

*La Nato cambia le regole per gli appaltatori privati in Afghanistan in seguito alle denunce del Congresso Usa e del Parlamento Europeo.*

*In evidenza, per i lettori del sito, l'articolo del New York Times e il memorandum del Generale David Petraeus nei quali si parla apertamente del rischio che i 14 miliardi di dollari che ogni anno entrano quasi senza controllo nelle fauci degli appaltatori privati che operano in Afghanistan finiscano con l'alimentare le mafie dei talebani e dei signori della guerra.*

The New York Times

### **Afghan Commander Issues Rules on Contractors**

By Alissa J. Rubin

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KABUL, Afghanistan — The NATO military command in Afghanistan has quietly issued new guidelines on contracting aimed at pushing commanders to take a tougher approach to how they spend billions of dollars. It is part of an effort to reduce corruption and decrease the funds that indirectly flow to the insurgency.

The American-led military operation here now spends about \$14 billion a year on contracting work, according to military officials.

[The new guidelines, issued last week by Gen. David H. Petraeus](#), the top military leader here, make clear that he wants his subordinates to use their purchasing power as a tool in the fight against the insurgency and that so far, that has not happened.

The provisions in the new guidelines suggest that on many occasions NATO contracts have ended up exacerbating Afghanistan's problems by empowering warlords and entrenched power brokers, and undercutting the trust of average Afghans, who see dollars being spent but never reap the benefits.

The guidelines, in a two-page unclassified memo, also raised the possibility that some contractors now on the NATO payroll could be purged or barred from further work. But no specific contractors were singled out in the memo, and it was unclear how the new guidelines could be enforced.

"The scale of our contracting in Afghanistan represents both an opportunity and a danger," General Petraeus wrote. "With proper oversight contracting can spur economic growth and development. If, however, we spend large quantities of international contracting funds quickly and with insufficient oversight it can fuel corruption, finance insurgent operations, strengthen criminal patronage networks and undermine our efforts in Afghanistan."

Contracting, wrote General Petraeus, "has to be commanders' business."

President Hamid Karzai has often criticized the contracting process for failing to employ enough Afghans and depriving many of the benefits of foreign spending because so much of the money is siphoned off by unscrupulous, over-priced contractors and subcontractors — or by foreign contractors who do not share much of the largess with Afghans.

NATO forces spend money on a vast array of goods and services in addition to projects specifically designed to benefit Afghans, like bridges, roads and schools. NATO troops also buy guard services from Afghan security companies, lease land, and contract for water supply and building construction.

Afghans in several provinces have complained that local warlords seize land from them and then lease it to local NATO forces. People feel wronged when NATO forces hire a company that

is staffed entirely by workers from another country or even from another province.

The contracting overhaul started under Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, General Petraeus's predecessor, as it became apparent that the military's approach often sent tens of millions of dollars to companies that favored one tribe, or that lined the pockets of corrupt local leaders or that delivered services like security by paying off gunmen for illegal armed groups — effectively providing financial aid to the insurgency that elsewhere the soldiers were fighting.

In other cases the military paid contractors who did a poor job on everything from building a bridge or a school to delivering military supplies. That undermined average Afghans' faith in NATO and in their own government, which is allied with the international forces, and turned people toward the insurgency.

The guidelines from General Petraeus suggested that sloppiness was pervasive, since it exhorted commanders to “establish systems and standard databases for vetting vendors and contractors to ensure that contracting does not empower the wrong people or allow the diversion of funds.”

General Petraeus also urged commanders to look at contracting through a wider lens, seeking to find new companies with the goal of breaking “monopolies and helping to weaken patronage networks.”

Finally, he put companies involved in illegitimate activity on notice that they ran a risk of losing the contract if they failed to perform, funneled money to insurgents or behaved in a corrupt way. When there are “linkages between contractors and criminal networks we must take action such as suspension and debarment of the individuals or the company, contract termination, or not renewing a contract option.”

Anthony Cordesman, a defense expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, wrote in a recent report that better oversight in the contracting process needs to be part of any overall drive by the United States in combating corruption in Afghanistan.

“Much of the level of corruption that threatens any real hope of victory in Afghanistan can be reduced and eliminated if the U.S., its allies, and other donors tightly control the influx of outside money, limit its flow to honest and capable Afghans at every level of government, and provide the transparency to allow Afghans to see how honestly and effectively the money is used,” he wrote.

*Thom Shanker and Mark Mazzetti contributed reporting from Washington.*