from every village were able to meet secretly, first in Tirin Kot, and then at the office of the implementing NGO in Kandahar, to plan the projects.

Part of the success is that this programme has reached areas that the NSP is unable to access due to insecurity. In total the Dutch supported almost 300 of these 'mini-NSP' projects: 60 each in Tirin Kot, Deh Rawud, Khas Uruzgan and Chora. In Gizab they only were able to support 30, with the additional 30 moved to the west bank of the Darafshan valley in Tirin Kot. None of these projects, which include karez/canal cleaning and reconstruction, water wells and hydro-dynamos, have been targeted by the insurgency so far.

Women's Initiatives

There are also three programmes specifically targeting the advancement of women in Uruzgan:

- In June 2008, some 8,000 laying hens were distributed among 500 of the poorest families, including many widows with young children for eggs and fertiliser production (each family received fourteen hens and two cocks).²³
- About 450 families headed by single mothers and widows have received a supply of vegetable seeds. They are also taking courses and will be receiving their diplomas in June.²⁴
- The Dutch have promoted a micro-credit programme in Uruzgan, providing loans to farmers and small business ventures. The World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) officially established an Islamic Investment and Finance Cooperative in Tirin Kot in June 2008 and Deh Rawud in November 2008. The Cooperative has issued 367 micro credits, including three to women, with a total value of \$182,500. The cooperative now has 1,065 members (370 in Deh Rawud, 695 in Tirin Kot), including 8 women. WOCCU is currently developing plans to grant microcredits for small-scale power generation. It is also exploring, with a cooperative bank, opportunities for increasing financial services to small and medium-sized businesses.²⁵

Most of these programmes are too new to accurately measure their impact; other than an improvement of living conditions of the direct beneficiaries. Little feedback so far has been received by TLO.

2.4 Economy and Livelihoods

Agriculture

Subsistence agriculture is the traditional economic activity of the bulk of the population in Uruzgan. In mountainous areas, land is scarce, but most of the land is irrigated, largely thanks to the rivers that cross all districts of the province. Wheat and other agricultural products (vegetables, cereals) that are cultivated are usually used for local consumption, and so far very little revenue is derived from cash crops.

The development of Uruzgan's agro-centred economy needs to be seen in the context of existing obstacles and difficult starting conditions. First, Uruzgan in 2006 was a province depleted by war, destruction and drought. Irrigation systems were largely destroyed, the diversity of crops had declined sharply and most livestock had been wiped out. Second, subsistence farming is heavily affected by adverse weather conditions, and Uruzgan has suffered drought followed by a harsh winter in the past three years. However, the mild winter in 2008/9 and the rainy spring in 2009 provided a rich harvest this year. Third, most crops in Uruzgan are perennial. Thus, it can take at least two years to see success in cash farming, sometimes more (e.g., almond trees which can take five years to harvest).²⁶ Fourth, Uruzgan and its capital Tirin Kot is neither geographically located on a

²³ <http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/en-pdf/afghanistan-pdf/maart09/fact-sheet-rural-development-uruzgan-march09.pdf>

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ <http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/en-pdf/afghanistan-pdf/maart09/fact-sheet--microcredits-uruzgan.pdf>

²⁶ The exception is vegetable seeds, which germinate in a few months.

main transit route, nor does it have a big business centre. Finally, the Province suffered from insecurity and opposition by hardliners among the Taliban, usually coming from abroad (see problems with wheat distribution in Gizab outlined below). Insecurity in neighbouring provinces is also impacting economic development in Uruzgan (see 4.3 for regional security context).

Dutch efforts to improve the agro-economy have centred on improved seeds, technology, training, marketing, and micro-financing. Locals have responded positively to a Dutch/Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) improved wheat seed distribution program that reached every district. In Gizab, however, the distribution was hampered due to a conflict between a local insurgency commander who favoured the distribution and a "hardline" commander with links to the Taliban Quetta shura wanting to sabotage distribution.²⁷ In contrast, in Shahidi Hassas and Khas Uruzgan, local commanders advised on how to distribute the seeds without hardliners noticing. When the Taliban leadership in Quetta heard that seeds had reached local farmers, they warned hardliners to be more watchful in the future and sabotage such programs.

TLO only heard critiques concerning vegetable and seed distribution in Deh Rawud, with the local population complaining that the seed was no good, and the number of germination quite low and quality of vegetables poor. Overall, residents have high expectations for the improved seeds. These expectations, however, need to be qualified against the above-mentioned obstacles, noting that achievements may be still too small in order to be visible, and that local expectations may far outweigh what can be achieved in such a short period of time. Other notable agro-projects currently underway include:

- The German Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ-International Services) has distributed 760,000 fruit trees and other tree species for the purpose of reforestation and nature conservation. Since early 2008, 50,000 trees have been planted by NGOs and 230,000 by the Dutch company Growing Sales Exchange (GSE). These are distributed to some 20,000 households and 1,000 small entrepreneurs, who are also offered training in growing fruit.²⁸
- A pilot project on saffron cultivation with an added value chain including training, and marketing was initiated in 2007. A total of 281 farmers in



Photo 3: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) extension workers and AHDS officials plan out seed distribution activities in Uruzgan

²⁷ Because two local insurgent commanders could not agree on who would be responsible for distributing the seed

²⁸ <http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/en-pdf/afghanistan-pdf/maart09/fact-sheet-rural-development-uruzgan-march09.pdf>



Tirin Kot, Chora and Deh Rawud successfully planted saffron over two seasons. The first harvest, planted in 2007/2008, produced 50kg, representing an important source of income for the farmers thanks to the dramatic increase in the price of saffron on the world market.²⁹ Given this success, at the end of August 2008 another 130,000 kilos of saffron corms were distributed to local farmers through local NGOs. The next harvest is expected at the end of 2009. GSE has offered to buy the produce at world market prices.³⁰ First results are visible, but it may still take three more years for full production.

- In fall 2008, the FAO, with Dutch support, started support to the vulnerable population affected by high food prices and drought through provision of wheat and fertiliser. Through this programme, 1,000 vulnerable farmer families were assisted to improve their food security and initiate activities such as storage of cereals, dairy farming, fish ponds, beekeeping or small woodlots to generate income. This activity also improves local capacities in the field of agriculture and brings agricultural extension to the province.
- In the spring of 2009 USAID via the US contractor ARD Inc. began a large-scale alternative livelihoods program to improve the agriculture and livestock economy through technical training and market development, which is currently being implemented by TLO. Among other activities planned for the coming year, the program will train 1,100 individuals in agricultural productivity, provide 300 farmers with advance growing contracts, create 40 full time jobs, assist five women's organizations/associations, put 2,000 hectares of farm land under improved natural resource management, and facilitate the sale of 50,000 USD of agriculture products outside the province.

Opium Poppy

Since 2006, when an estimated 9,703 ha were under poppy cultivation, province-wide cultivation dipped slightly in 2007 to 9,204, rose moderately in 2008 to 9,939, and decreased again in 2009, according to the most recent UNODC figures.³¹ Though UN numbers are derived from a small sample size and do not include Gizab district, where cultivation levels are reportedly high, recent TLO district surveys and focus group discussions with farmers and landowners also point to a province-wide decrease in poppy cultivation. The decrease is due to falling opium prices and soaring wheat prices: "*The price of wheat is higher than I've ever seen it in my life,*" one Deh Rawud landowner noted. Given the low price of opium, some farmers that TLO spoke with in Deh Rawud said they planned to stockpile their fresh opium, and sell it dry³² when the market improves.

The government's inability (in Shahidi Hassas and Gizab) or unwillingness (in Deh Rawud) to stop farmers from cultivating poppy means that for the time being cultivation will be dictated by market demands and profit margins. The opium problem, however, is not just a matter of cultivation. Tirin Kot and Deh Rawud are key opium/poppy trading centres

²⁹ Farm gate value of 50kg of saffron is EUR 115,000 (USD 180,000)

³⁰ <http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/en-pdf/afghanistan-pdf/maart09/fact-sheet-saffron-uruzgan-march09.pdf>

³¹ Afghanistan Opium Winter Assessment (January 2009), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/ORR_report_2009.pdf. Though it has been returned to Uruzgan, the UNODC still considers Gizab one of the highest poppy cultivating districts of Daykundi province.

³² As of May 5 2009, the "farm gate" price of fresh opium in Deh Rawud was 2,500 PKR/kg (\$31), while dry opium was 5,000 PKR/kg (\$62)



and, despite government control of these areas, poppy markets continue to visibly operate. The government is presently too weak and too entangled in the trade to aggressively enforce a ban on either cultivation or trade. In a 2008 provincial *jirga* Governor Hamdam announced a plan to wean Uruzgan from poppy cultivation over a five year period. Though locals have no knowledge of the details of this plan (if such a plan exists at all), the announcement, which was made to approximately 1,600 assembled tribal elders, has trickled down to the village level.

3 Governance

Governance in Uruzgan needs to be understood against the historical backdrop of three factors:

- **Divisive *mujahideen* rule** (1992-1994): Only a few commanders controlled large areas, while most of the territory was dispersed among numerous small commanders whose networks of support and areas of activity were almost exclusively arranged along sub-tribal lines.
- **Hamid Karzai launched his armed uprising against the Taliban in the fall of 2001** from Uruzgan with the help of many local commanders who were rewarded with government positions for their support.
- **The influence and divisive rule of provincial-level government power holders in the 2002-2006 period**, during which time the government actively sought to weaken tribes and communities in order to consolidate its own rule.

3.1 Provincial-level government

In the first years of its existence after 2001, the transitional government of Afghanistan enjoyed significant support in Uruzgan and residents participated in the political process with great hope for the future, particularly in the wake of the 2002 emergency *loya jirga*, the 2003 constitutional *loya jirga*, and the 2004 presidential elections. By the middle of 2004, however, poor governance resulted in the gradual estrangement of a growing number of important tribal leaders who had initially supported the new government, and a deepening polarization of Uruzgan's society along tribal lines. What had initially been a more representative local government had soon come to be dominated by a small Popalzai tribal elite. Most government positions at the provincial level were held by a limited number of tribes, while the important Nurzai population group was only minimally represented.

The perception among local populations was that a disproportionate share of resources had been concentrated in the hands of a few tribes or individuals, especially the Popalzai. This, in part, facilitated the rise of the Taliban insurgency and local sympathies for anti-government elements. Not surprisingly, the insurgency in Uruzgan today is a patchwork of tribes and individuals with a range of grievances (see 4.1). In short, by 2006 the political landscape had become deeply divided and polarized and thus the Dutch mission was deployed into a highly charged political minefield.

The existing Provincial Council (PC) has so far failed to serve as an effective mechanism for popular representation since it was elected in 2005. The elections were flawed from the start. None of the three seats for women were filled due to the lack of female candidates, reducing the total of seats from nine to six. Over the last three years the PC



has met irregularly due to insecurity, and its members are openly acknowledging their inability to fulfil their roles. The council has yet to convene as of early May 2009. The provincial *ulema shura* is also not meeting at present.

3.2 Presidential and Provincial Council Elections

As the final draft of this assessment was completed in mid-September 2009, official presidential and provincial council election results had not yet been announced. According to election officials interviewed by TLO, voter turnout throughout Uruzgan was low compared to the 2004 and 2005 elections, with no polling stations opening in Gizab district, and limited voting in Pashtun areas of Khas Uruzgan outside of the district centre, and in the central and southern areas of Chenartu.

Overall low voter turnout was the result of a number of factors: Taliban efforts to deter voting through intimidation and violence in the days leading up the election³³; growing public distrust of the government and apathy towards a voting process that many felt would be fraudulent; and, conversely, a major effort by the election commission to deter fraud, especially in terms of candidates bringing female election cards to polling stations to cast votes on their behalf. During the registration process, interviewees expressed scepticism about the transparency of the process. However, following the elections many of those TLO spoke to said that in areas where residents were able to vote, the general perception is that the process was more transparent than in neighbouring provinces such as Helmand, Kandahar and Ghazni, where election officials interviewed by TLO cited numerous instances of vote rigging.

Though it is important to remember that the 2009 presidential and Provincial Council (PC) elections may not remedy either the polarized political climate or the lack of popular representation that exist at present, initial reports received by TLO suggest that most, if not all, incumbent PC members have been voted out of office. This is encouraging considering, as noted earlier, the PC was widely believed to be ineffectual and corrupt, and the ability of residents to use the vote to remove these individuals from office may re-energize faltering public faith in the power of electoral democracy.

One note of caution: though current signs point to a Karzai re-election, if he fails to win the presidency, there could be a backlash against his Popalzai network, and a realignment of power-relations in Uruzgan and across the south. This scenario, however, is unlikely. Instead, a Karzai win will likely mean a further entrenchment of the 'Popalzai versus everyone else' polarity that currently exists.

³³ Though violence on polling day itself was less than expected in part because of a military operation in the Mehrabad area during the beginning of August which resulted in the capture of key insurgent leaders

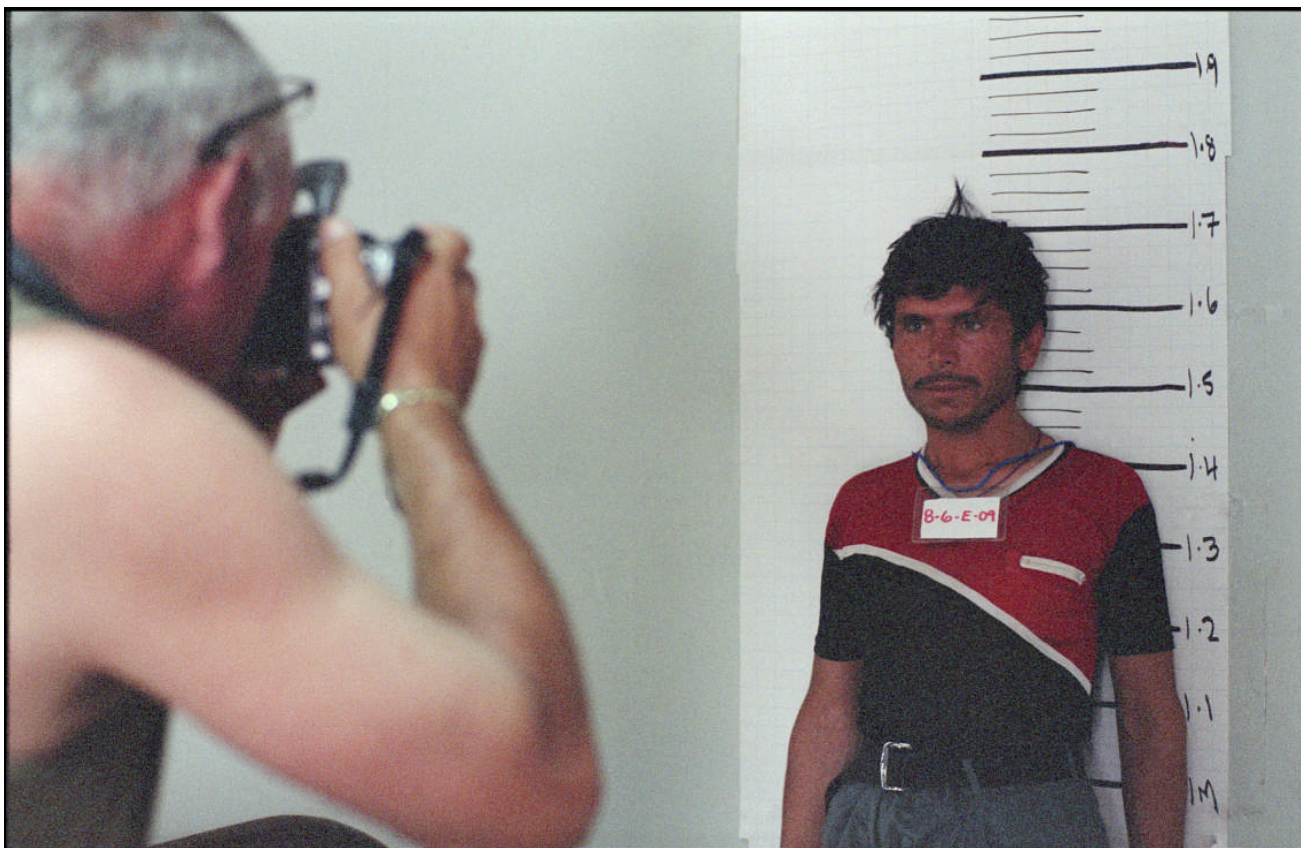


Photo 4: Hans Groen of EUPOL takes a photo of an ANP policeman in Tirin Kot during an intake of new recruits who received extra training in preparation for the presidential and provincial council elections in Uruzgan. credit: Gitta van Buuren

3.3 District-level government³⁴

In 2006, only an estimated 20% of key district positions were filled. With the exception of Deh Rawud and Chora, district-level government remains understaffed in Khas Uruzgan, Shahidi Hassas, Chenartu, and is non-existent in Gizab. The lack of bureaucrats able and willing to fill government positions in insecure areas remains a fundamental problem. The level and changes in overall governance – i.e., the presence and reasonably regular functioning of government or non-insurgent informal structures (*shura*) are indicated below. In these terms, the situation has improved (↑) in Deh Rawud and Chora, remained stable (→) in Gizab³⁵ and Chenartu, but deteriorated (↓) in Shahidi Hassas and Khas Uruzgan.

↑ In **Deh Rawud**, the Afghan government with the support of international forces has managed to re-gain control from the insurgency since 2007. Locals attribute improved governance to better communication between the district government, the community, and the Dutch-led PRT. Presently there is a district governor, chief of police, court, line departments, and three district *shuras*:

- A 29-person “development *shura*” composed of tribal elders and engineers who monitor the implementation of development projects supported by MRRD

³⁴ Tirin Kot is not included because it is administered by the provincial government.

³⁵ Gizab is remains stable in the sense that the GoA still has no presence in the Taliban controlled areas, or the Hazara territory.



- A 40-person tribal *shura*
- A 73-person *malikan* (village representative) *shura* that meets every Thursday and serves as a contact point for international actors

↑ **Chora:** During 2006 and 2007 more areas of the district fell under insurgent control, but since early 2008 the government has become progressively stronger and the situation in and around the district centre is more secure. A district governor, chief of police, court, and line departments are all present. These gains are encouraging but fragile.

→ **Gizab:** There has been no government presence since 2006. Pashtun areas are under an established Taliban system and Hazara areas are self-governed through a 20-person district council composed of representatives from each of the six Hazara clans and prominent religious figures. The council maintains a mullah-headed court, a district jail, and a 40-person police force mandated to provide security only within the community. The system runs on community taxes.

→ **Chenartu:** This new district (spring 2008) has a Popalzai district governor and chief of police who only control the northern, predominately Popalzai, third of the district through a tribal militia (see 3.3) Though Barakzai, Nurzai, and Achekzai tribes also live in the district, the 8-person district *shura* is exclusively Popalzai.

↓ **Shahidi Hassas:** Since 2006 government presence in Shahidi Hassas has gradually been reduced to a radius of five km around the district centre. In the Tagab area there has been no Afghan government presence at all since 2006. There are no government decision-making bodies (*shuras* or courts).

↓ **Khas Uruzgan:** The government, which locals describe as corrupt and occasionally extortive, has no presence outside the district centre. A District Governor, Chief of Police, four person district council, four person *ulema shura* and a two-judge court exist. The district council had eight members until the spring of 2008, when Taliban threats forced half to quit.

3.4 Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)

In the 2006 TLO Provincial survey, we observed that *"the government can barely align a non tribal force of 600 to 650 relatively poorly armed and poorly equipped men, confronting a Taleban threat that is at least twice that size, and is forced to use auxiliary forces whose primary loyalties are tribal."*

In addition to development, part of the Dutch strategy in Uruzgan was to focus on an 'Afghanisation of security' to strengthen the ANA/ANP and shift away from international-led security provision in the Province. Since then, the number of trained ANA and ANP has risen steadily as the auxiliary police forces in Tirin Kot, Chora, and Deh Rawud were integrated into the ANP and trained by the Uruzgan Task Force at Camp Holland (1,000 trainees, of whom 600 have now received additional training, which qualifies them to join the regular Afghan police³⁶). The majority of these new ANP are serving in their districts of origin, and the public response in all three districts has so far been positive. Around 300-400 of those integrated were under the command of former Afghan Highway Police head Matiullah Khan.

³⁶ <http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/en-pdf/afghanistan-pdf/maart09/fact-sheet-public-order-uruzgan-march09.pdf>; The Netherlands has also funded a basic equipment package for both the Afghan army and police.



- **ANA:** The 4th Brigade of the 205 Corps at the moment has the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th *kandak* and Head Quarters staff in Uruzgan. The total number adds up to 2,390 military, of whom 1,751 are present (the rest are on leave, are attending courses, are in hospital, have gone AWOL, etc.). The *kandak* for management of the barracks (113 men) will soon arrive in TK, as well as the 3rd *kandak*. The 6th (security) *kandak* has been allocated to Helmand.
- **ANP:** The official *tashkeel* for Uruzgan is 1,319; according to the pay-roll some 1,657 policemen are paid. It is not known how many are actually present in Uruzgan (estimates range between 800 and 1,800).

While police numbers have increased province-wide, certain problem areas still exist. For instance, in Khas Uruzgan in 2007 there were an estimated 60 ANP (Hazara and Pashtun) patrolling Hazara areas of the district which had been trained at the national police academy. Today, this force has less than 10 men. Residents say that insurgents have killed about a dozen officers, but the majority deserted their posts after not being paid. There are about 80 Hazara ANP guarding the Forward Operating Base (FOB) Anaconda³⁷ in the district centre, but the number of ANP patrolling the district centre itself has dropped from 50-60 in 2007 to about 10 as of late 2008.

As in other areas of the south, locals had a relatively positive opinion of the ANA but cited specific instances of corruption and extortion when evaluating ANP performance. Underlying the corruption is the simple fact that ANP are still not receiving regular wages; as one police officer in Chora put it bluntly: *"For the past five months I haven't been paid. I've got to demand bribes. I have no other source of income."*

The Netherlands are planning to take further steps to an all-Afghan security apparatus in Uruzgan. A 12-month provincial security plan for training and reconstruction was signed in March by the governor, police, army commanders, and the director of the intelligence service. Amongst other things it includes:

- The deployment of three Dutch police officers to the EU Police Mission (EUPOL) to serve as advisers to police in Uruzgan (completed);
- The construction of 11 ANP regional stations and six checkpoints (ongoing);
- The construction of a new provincial prison in Tirin Kot;
- The construction of a police training academy in Tirin Kot (completed).³⁸

3.5 Auxiliary Security Forces

Despite the improvement of Afghan security forces, several auxiliary security forces, or pro-government militias, are still operating in Uruzgan in areas only partially controlled by the government:

- Even though Matiullah lost his position as Chief of Highway police, his militia (about 400-500 permanent men, though he can mobilise from 1,500-2,000 if needed) still secures the Kandahar-Tirin Kot highway for weekly convoys of military/government/NGO personnel and material.

³⁷ American forces are permanent in Khas Uruzgan and Czech Special Forces seem to rotate in and out.

³⁸ <http://www.minbuza.nl/binaries/en-pdf/afghanistan-pdf/maart09/fact-sheet-public-order-uruzgan-march09.pdf>



- The Popalzai area of Chenartu is secured by a 150-man Popalzai militia under the command of the current chief of police. While the militia wears police uniforms and is paid by the government, it only operates in Popalzai territory and it is unclear how it fits into the ANP hierarchy.
- A Hazara militia has been active in Shahidi Hassas since 2004/5, and has a reputation of looting local shops in Yakhdan. Today, the militia provides security for the limited government presence in the district centre, and international military forces.
- In Deh Rawud there are militias that allegedly have check posts in the district and are said to be associated with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The four “gates” of Deh Rawud (Dezak, Morcha, Tangay and Char China) are protected by militias that are paid by international military forces.

Some of the pro-government militia (“campaign”) commanders are associated with the US forces. They have check posts and provide security, but have a bad reputation among the population because they exploit their links with the international military and manipulate local conflicts to their advantage. This in turn sheds a bad light on the international military efforts.

4 Security

Security for the ordinary Afghan citizen is measured by mobility, physical safety, and economic viability. From this perspective, the worst areas in Uruzgan are those that are heavily contested. As of early 2009, these are Khas Uruzgan, and selected areas in Tirin Kot, Chenartu and Chora. The local population here fears insurgency pressure as much as aerial bombings and armed battles, all which have led to temporary and more prolonged internal displacement. Most of the displaced are not assisted, or receive only one-off assistance packages, and there is little reliable information on their numbers. Most people seem to flee to Kandahar City and Spin Boldak while others try to stay with family or rent houses in Tirin Kot. Uncontested areas—though under insurgent control—are generally safer. The following section provides an overview of current security issues in Uruzgan.

4.1 Insurgency

Most of the Taliban in Uruzgan are Afghans originating from different southern provinces such as Zabul, Helmand, Kandahar and Uruzgan proper. In most districts of Uruzgan, the insurgency seems to be home-grown, with the exception of Gizab and Khas Uruzgan. In Gizab, TLO received reports of Pakistani terrorist organizations³⁹ and Iranian intelligence operatives active in the area; in Khas Uruzgan TLO received reports of an Iranian presence in the Hazara areas. Whenever large-scale offensives are planned, foreign fighters (mostly Arabs and Pakistanis) join in with local insurgents. Foreign elements reportedly control most suicide attacks and play a supervisory roll vis-à-vis local Taliban. It is further said that the Taliban command structure in Pakistan controls the Taliban in Uruzgan. Despite the diversity of the insurgency in Uruzgan, they all operate under the Taliban banner.

³⁹ Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HUM) seeks Kashmir’s accession to Pakistan and conducts armed struggle against those who oppose Islam. Connected with Taliban and al Qaeda networks since mid-1990s, many HUM militants have been trained in Afghan/Pak border areas.

Old garde Taliban from the first Taliban government became a decisive force in the reformation of the new insurgency in Uruzgan due to their harassment (e.g., torture, imprisonment, extortion, humiliation) by the former provincial governor and US military forces. Other *old garde* Taliban joined to avoid arrest. Another important group among the local Taliban is what can be considered a mix of 'accidental' Taliban, who join mostly out of political or economic grievances, (e.g. being marginalized and sidelined by the former provincial governor and his network), and 'opportunistic' Taliban who see the insurgency as a resource to be exploited. It is difficult to make statements about the tribal composition of the insurgency as they have managed to be rather inclusive – much more so than the Afghan government. For example, the current Taliban provincial governor is a Khogiani (Panjpai) while his predecessor was a Popalzai (Zirak). The Hotak (Ghilzai) are active in Tirin Kot, while Achekzai (Zirak) in Khas Uruzgan occupy district-level positions within the GoA and the insurgency.

In Uruzgan, as in much of the south and east, many tribes have split their allegiances as a sort of insurance measure because they do not know which side will come out on top in the current conflict. As one influential Popalzai leader in Tirin Kot explained: *"As a tribe, we can not afford to be seen as favouring one side rather than the other. Of course, we have Popalzai within the insurgency ranks, as much as we have many of our tribesmen working for the Government; no one knows what will happen in the future..."*

In its drive to be inclusive, the insurgency has had to deal with tribal rivalries. In recent years upper-level Taliban leadership in Quetta has tried to prevent internal feuds by appointing commanders with an eye to establishing tribal balance. More recently a directive was issued which authorized insurgents of one tribe to kill or carry out actions only against their fellow tribesmen, not other tribes in the movement, to avoid cycles of revenge and prevent internal divisions. Furthermore, most local Taliban commanders are aware that international military forces may try to 'stir conflict,' intentionally or inadvertently through the provision of development projects. This is why local Taliban commanders in Shahidi Hassas did not oppose the distribution of wheat seeds; which did cause conflict in Gizab.

The insurgency has an established and recognized government in every district except Deh Rawud.⁴⁰ In the Pashtun areas of Gizab, insurgents rule uncontested, while in other districts they operate parallel to the GoA. Taliban Islamic courts are often the preferred means of solving disputes among the people because they are seen as less costly, less corrupt, and more accessible than the formal justice system (which in many cases has no presence). However, locals living within areas of definite Taliban control say that insurgent justice systems have also grown repressive and corrupt. In Gizab, for example, locals report that foreign armed groups using the area as a safe-haven operate above the law, and that courts are used by the entrenched Taliban government to make money and silence opposition.⁴¹

It should be noted, however, that Taliban district governors are not necessarily the most powerful in the area; often times, local commanders with the ability to mobilize fighters are in fact stronger. This same dynamic is also seen within the GoA, with chiefs of police or local elders who can mobilize a militia being stronger than the government-appointed governor.

⁴⁰ A Taliban district governor still exists, though he reportedly has no presence in the district at this time.

⁴¹ We also received reports of public discontent over Taliban justice in Khas Uruzgan, and the northern Helmand district of Naw Zad.

4.2 Government vs. insurgency control

Districts

Over the past three years, **government control has improved** (↑) in Deh Rawud, Chora and Tirin Kot, **remained stable** (→ albeit at a low level) in Shahidi Hassas and Chenartu, and **deteriorated** (↓) in Khas Uruzgan. As in 2006, the government today has no control in Gizab district (→). Government gains should be considered fragile. The following is a brief description of the reason why the security situation has improved or worsened. Four districts deserve special attention:

↑ **Deh Rawud**: Divisive district level government officials have been removed and the administration was put under the control of the ANA. The local economy linked to poppy cultivation has not been directly threatened, and there has been an increased focus on development. A perimeter of security was created by international military/ANA/ANP/militia that has allowed local councils to form, function, and better represent communities. The Dutch approach of community engagement has been well-received.

↑ **Chora**: In the last year the government has expanded its control slowly outward from the district centre. Locals are optimistic about the formation of two *shuras* (ulema and development) that meet regularly and have been able to link the community to international actors and aid.

↓ **Khas Uruzgan**: The strongest tribe in the district, the Achekzai, are deeply divided and represented both in the district government and insurgency leadership. Increased air strikes and ground combat have driven individuals to the insurgency for protection and revenge. The district government is increasingly seen as corrupt and extortive, and there is growing resentment among the Pashtun communities towards Hazara ANP that work for international forces and conduct searches of Pashtun houses.⁴²

→ **Gizab**: Though government control has not changed, the situation for locals has gotten worse as there is increased infighting between different insurgent groups, along with growing corruption in the Taliban justice system. Foreign insurgents have also set up roadblocks and demanded 'protection' fees from the Hazara. More alarming, for the Hazara population is the presence of at least one Pakistani anti-shia terrorist group.⁴³

Table 2 is a rough attempt to describe the level of access the government and the insurgency have today, in comparison to estimates made in the 2006 Survey. Percentages should be considered as indicative only.

⁴² Hazara/Pashtun tensions linked to affiliation with international forces were highlighted as possible conflict points in the 2006 TLO Provincial Survey

⁴³ Sipah-e Sahaba (SSP) wants to establish Pakistan as a Sunni Muslim state. The group is opposed to all other forms of Islam and other religions, but has particularly targeted Shias.

Table 2: Approximate levels of government access

District	Government Access		Areas of respective government/insurgency access
	July 2006	May 2009	
Tirin Kot ↑	30-40%	80%	The Baluchi valley (Darafshan) and Mehrabad areas remain problematic, but government control has increased and the killing of pro-government mullahs and suicide attacks has decreased.
Deh Rawud ↑	20%	90%	The Tangi area bordering Tirin Kot is still contested, the area north of the Choto bridge appears to be gradually coming under government control, nevertheless the Taliban still managed to prohibit trucks to pass via this new bridge.
Shahidi Hassas →	2%	2%	Government control is limited to an area including the district centre. Insurgent district centre is Yakhdan.
Chora ↑	20%	50-60%	Government control has been expanding out of the district centre to include areas under firm insurgent control in 2007 (Awi). Locals say that along the Kamisan river valley everything southwest of the village of Sarab is under government control, past Sarab the area is considered contested until the village of Nuri at which point the area is under insurgent control.
Khas Uruzgan ↓	30%	25%-30%	As in 2006, everything outside the district centre and Hazara areas are contested with a stronger insurgency presence in the north and east. Insurgent control is strongest in the north and east of the district and near Chakajoy village bordering Chenartu.
Gizab →	0 %	0 % Pashtun areas; 20 % Hazara areas	A Taliban government has been in place since 2005-6 and there has been an increase in the number of foreign fighters and alleged terrorist organizations. Insurgents have not yet occupied Hazara territory but have blockaded roads leading from Hazara areas to the district centre. The Hazara are considered supportive of the Afghan government. The Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) ⁴⁴ of the Afghan government has recently appointed a district governor, who is unable to work in the district. It has also shifted the district headquarter to the Hazara areas. These moves, however, are largely symbolic.
Chenartu →	<i>part of Chora</i>	33-50 %	The northern third of the district controlled by pro-government militia, the central third is contested and since 2005 insurgents have occupied the southern third, along the Garmab river.

⁴⁴ IDLG was established through a presidential decree on 30th of August 2007. This directorate is mandated to improve governance and achieve stability and security through improved governance.
http://www.ands.gov.af/ands/final_ands/src/final/ministry_strategies/English/IDLG%20Strategy.pdf

Roads

Freedom of movement, a key issue for all conflict-affected populations, worsened throughout 2007, but has gradually improved in many areas of Uruzgan since mid-2008. While mobility for most citizens in Uruzgan right now is better than it was one year ago, it is still limited for known pro-government individuals, and even more so for government officials. For example, an important tribal elder had to be recently airlifted to his district in order to meet with his community. Table 3 provides a brief description of the security on major roads throughout the province, according to local perceptions.

Table 3: Overview of Road Security on Major Roads in Uruzgan Province

Road	Government-controlled	Insurgency-controlled
→ Tirin Kot-Kandahar Highway	Matiullah's militia secures the road once a week for a convoy of internationals and government individuals/NGOs; locals not affiliated with the GoA or internationals can travel the road freely	Shah Wali Kot District in Kandahar has highest insurgent presence
↑ TK-Deh Rawud	The safest road in the province; controlled for the government by a mix of ANA, ANP, and militia	Insurgents still occasionally appear in the Tangi area on the Deh Rawud-Tirin Kot district border
↑ TK-Chora	Road security has improved as the result of a coalition offensive in the Mehrabad area of Tirin Kot in early August 2009 in which a number of insurgent commanders were either killed or captured.	In early 2009, insurgents were appearing about three times a week, mostly in an area known as Du Koh. As of early September this had been reduced to a single appearance about once every two weeks. NGO workers report greater freedom of movement.
↑ Deh Rawud-Shahidi Hassas	From the district centre to the Helmand River the road is under government control and safe. A much-needed bridge spanning the Helmand River at Choto was inaugurated in early 2009 replacing a wooden ferry.	North of Choto the road is contested but locals say that the new bridge is expanding government control. Though the new bridge is open to vehicle traffic, the insurgency allegedly is blocking lorry traffic forcing it to travel through the Tagab Valley of Shahidi Hassas to Kajaki and Baghran (Helmand) in order to continue taxing them.
→ Tirin Kot - Khas Uruzgan	Except for the district centre of Chenartu, the road is insurgent-controlled. Many residents of Khas Uruzgan and Chenartu now travel north into Chora to access a desert road—known as the Jan Khan or Kash road—which runs parallel to the insurgent-controlled road to the south and is passable only in 4x4s. The 3-hour trip to Tirin Kot can now take up to a full day. The cost of the journey for those in Chenartu has more than tripled from about \$2.50 to between \$10.00 and \$12.50.	The worst area is the Mehrabad area where insurgents have mined other roads in an attempt to re-route all traffic by a Taliban post for taxation purposes.
→ Chora-Gizab	No ANP presence. Resurfacing is said to begin in May/June 2009.	High level of insecurity

4.3 Regional Dimensions

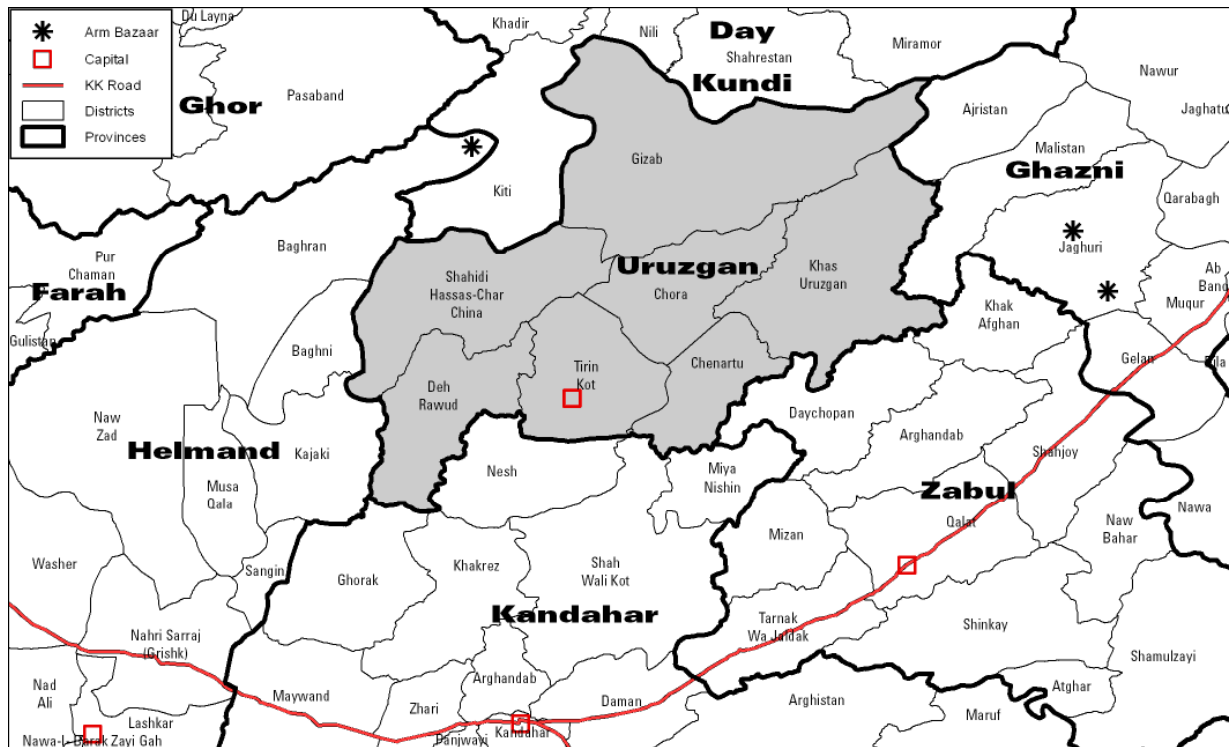
Uruzgan is surrounded on all sides by areas that either have been under constant insurgent control for at least three years (northern Helmand), have a traditionally weak government presence and a mostly non-existent state security structure (Ghor, Zabul, Day Kundi) which allow weapons and narcotics to flow unchecked into the Province, and highly volatile areas (Kandahar, Ghazni) where the government and the insurgency are currently battling for control. In addition to Pakistani and Arab militants, there are also reports that Iran agents have a presence in the province, particularly in the Hazara (Shiite) areas.

With neighbours like these, even the small security gains made in Uruzgan over the last three years are astounding. It is clear, however, that if an effective regional strategy between provincial security forces and lead international nations does not form very soon, the gains made in Uruzgan will remain fragile and reversible. The following is a summary of regional security threats:

- **Northern Helmand-Ghor-Day Kundi:** In general the northern Helmand-Day Kundi-Ghor area is a blind spot for international and GoA security forces: insurgents are able to move freely here, and even areas assumed to be pro-government (e.g., Hazara-populated Day Kundi) play a destabilizing role. For instance, there is an arms bazaar in an area known as Naw Mesh along the border of Baghran district of Helmand and Kiti district of Day Kundi. Russian-made weapons smuggled into Afghanistan from the north and through the Hazarajat are sold in this market.

Northern Helmand (Baghran, Kajaki, Naw Zad) is out of government control and has been a safe haven and regional hub for insurgents for at least the last three years. The area is one of Afghanistan's key opium transport routes, and serves as an important source of tax revenue for the insurgency. Shahidi Hassas is still economically oriented towards northern Helmand, and many of the insurgency leaders operating in western and northern Uruzgan are from northern Helmand.

In a larger sense, northern Helmand connects Uruzgan to southwestern Afghanistan (Farah, Nimruz), the central highlands (Day Kundi, Bamiyan) and Ghor Province. Ghor is often cited as the most under-developed province in the country. Though centrally located, the province has social and economic linkages with southern Afghanistan (many labourers travel to Helmand to work as sharecroppers). Recently even non-Pashtun tribes from Ghor (the Aimaq, for instance) have been reportedly active in the insurgency in northern Helmand.



Map 2: Uruzgan and the Region

- Kandahar:** As the security situation has improved in Uruzgan, it has declined in neighbouring Kandahar, where insurgent attacks are now occurring almost daily in the provincial capital and the Taliban have established firm control in the northern districts such as Nesh and Miya Nishin which border Uruzgan. Because it is reliant on markets in Kandahar City, Uruzgan is often isolated due to insecurity along the Tirin Kot-Kandahar road (especially in Shah Wali Kot district of Kandahar).
- Zabol:** With neither the economic importance of Kandahar, nor the agricultural capabilities of Uruzgan, Zabol is a barren through-route known mostly for the fact that the Kabul-Kandahar (KK) Highway passes through the Province. Security is reportedly so bad at present that not even insurgents are willing to spend much time in the Province. Zabol is an important transit route for insurgents coming from Pakistan, but it has also become a route for non-aligned residents of Khas Uruzgan who prefer to enter and exit the district via Zabol because of continued insecurity on the Tirin Kot-Kandahar road.
- Ghazni:** Ghazni has also become an entry-exit point for insurgency and non-aligned locals—especially the Hazara population of Khas Uruzgan, which prefers to travel through Hazara territory in Ghazni to reach the Kabul-Kandahar Highway. Today the insurgency controls much of Ghazni, and those areas that are not under insurgent control—mainly the Hazara districts—have no stable government presence, and are instead ‘governed’ by Hazara strongmen and former mujahideen commanders. There are two significant arms bazaar in Jaghuri district, where weapons smuggled from the north though Hazara areas are traded. The district of Ajristan is under insurgency control, and reportedly under the overall command of insurgent leadership in Gizab district. Moreover Kuchi nomads migratory routes

pass through Ghazni, Zabul, and Uruzgan, and as such there are a number of land conflicts between these Kuchi and settled populations (especially Hazara).

5 International Military Actors in Uruzgan

In August 2006, NATO assumed authority for Uruzgan from the US-led Coalition Forces (CF), as the Netherlands took command of the PRT from the US as Task Force Uruzgan. There is also an important Australian contingent under the Dutch command. The Dutch military presence is currently divided between Tirin Kot, Deh Rawud and Chora. In addition, US-led forces (including special forces) under the Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) mandate continue to operate in the Province.

As in much of the rest of Afghanistan, especially the contested areas of the South, East and Southeast, conflicting objectives influence the strategy of military actors. OEF forces have a primary mandate to combat terrorism; PRTs and ISAF forces under a NATO command have a combined mandate to assist the Afghan government to maintain peace and security and help with reconstruction and development. While the local population is not aware of the differences in mandate, in most cases, they differentiate between the various foreign military actors in Uruzgan and, indirectly, also the conflicting objectives and strategies of these actors. When asked if locals had a similar opinion of foreign forces, one person said:

"When a village hears that Australians, the Czechs or the Dutch are coming, the Taliban who live there will begin loading their weapons, but when a village hears that the Americans are coming everyone—Taliban, farmers, everyone—will load their guns."

An overarching critique of the entire foreign presence in the province is their **lack of coordination**. There seems to be a shared perception that internationals (civil and military) are not coordinated at all. Elders from Deh Rawud, for example, say that during their weekly *shura*, the Dutch are always present, the Americans come occasionally, but when both attend the same meeting, each mission meets separately with locals instead of talking as a group. This confuses locals, especially after internationals stress the benefits of cooperation and unity to local populations. A former governor of Uruzgan also noted the lack of coordination among internationals as one of the main problems. Also, there seems to be a general perception among the public that the Americans dislike the Dutch and vice versa.

Another critique raised, mostly against OEF forces, is the ability of local adversaries to manipulate them in order to eliminate rivals or gain the upper hand in resource conflicts. This creates resentment or real enemies among the local population, and exacerbates the existing conflict between insurgents and international military forces. As in 2006, local conflicts remain a dangerous trap for third party actors. For example, the former district governor of Shahidi Hassas collected 500 *man* (2,250 kg) of poppy from villagers by threatening that if they would not deliver, he would tell the foreigners that insurgents were hiding in their village and tell them to bomb them.

The generally favourable opinion of the Dutch is contrasted with a negative perception of American forces, while the Australians received mixed reviews. As one local elder put it: *"The Americans are extremists and the Dutch are moderates."* This image seems less the result of a deliberate good-cop bad-cop strategy by international actors than a by-product of the different mandates and approaches of OEF and NATO. The following other perceptions of military forces are noteworthy:

Dutch: Local perception of the Dutch in areas where the Netherlands has a presence (either permanent, in the case of Deh Rawud and Chora, or through development projects in the case of Khas Uruzgan) **was generally positive**. Overall, people feel that the Dutch presence has resulted in increased security and development, with locals understanding the link between the two. Respondents especially appreciate the following aspects of the Dutch mission:

- Serious about minimizing civilian casualties
- Well-thought through operations
- More careful in triangulation of information received
- Diplomacy (instead of military force) as a way of solving problems
- Consultation with tribal elders before making decisions
- More effort in identifying the true representatives of local communities and therefore more successful at initiating development projects and/or contact with the wider community by working with and through these individuals;
- Maintaining a consistent and primary focus on development/reconstruction initiatives: *"everyone knows the Dutch do development"*
- Culturally sensitive, such as not conducting house searches, and generally more respectful and polite in their interactions with Afghans
- Seem to communicate an exit strategy: *"The Dutch don't want to stay here forever."* Locals generally do not think the Dutch have ulterior (geopolitical) motives for extending their stay in Afghanistan.
- Another common sentiment, expressed was *"The Dutch don't fight."* In Deh Rawud this was stated as fact and not a critique, which seems to show a greater understanding of the Dutch focus in relation to American, Australian, and Czech missions, while in Chora it was stated more as question—that is, "why won't the Dutch fight?"

In addition to the positive comments, locals also highlighted areas where the Dutch could improve, including:

- Lack of hospitality, which is very important in Afghan culture: *"We only get water when we see the Dutch."*
- Talk over action: While Afghan communities overall appreciated the dialogue culture of the Dutch, some criticized what they saw as an overcautious approach, with more time spent on consultation than project implementation.
- Fulfilling Promises: though "under-promise and over-deliver" has become an ISAF/NATO mantra, locals said that they were still disappointed when things they *thought* the Dutch had promised failed to materialize.

Australians: The perceptions of the Australians are generally positive, albeit in some ways they are more similar to the perceptions of the Americans than the Dutch.

- Locals say that the Australians are serious about reconstruction, best about delivering what they promise in terms of development, and not promising what they cannot deliver. In addition they thoroughly monitor their projects.

Americans: Aside from their tough stance against the Taliban, the overall perception of the Americans is poor in Uruzgan. The following reasons were given:



- The frequent use of foul language against respected community leaders and government officials.
- The frequent inappropriate manhandling of respected community elders and government officials, such as pushing, shoving, and searching. One of the reasons a former governor resigned was such a humiliating experience.
- Known to 'throw around a lot of money' without ever monitoring project implementation. They seem to not care about development.
- Suspected of having ulterior (geo-political) motives for prolonging their stay in Afghanistan, similar to the British in Helmand.⁴⁵
- Not carefully choosing their interpreters. In Khas Uruzgan, for example, an interpreter with international forces was bribed to mistranslate the words of an influential tribal elder. As a result this individual was jailed for time.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

Compared to other southern provinces such as Kandahar, Helmand, and Zabul, the security and development situation in Uruzgan has improved over the last three years. This can be attributed, amongst other things, to the Dutch development and security approach in the Province. Having invested in research and analysis, the Dutch understand that engagement must be tailored to fit the local context. As in other southern provinces, the tribal leadership in Uruzgan is far from cohesive and many areas are outside government control. Within this context, the Dutch focus on a micro-level and bottom-up development strategy that engages community leaders has been effective.

One weak link in the Dutch comprehensive '3 D approach' is the *transfer* of responsibility to the Afghan government. Presently, local communities associate positive changes in Uruzgan very much with the international presence, while the government is still seen as unrepresentative, ineffective, and lacking capacity. The lack of much-needed confidence building between the population and the Afghan government is a central challenge as the Dutch military engagements scales down and a strategy for continued civil engagement and development initiatives takes shape. With this in mind, the following recommendations can be put forth:

Development

- **The choice between large and small-scale development should not be an either/or decision**—Uruzgan needs better roads and new bridges as much as individual villages need irrigation canals and hydro-dynamos.
 - **In Khas Uruzgan locals voiced a preference for projects that, though small in scale, have a direct and visible impact at the village level,** because they understand that the security situation is too volatile to carry out large-scale projects and, more basically, they want the autonomy that comes with determining their needs and then working to meet them. This suggests that the Dutch expand their 'under-the-radar' village-level projects,

⁴⁵ A common perception (not only in Helmand but also in Uruzgan, Zabul and Kandahar) is that the British have come back to take revenge from their previously unsuccessful Afghan campaigns and are ready to do anything to avoid yet another defeat. Afghans pride themselves very much to have been able to defeat the British in the series of Anglo-Afghan wars in the 18th and 19th century.

keeping it at the \$4,000 level, which is high enough to make a difference for villages, yet low enough to be unattractive for strongmen and insurgents.

- **Connect the major economic centres in Uruzgan (Tirin Kot and Deh Rawud) by paving the road which connects the two towns.** In Deh Rawud residents said that paving the road to Tirin Kot would decrease transport costs to the point where it would be economically possible to transport basic produce to markets in the provincial capital. *“Right now it is not worth to bring tomatoes to the district centre because the cost of transporting them is too high that I would hardly break even. If the road gets paved and the cost of transport goes down, then I will be able to make money.”*
- **Provide logistical and technical support for demonstration farms,** and crop yield demonstrations in areas/villages that have yet to receive improved seeds.
- **Continue to expand improved seed program to include seeds for other indigenous crops** (e.g., almonds, apricots, etc.), as well as the distribution of improved saplings. Increased cultivation of wheat is likely to push down the market price, and as a result many farmers may turn to other crops. It is important, then, that the seed program is diverse enough to give farmers other choices besides simply increasing cultivation (the ongoing saffron pilot project is a step in the right direction).
- **Continue to expand the value-chain approach to agriculture by providing extension work, training, technical assistance, and marketing.** One reason why poppy has been so successful is that traffickers provide training, machinery, and ‘farm gate’ collection of the product—in other words, they ensure a strong and streamlined value-chain that makes economic sense for local farmers. Development initiative should borrow from this approach.
- **Agro-business development must continue to push towards greater industrialization,** including increased access to fertilizers, pesticides, farm machinery, and storage facilities for commercial purposes.
- **Support the creation of a “development monitoring” shura composed of engineers and tribal elders in Tirin Kot.** A *shura* of this type already exists in Deh Rawud and Chora and locals credit it with improving transparency and overall quality in development initiatives.
- **Women’s Development**
 - **Provincial public health officials stressed that a basic awareness raising campaign for women’s health is needed throughout the Province.** Such a project needs a good media campaign—perhaps something modelled after the BBC’s “New-Home New-Life” radio soap opera which is popular amongst locals.
 - **Continued work in the area of women in development should be explored and expanded.** Raising men’s awareness and acceptance of women’s contribution to economic areas should be worked on, as this is the biggest obstacle so far.
 - **Continue to explore programmes to increase women’s literacy and girl’s education.** Under the Taliban government, home schools were often

- tolerated as long as they were not publicized. Thus the Dutch could attempt an 'under-the-radar' approach to education, expanding their accelerated learning classes in villages. Again, one could try to work with *mullahs*, as they are often open to girl's education until puberty. During the Taliban regime an NGO in Kabul was able to hold several girls' classes in mosques with the buy-in of mullahs, as long as religious education was part of the curriculum. In Spin Boldak district of Kandahar, girl's enrolment is higher in madrassas than in government schools.
- **Adult education campaigns targeting women should be continued.** This could combine literacy courses with information on health, basic rights and government. Often a 'neutral topic' such as health helps to gain access to women, and educators can then add other topics during information discussion. **The main aim is to create 'socially acceptable' spaces for women to gather and discuss.**
 - **There are unknown benefits that could arise from understanding the influential power of women within the family circle.** Despite the heavy "clichés" regarding the social role of women in Afghanistan, many indicators suggest that within the family inner circle, women retain a very strong influence on their children's perception of things, shaping their personalities and their understanding of the world. Considering the young age of most of the insurgents, it will prove vital in the future to not neglect this specific segment of the population when promoting peace and political dialogue.
 - **Remember that in all aspects of female-targeted development the buy in of local religious leaders and tribal elders needs to be achieved first.**

Diplomacy/Governance

- **Concentrate on facilitating small community-level meetings.** Tribal leadership is not cohesive across the province (or even within districts in many cases), so it may be more productive to work on specific issues at the district- or sub-district (village) level where decisions can be made and implemented. Province-wide (or even regional) *jirgas* are important, however, without first laying the ground work for such *jirgas* at the (sub-)district level, these large gatherings have had little real impact, and can even begin to be detrimental when they are held repeatedly to no effect.
- **Conduct a thorough mapping of the district sub-units known as *manteqas*.** Communities often organize through, and identify with, these geographical units, however mapping efforts thus far have been either too broad (district boundaries) or too narrow (village location and tribal composition).
- **Facilitate cross-regional dialogue by providing opportunities for tribal elders and religious figures from Uruzgan to visit communities outside of the south.** Such field trips expose often isolated individuals to new ideas about everything from solving conflicts, to how to harvest wheat, to dealing with insurgents.
- **Support the 36-person "independent *shura*" that currently exists in Khas Uruzgan.** This *shura* has attempted to remain separate from state and insurgent



councils that currently exist (but have little popular support) in the district. However, the *shura* still meets in an ad hoc manner and its role (and power) within the district remains unclear.

- **Do not pursue an aggressive anti-poppy campaign.** Though more of the province is coming under government control the overall security situation remains fragile and any attempt by either the government or internationals to adopt tougher anti-poppy measures risks alienating communities. Moreover, anecdotal evidence gathered for this report suggests that rewarding 'poppy free' villages with development may actually be dividing communities, and turning areas against the internationals that are funding such initiatives. Unless and until the government is strong and legitimate enough to enforce a poppy ban, the best method will be to continue to provide access to alternative crops/livelihoods and facilitate access to markets.
- **International actors must present a more cohesive engagement strategy to local communities.** A shared perception at the district-level is that the various military and civil-military missions in Uruzgan are not on the same page, or do not get along. For instance, at the weekly district *shura* in Deh Rawud locals are confused by the fact that the US and Dutch representatives meet separately with *shura* members rather than as a group.
- **Continue to expand strategic communication initiatives.** A first step would be to conduct a thorough media/communication assessment to understand local listening habits and preferences for the different demographics.
 - In addition to supporting Radio Nawa, **consider also strengthening Radio Television Afghanistan (RTA)**, which is a very interesting and credible alternative channel that could support a large-scale communication campaign targeting rural populations.
 - **A communication campaign aimed at promoting peaceful conflict resolution, specifically targeting the youth** (the age-bracket for the insurgency recruitment), should be designed and tailored appropriately. For example, this could include programmes on successful community efforts in various districts of Uruzgan.
 - In order to change the government's extremely poor image, **it is crucial that ministers and governors are seen working in the field, sharing people's daily concerns and suffering, and answering people's questions.** Reports in the field, talk shows and open discussion forums where officials can be challenged and held accountable should be produced and broadcast through national radio and television.
 - **Locals want political debates, talk shows that are live, un-rehearsed, and open to a wide range of voices.** Make these shows relevant for local communities, and not externally driven. People genuinely appreciate open discussions and roundtable forums (radio and television) with identifiable and knowledgeable individuals such as scholars or scientists. Among recognized experts, civil servants seem to enjoy great trust compared to, for example, NGO workers. When talking about the local implementation of a reconstruction project during a radio program, the message will prove much

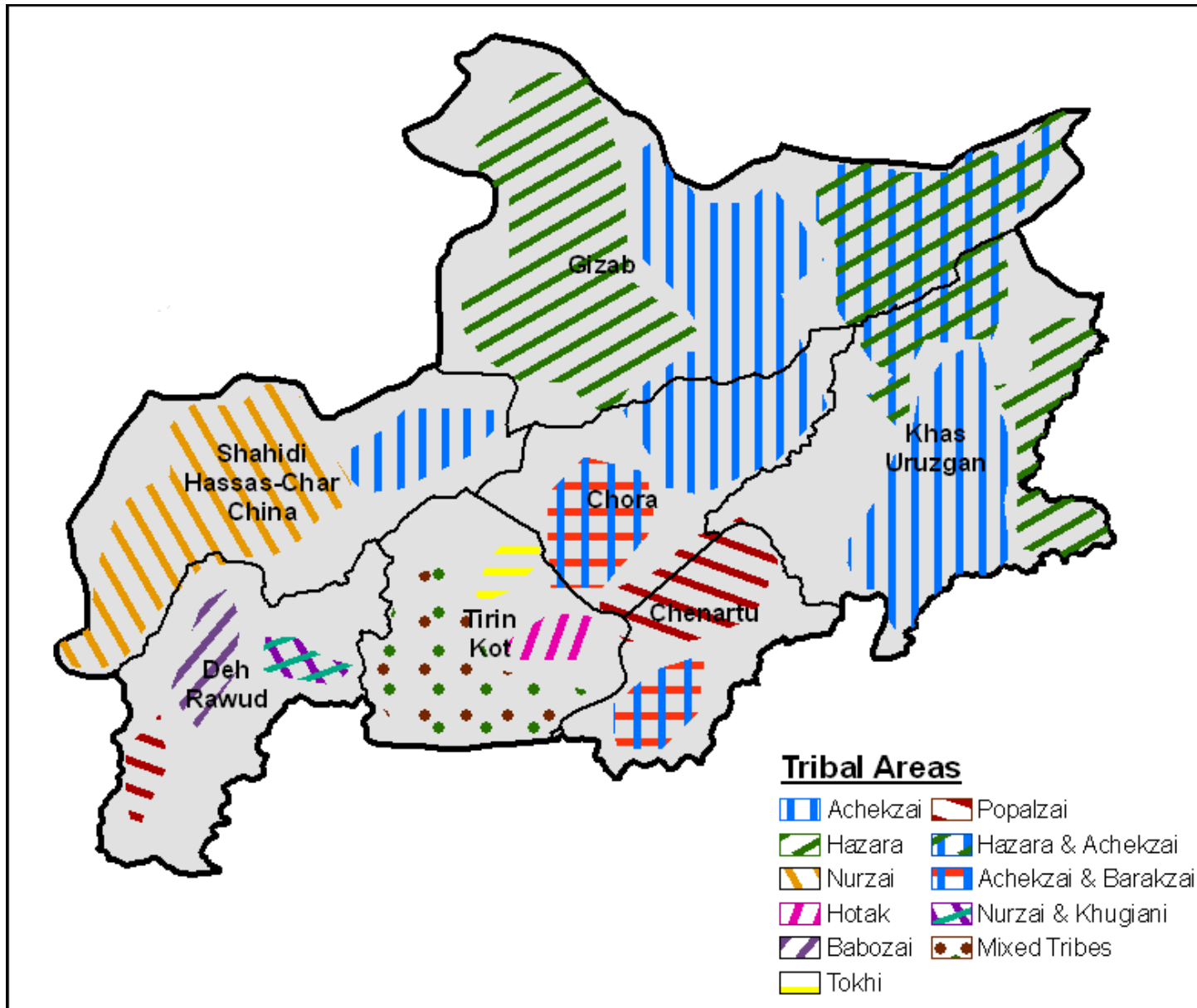
more trustworthy if it comes from the mouth of a local civil engineer rather than from the line Minister or an NGO spokesperson.

- **As the Dutch engagement in Uruzgan prepares to shift away from its military component, the timeline for this shift must be clearly and directly explained to the population.**
- **Continue to strengthen civilian government personnel so that their service provision can improve.** Special focus should be made on improving the judiciary, and finding ways to link traditional conflict resolution mechanism to formal justice systems. It is important to remember that the justice system cannot be rehabilitated with the same speed as the ANA/ANP. In some areas of the southeast, for example, the formal justice system has been strengthened by also building up customary structures that have been damaged through years of war but are often the most accessible (and credible) for local populations.

Security/Defence

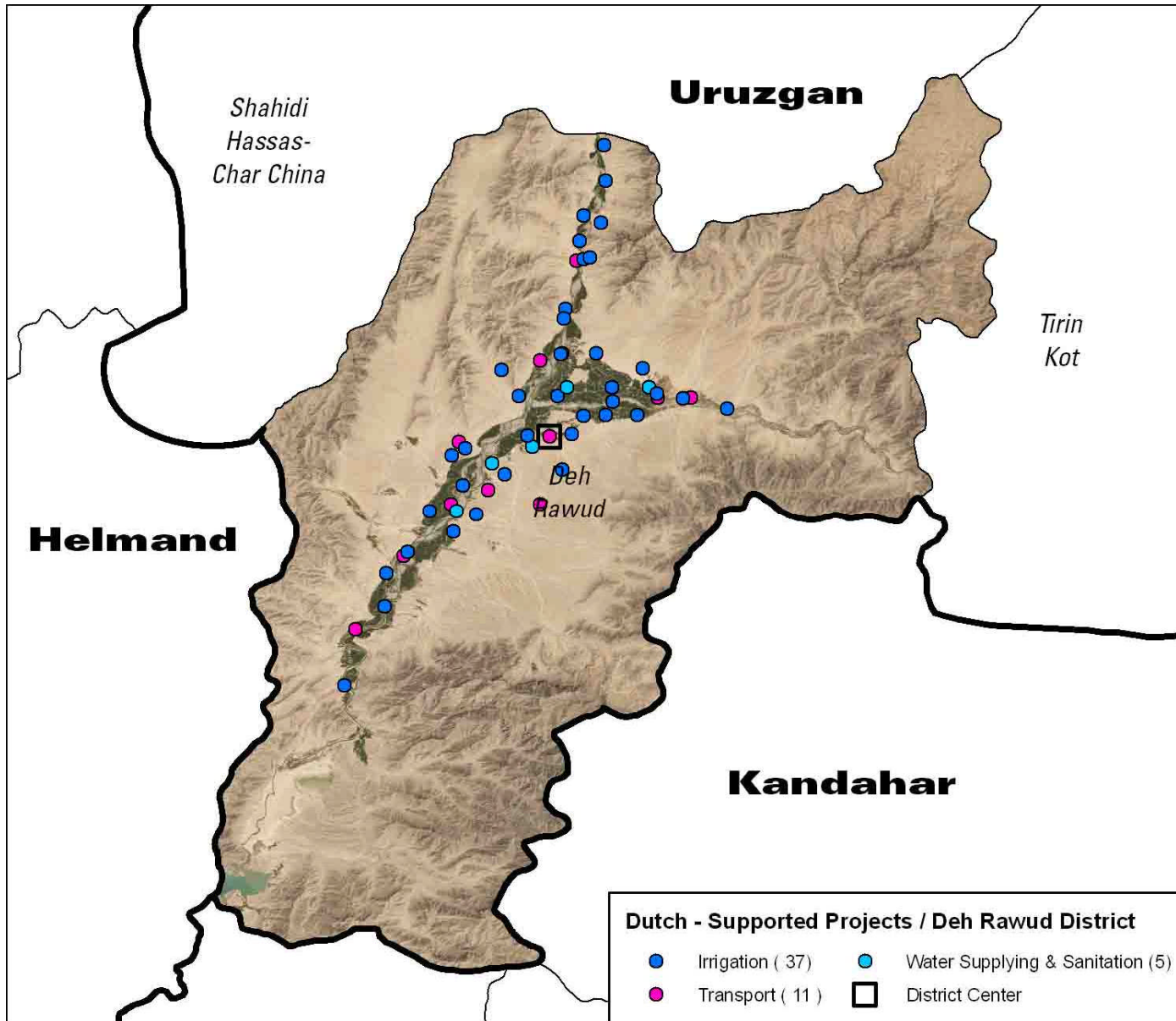
- **The Dutch need to communicate to the US that their individual development strategies are working at cross-purposes.** To communicate this effectively to newly arriving military personnel, and to hopefully influence a change in approach, the Dutch will need to frame the argument in counterinsurgency terms: making the case (as objectively as possible) that the Dutch method of development—i.e., more monitoring, no sub-contracting, 'under-the-radar' engagement—is a more effective *counterinsurgency* strategy than the US's *laissez-faire* approach.
- **Continue to expand and strengthen control in the districts of** Shahidi Hassas, Gizab, Khas Uruzgan, and the non-Popalzai parts of Chenartu, which are out of government control.
- **Reduce dependence on northern Helmand by continuing to improve roadways and building bridges that orient the population towards Tirin Kot.** However, linking the population with Tirin Kot alone is of limited utility if Tirin Kot is not linked to regional economic hub of Kandahar City. The necessity of improving security along the Tirin Kot-Kandahar Road highlights the need for a comprehensive strategy with US and Canadian forces in Kandahar, and with lead nations in neighbouring provinces (especially Helmand and Ghazni) as well.
- Though much focus has been on stemming the tide of the transnational weapons and narcotics trade, it is also important to remember that in the last thirty years of conflict, **a thriving internal weapons and narcotics market/trade has developed.** Though there are many links between the external and internal trade in weapons and narcotics, **it is important that international security actors understand the semi-autonomous nature of the internal trade and develop specific strategies to deal with it.**

ANNEX I: Tribal Areas

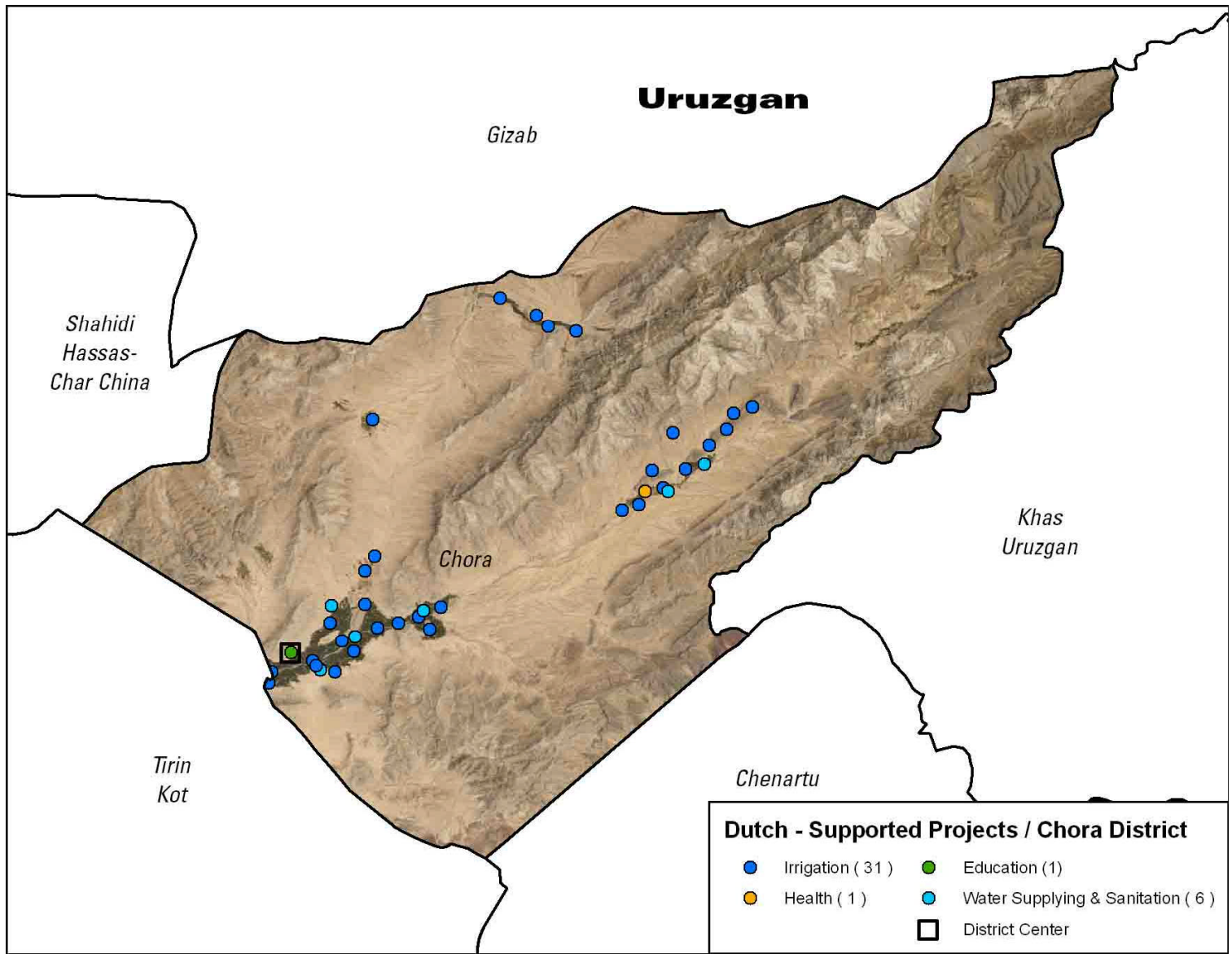


Map 3: Uruzgan Province: Tribal Areas

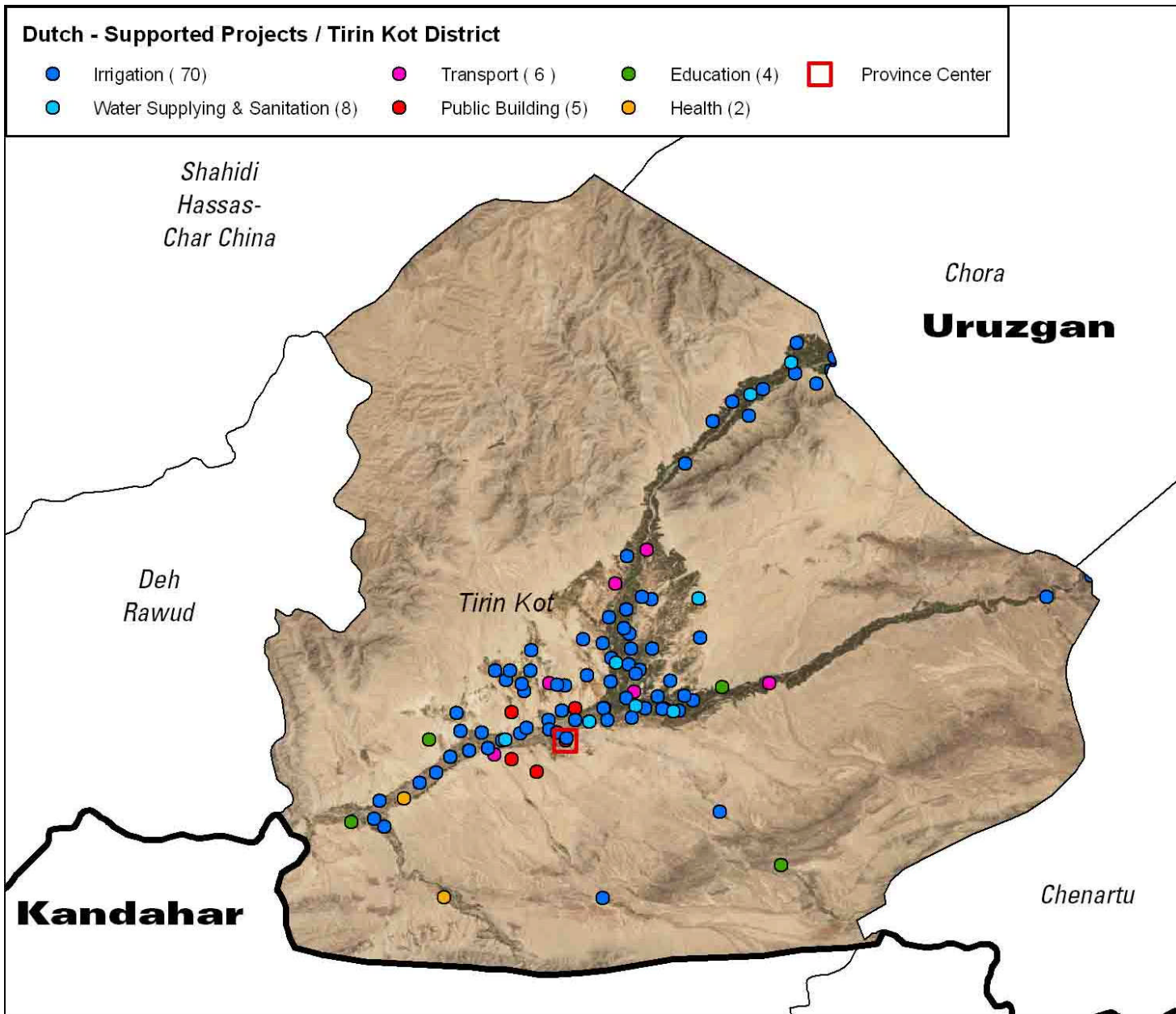
ANNEX II: Dutch-supported development by district



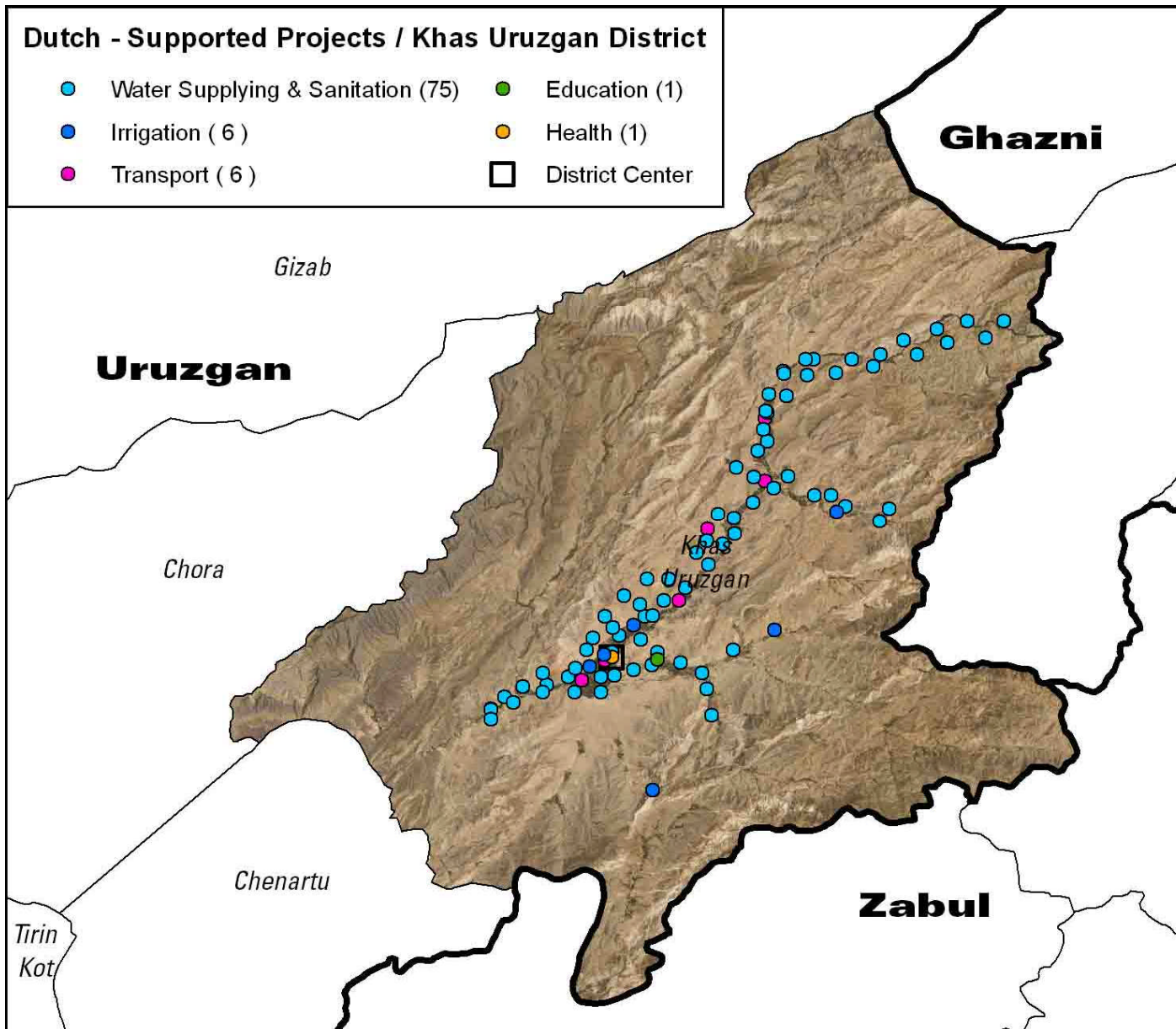
Map 4: Dutch-supported development in Deh Rawud District



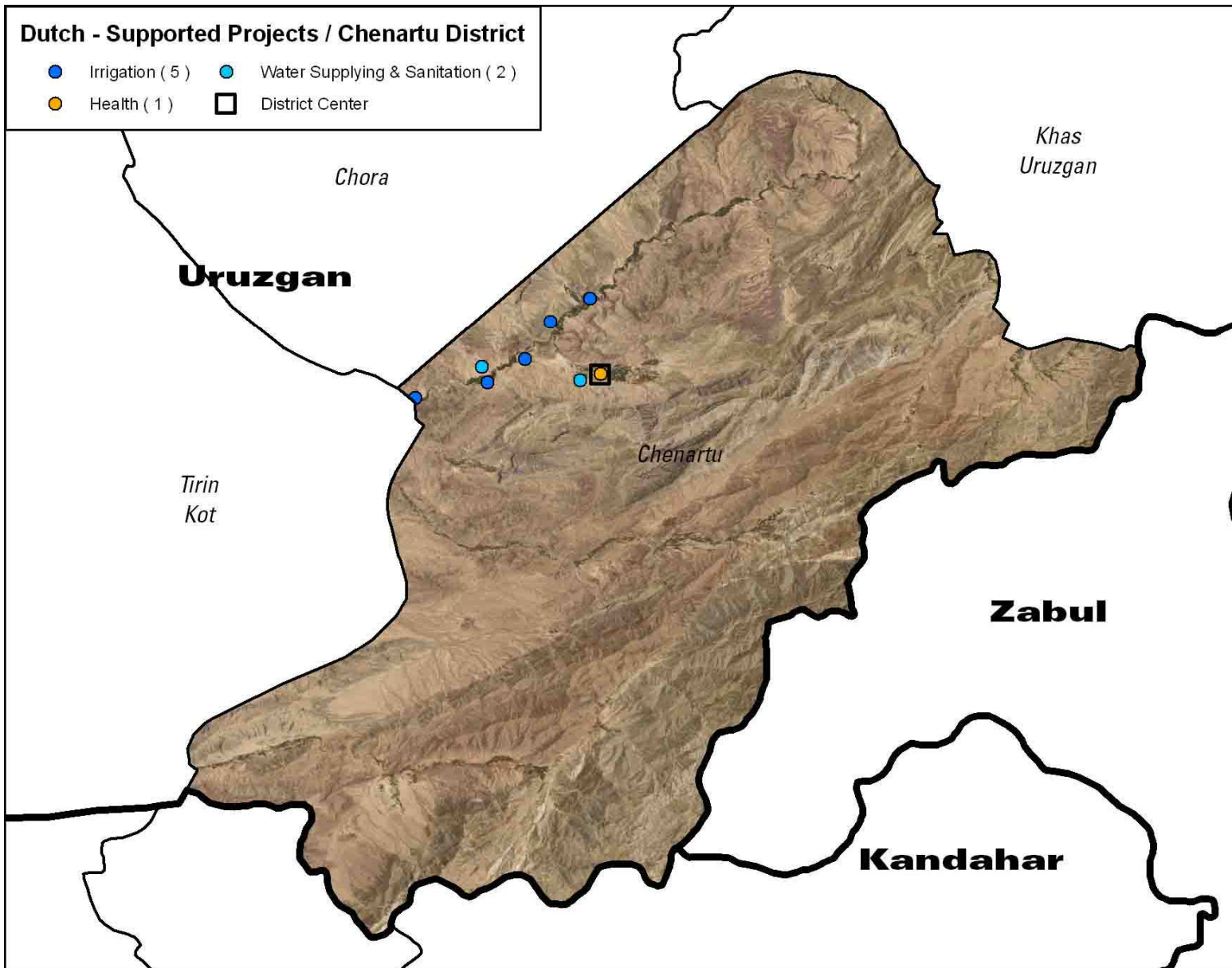
Map 5: Dutch-supported development in Chora District



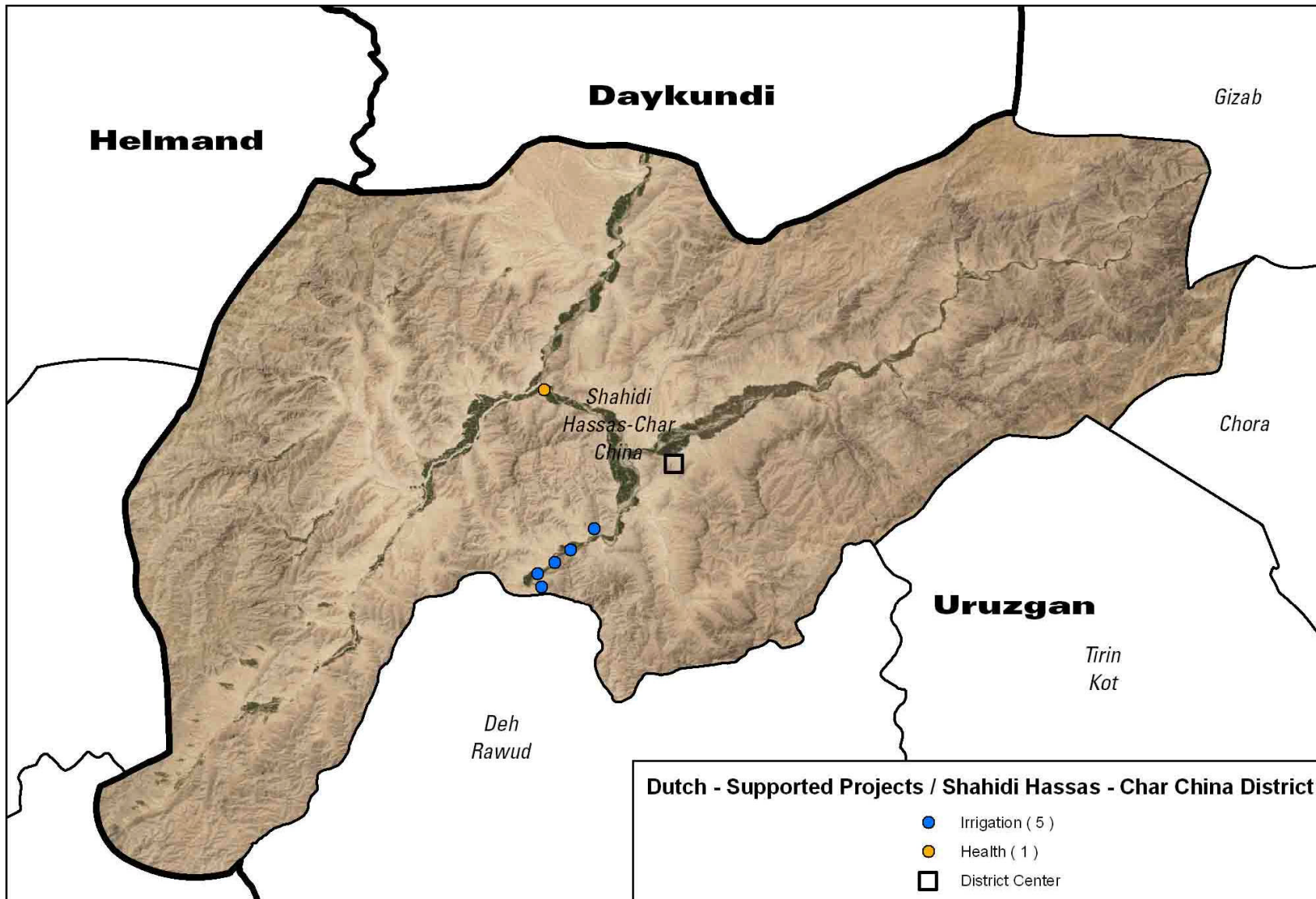
Map 6: Dutch-supported development in Tirin Kot District



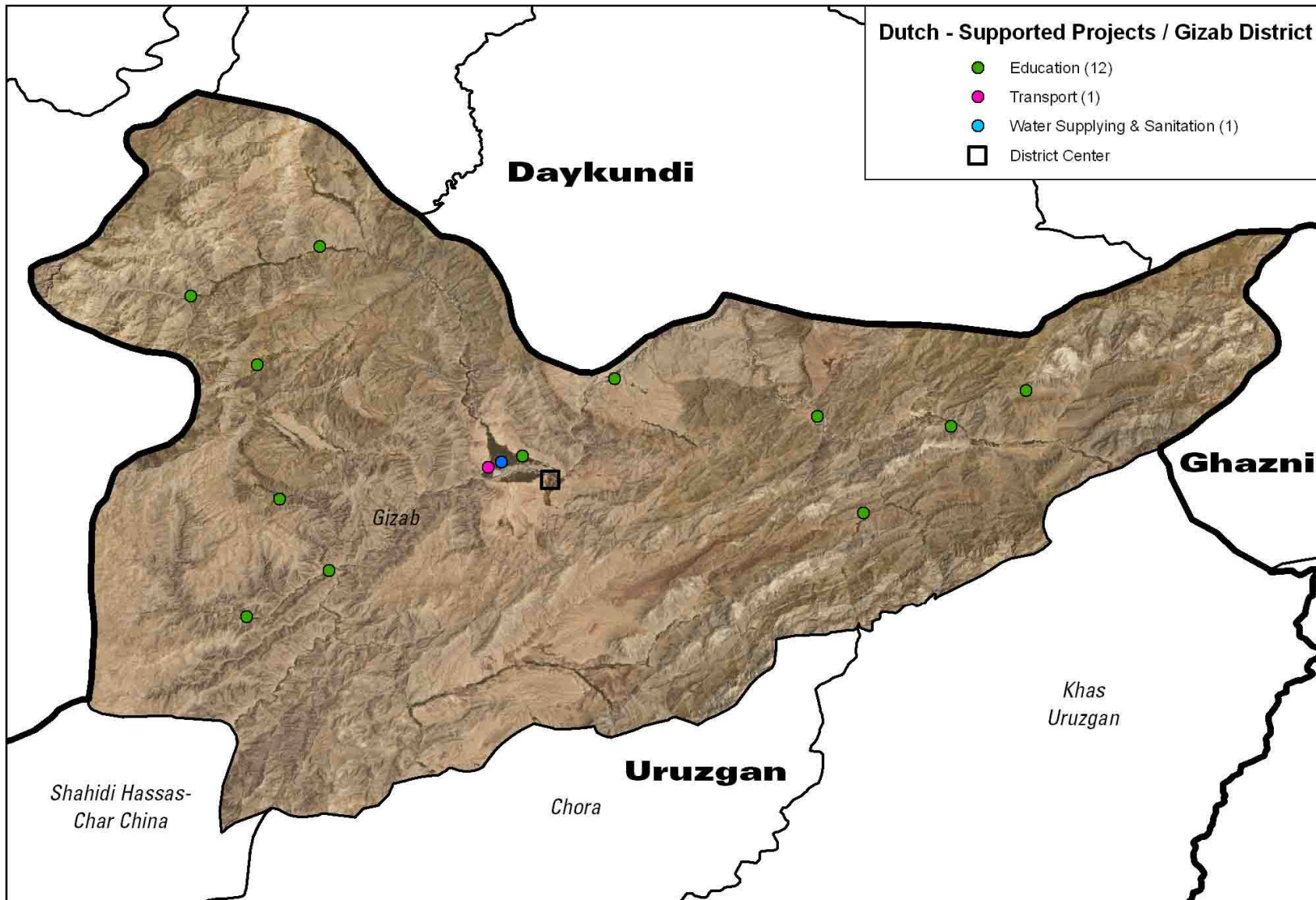
Map 7: Dutch-supported development in Khas Uruzgan District



Map 8: Dutch-supported development in Chenartu District



Map 9: Dutch-supported development in Shahidi Hassas District



Map 10: Dutch-supported development in Gizab district

ANNEX III: Afghan Health and Development Services (AHDS) Uruzgan Healthcare Performance Indicators

Indicator	Aug 2006	Aug 2009	Improvement
Number of functional Health Posts (couple volunteer CHWs)	59	165	106 new HP
Number of functional sub-center	0	1	1 new
Number of functional BHCs	1	6	5 new
Number of functional CHCs	4	5	1 new
Number of functional Hospitals	1 District H	1 Provincial H	Upgraded
Number of consultations per person per year	0.6	1.2	Doubled
Proportion of all pregnant women receiving at least one antenatal care visit	45%	61%	16% increase
Proportion of deliveries attended by skilled workers in the facilities	2.6%	12%	9.4% increase
Cesarean section rate among deliveries in the facilities	0	1.1%	New service
Number of current users of contraceptives	1035	1425	37% increase
Proportion of pregnant women receiving at least two doses of tetanus toxoid	29%	72%	Doubled
TB detection rate	0	20%	New service
Treatment completion rate among TB cases detected ▶	0	26%	*
Proportion of children <5 receiving growth monitoring	81%	100%	37% increase
Proportion of children 0-11 months receiving DPTHb1	71%	100%	51% increase
Proportion of children 0-11 months receiving DPTHb3	25%	91%	66% increase
Proportion of health facilities with at least one female health worker	40%	46%	6% increase
Number of Surgeons	0	2	New service
Total number of female doctors	0	1	Better situation
Total number of midwives	2	12	6 times increase
Total number of female nurses	3	5	Better
Number of CHWs completed 3 rd phase training	60	232	Almost quadrupled
Number of female CHWs completed 3 rd phase training	11	67	6 times increase
Completeness of HMIS reporting	100%	100%	Same
Proportion of postpartum visits (within 6 weeks after delivery)	4.2%	16%	4 times increase
Malnutrition rate in growth monitoring	2.4%	3.2%	Some increase
Transportation availability (for the districts)	40%	54%	Some increase
Referral percentage of patients to higher level	0.5%	2%	4 times increase

▶ 26% of under treatment patients have completed the Therapeutic Course. It is a nine month treatment course