

# STUDY OF SUB-NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES IN AFGHANISTAN

## WARDAK

### POLITICAL CONTEXT AND SECURITY STRUCTURES

#### Summary of Findings

- The general security situation in Wardak has been steadily improving since Governor Saifullah has been appointed by the central authorities, in September 2002.
- The population welcomes the demise of the warlords although it has resulted in the strengthening of non-native factions such as the Shura-ye Nezar, which may be destabilizing in the long term.
- Wardak is a poor province with few sources of revenue outside remittances and agriculture. It is underserved by the central government, and the provincial and district administrations are crippled by a complete lack of resources.
- There are currently no major tensions between the ethnic groups inhabiting the province, or between the province and Kabul, although the Tajik minority has a disproportionate share of power. This may eventually lead to a deepening divide between North and South Wardak and between the inhabitants of Wardak and Kabul, if they continue to be neglected.
- The Governor's efforts to break networks of political patronage by transferring district administrators from one district to another and by reducing the power of the factional leaders has had positive results in strengthening the control by, and the legitimacy of, central government.
- The district councils, or shuras, play a major role in achieving governance and are generally supportive of the administration
- The overlapping areas of responsibility of the security forces - Police, National Security and Army - lead to tensions, especially because they are dominated by factions (Sayyaf and Shura-ye Nezar) and are considered a security/political threat by the population.
- Professionals in the province, and especially among the Police, resent the dominance of the Mujahideen factions supported by different ministries in Kabul.

#### Short History of Post-Taliban Wardak

The Taliban fled from Wardak without a fight as they surrendered Kabul. There was never much fighting in Wardak during the period the Taliban ruled, except in the area of Maidan where Taliban positions were attacked by Rabbani's government in 1995-96.

Northern Alliance forces moved into key positions of the provincial administration immediately, but for a long time their control did not stretch much beyond Maidan Shahr, the provincial capital. Abdul Ahmad Durrani, a mujahid linked to Sayyaf's Ittehad-e Islami and acting police chief, proclaimed himself governor, while Commander Nangiyalai, previously with Hezb-e Islami/Khales and now supporting the Rome process, took military control of essential parts of the province. He disputed the governorship with Abdul Ahmad and had himself appointed governor by a provincial shura he convoked, but Abdul Ahmad retained physical control of the government building. Armed groups of ex-Taliban still roamed in the area, notably around Jalrez. The Shura-ye Nezar took over the intelligence apparatus in the province by sending Shir Mohammed Takana, a native of the area, the day after Kabul fell. He still heads the local NSD

department. The Panshiri-dominated power ministries in Kabul then tried to wrestle control of the area from Nangiyalai - who they accused of being supported by the ISI and of harbouring Al Qaeda/Taliban forces - by backing commander Muzafaruddin, former Hezb-e Islami/Hekmatyar mujahideen leader. Small-scale sporadic engagements occurred between these two commanders several times in the first half of 2002. Political and military control over the province remained divided until the late summer in 2002, when the central government finally managed to neutralize its opponents in the province.

In the districts political power had been taken over by "shuras" upon the departure of the Taliban. In some cases it seems the Taliban, while leaving, handed over authority to an appointee who then would call together a district council to confirm his authority. In other cases the mujahideen leaders among the local population formed this shura. In all cases these shuras were unable to resist the onslaught by armed groups, mainly those belonging to Nangiyalai and to Muzafaruddin. These commanders would sometimes try to "legitimize" their rule by forming their own councils, called "commanders' shuras" and by occupying the buildings of the district administration, putting in place their cronies.

The unarmed population did not support any of these commanders and armed groups, even those from their own locality. The consolidation of central government power undertaken by Governor Saifullah from August/September 2002 onwards was thus generally welcomed, regardless of which party's interests that may have served.

Governor Saifullah, an Ahmedzai originally from Paktia that worked as a commander for, and advisor to, Sebghatullah Mojadedi (Jabhah-e Melli) until 1996, was appointed Governor by President Karzai in August/September 2002, and was thus the first legal governor of post-Taliban Wardak. In the meanwhile Commander Muzafaruddin had ousted Nangiyalai and achieved military control over the province. Saifullah put an end to local conflicts by transferring the acting wuluswals to other districts and then having their appointments confirmed by the President. He diminished the influence of local shuras, which he claims were all commander-dominated, by sending in wuluswals from other districts; and he affirms that the activities of both shuras and wuluswals are now closely scrutinized, presumably by enlisting the support of the NSD. He warns that those working for foreign interests and corrupt officials will be expelled. Finally he pacified relations between some of the main commanders, such as Muzafaruddin - now commander of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division based in Maidan Shahr - Abdul Ahmad Durrani - who retained his position of police chief - Nangiyalai - allowed to remain in his native Jaghatu Province - and Turan Amanullah, the most famous mujahideen (Hezb-e Islami/Hekmatyar) commander of Wardak who has remained on the sidelines over the past times.

Currently Wardak is calm, and the "rule of the gun" (*topak salari* in Pashto) seems to be on the decline. Although some armed groups are still operating under cover of the government security forces (police and army) security has greatly increased over the past year. The momentum of the expanding control over the province by the central government seems to have been lost, however, due to lack of resources, and some elders advert that the criminal activities of the politically protected armed groups are again on the rise. Recommendations given by various sources in Wardak in order to improve the security are:

- Replacement of the police chief, Abdul Ahmad, and in-depth reform of the Wardak police force including appointment of non-native professionals and organization of training courses.
- Imposition of a stricter discipline on the Army, by appointing professionals and restricting soldiers to the barracks
- A thorough disarmament campaign sparing no armed groups, including militias
- Allocation of more resources to provincial security organs, including vehicles and communication means - after the reforms indicated above
- A job-creation programme for the population

## **The Political Economy**

Wardak is one of the poorer provinces of Afghanistan. It has no borders, no industry, and few commercial activities, so almost all revenue is from agriculture and remittances from elsewhere. Some revenue also comes from taxing transport on the road from Kabul to Kandahar. What used to be another important transportation axe, the road from Maidan via Jalrez to Bamiyan and the North, has fallen into disuse as a result of the re-opening of the Salang Tunnel and the road over the Shebar pass.

Wardak has been severely affected by the drought over the past years. Its production of apples and other fruits and vegetables, and wheat and crops, will probably pick up again due to this spring's abundant rainfall. However, the lack of food processing industries means that no value-added remains in the province.

Most revenue clearly comes from remittances. Wardakis form a numerous contingent among Kabul's educated workforce, and a great number of them have emigrated to Pakistan, Iran, the Gulf or the West.

There are thus no obvious resources to seek control of, if not the bazaars. But even these are quite depleted. As an indication, in the provincial capital it was not possible to buy meat and only one commercial photocopier exists in the whole province.

Criminal activities focus on the robbery of assets of families receiving remittances, NGOs and travellers on the Kabul-Kandahar highway, especially near the notorious Salar pass. Although there are still frequent cases of banditry, the systematic spoliation by warlords now seems much reduced.

Another illicit source of income that is now being explored is the looting of antiquities. In other provinces this is typically under the control of commanders. The looting of a Buddhist site in Jalrez recently prompted the visit of the Minister of Information and Culture.

A few recommendations for the improvement of Wardak's economy made by inhabitants:

- Wardak used to have a significant energy-generating capacity with the dam in Chak-i Wardak. The four turbines could provide electricity to Wardak, and parts of Kabul, Logar and Ghazni provinces. The cleaning of the dam and the repair or replacement of the turbines is an urgent priority.
- Food processing plants (such as a juice factory) should be built in Wardak to increase the revenue from agriculture.
- Technical improvements to agriculture (improved seeds, fertilizers, agricultural machinery, irrigation works)
- Improved roads and public transport

## **Relations with the Centre**

Although Wardak is close to Kabul - its provincial capital is only 30 minutes away from Kabul - both the local authorities and the people feel neglected by the Central Government. As an indication, Governor Saifullah claims that the only financial transfers made to the provincial government in ten months, besides salaries, were 1,000,000 Afs (US\$ 20,000) when he arrived in September, which he used to buy a car, and 200,000 Afs (US\$ 4,000) which he used to buy basic furniture for the district administrations<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This does not include material or other transfers made by the line ministries to their provincial and district departments. The only signs of such transfers were seen in the provincial police headquarters and in the Provincial National Security Directorate, which had

The Pashtun population feels discriminated against by the new central authorities. For example, some elders complained about the low number of Wardaki students admitted to the University, in comparison with other years. Wardakis pride themselves on being one of the most educated population groups in the country and feel particularly hurt by the lack of access to higher education. Such complaints are not heard from the small Tajik minority (Hazara districts were not included in this study)<sup>2</sup>.

The proximity to Kabul does ensure a comparatively good coverage by international aid agencies. However their capability to provide the required basic services is limited to health and education.

Altogether one does not sense great animosity towards the central government, or strong interethnic tensions. These may increase, however, if the Government continues to neglect the province or if it pursues factional policies by supporting one group (Tajiks, Shura-ye Nezar) against the others.

### **Relations between institutions and factions in the province**

Wardak is potentially as adversely affected by the takeover of the ministries in Kabul by ethnic/political factions as is the rest of the country. For example, it is perceived by inhabitants of Jalrez that the Minister of Agriculture, Anwari, favours the Hazaras of Harakat-ul Islam that belong to his faction. This does not extend much beyond opportunities for employment in the ministries in Kabul, however. The general lack of resources that impedes ministries to implement programmes in Wardak prevents the exacerbation of tensions between the departments of the line ministries working in the province. There is nothing to fight for. Low salaries make it difficult for these ministries to populate their provincial arms with people belonging to their own faction. They basically have to employ whoever offers to work for them, which are always local inhabitants who usually have a civil service background.

This situation could obviously change into increased competition for access to resources or employment opportunities if the ministries start funding programmes or substantially increase wages.

The strongest tensions were perceived between the security organs: the Police, the National Security Department and the Army, especially between the former two. Both the Police and National Security are present at the district level. Although the National Security's main tasks, as given by two separate sources, are to fight terrorism, "sabotage" (or counter-insurgency) and narcotics, the police also is responsible in these domains. The Army has a similar mandate, barring the war on drugs. Wardak not being a frontier province, the Army mostly provides defence against internal threats, which means it may also intervene against "terrorists" and other perceived enemies. This confusion is compounded by the fact that the three security organs have separate judicial systems. The police refer cases to the attorney and the court, the Army has military courts while the NSD has "special security courts" and its own powers of attorney. On top of that the police is controlled by mujahideen belonging to Sayyaf's party Ittihad-e Islami, while the NSD (and probably, to a lesser degree, the Army) owe allegiance to the Shura-ye Nezar.

One can easily imagine how this could degenerate into inter-agency rivalries; and tensions were noticeable between the Police and the National Security organs at both district level, and between the provincial heads of both institutions (no contact was made with the Army). However, here again, the lack of resources forces the agencies to work together in the field. Typically, the NSD agents will pass information

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by far the best furnished office. Other income, such as that gained by illegal activities or party donations, will usually not reflect in the administrative property, but in the private property of the recipients.

<sup>2</sup> A University student in Kabul admitted that the rate of University enrollment of Wardakis has decreased, but sees it as a natural rebalancing of the Taliban favor towards Pashtun students. Interestingly, he stated that the majority of the Pashtun students in the University of Kabul come from Wardak, followed by those from Jalalabad.

to the police, who then use their manpower and links to the district administration and population to follow up on the case. If firepower is needed the Army may be called in.

- Recommendation of the author: before the government starts channelling more funds to the provincial and district administrations, areas of reference must be carefully mapped out, especially between the security forces. The usefulness of the presence of the Army may be questioned. Also, in order to avoid factions taking over project money or positions in the government, projects must allow for input of the beneficiary communities and the Civil Service Commission and/or the provincial government should be allowed to propose or vet candidates.

### **North, South and West Wardak**

When the Taliban fled and local shuras took over the district administration - and before they were ousted by rival commanders - the shuras of Saidabad, Chak-i Wardak, Jaghatu and Deh Mirdad together elected a "provincial" shura headed by Maulavi Mohammed Hassan. These four districts are populated by Pashtuns that call themselves "Wardakis" (of the Ghilzai tribe). They refer to the inhabitants of the districts of Maidan, Nerkh and Jalrez as "Maidanis" - these have a more mixed population, with Tajik, Hazara and Durrani Pashtun minorities - while the western districts of Behsud-1 and Behsud-2 are mostly populated by Hazaras.

The Hazaras have historically not had power in Wardak, which has been disputed between the Wardaki Pashtuns and the minority Tajiks. Although usually the Wardakis have ruled the province named after them, currently - and apparently also in the years between 1992 and 1995 - the Tajiks have a disproportionate share of power. This is a situation similar to that of Paktia, where the urban Tajik minority in Gardez has an influence that is better explained by the dominance of Tajiks in the central government than by their numbers in Paktia.

As noted above, there are few signs of ethnic tension in the province. In the long run, however, if this situation doesn't change, one may expect an increasing grudge of Wardaki Pashtuns against the local Tajiks and the central government.

### **The Social and Political Role of District Administrations**

The legislative branch of the State is not represented at either district or provincial level. The judiciary is functioning but is overshadowed by the executive<sup>3</sup>. Thus the executive - the district or provincial administration - is the main function of government at the sub-national level. There is no system of checks and balances on executive power, although in practice the local shuras may sometimes perform such a function.

The district administrators' main function, in their own words, is to provide an interface between the government and the people. Inhabitants with any kind of request, be it judicial, administrative or other, tend to come and meet the wuluswal first. The provincial authorities have a similar kind of role, be it at a higher level. Therefore the wuluswals and the provincial authorities we met usually began the meeting with a long list of grievances and requests of the population that they are unable to answer to.

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<sup>3</sup> The three national judiciary institutions are present at the district level: the District Court (*mahqameh*) with 3-4 staff, the Attorney (*saranwal*) with 2-4 staff and the Department of Justice (*Mudiri-ye Huquq*<sup>3</sup>), usually 1 person. Only the district court represents the judiciary given that the attorney reports to the executive and that the department of justice is part of the administration. In addition the court deals mostly with matters referred to it by the district governor or the attorney.

**List of needs given spontaneously by the Woluswal of Chak-i Wardak, Ghausuddin Shahrukh:**

Buildings for the district administration and other governmental departments - furniture and stationery - means of transportation, including for the police - food - means of communication with Maidan Shahr and Kabul - uniforms for the police - roads - cleaning of the reservoir, where the silt has not been cleared since the construction of the dam - repair or replacement of three of the four turbines - better trained doctors - female doctors - health and veterinary clinics in remote areas - mother-child healthcare - improved seeds and agricultural advice - fertilizers - deep wells - cleaning of the karezes and springs - buildings for girls' schools - more professional teachers - textbooks and libraries

The Woluswals either refer the matters to local "shuras" (see below), discuss it with the heads of the departments of the line ministries, send cases to the local prosecutor or the district court or, if the matter justifies it, refer it to the provincial government. Thus they truly do seem to perform the function of a hub between the population and the different agencies and levels of government - although their capability to solve the problems of the districts' inhabitants is much impaired by lack of resources. One suspects that their ability to deliver depends more on their linkage to networks of political patronage (mujahideen factions, contacts in the capital...). In Wardak this seems to have been disrupted by the rotating among districts of the woluswals<sup>4</sup>. In return they hardly interfere in the lives of the population, besides a yearly (modest) tax collection from shopkeepers. In summary, one could say their main function is not political but social.

As the Governor clarified, there is no limit to the length of time a district governor can serve. If he doesn't commit a crime or show corrupt behaviour, he can be woluswal for life.

### Functioning of Shuras

We met two distinct types of district councils (shuras) in Wardak: councils of elders somehow selected by the community and councils convoked by the district governor.

The shura of Chak-i Wardak is of the former type. It is composed of the commanders of the *hauzas* (a cluster of villages, of which there are 13 in this district): not military commanders, but elders that have acquired their legitimacy during the resistance against the Soviets. Each *hauza* decides on a group of five elders to represent the area, of which one is head. Therefore there are 65 members of the shura, and they meet regularly every 15 days with the district authorities, at the beginning and the middle of each month.

In Saidabad and Jalrez the shuras we met were convoked by the district governor. It is difficult to say how representative they were of the population, and it was doubtful whether the same groups of people would meet under ordinary circumstances. The fact that the woluswals are not native of the district they serve in probably ensures better representation in such councils.

Other shuras may be convened ad hoc with different groups of the population. For example, some NGOs work with community shuras for their projects - the members of such shuras then come from the project area. The woluswal of Chak-i Wardak indicated that he would sometimes invite religious elders or others according to the subject to be discussed (these would then be "extraordinary council meetings").

The district authorities, mainly the woluswal, representatives of the judiciary and the police chief, commonly participate in the gatherings of the shura. This seems to indicate a balance of power in favour of the local elders, because in the different shuras observed (here and also elsewhere in the region on

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<sup>4</sup> For example, it appears that the woluswal in Chak-i Wardak, Ghausuddin, catered mainly to the needs of the Tajik minority to which he belongs when he was district governor in Jalrez. In Chak-i Wardak, where there are no Tajiks, he no longer belongs to this network of political patronage.

other occasions) the district authorities make no attempt to steer the meeting, and the elders show themselves quite critical about government policy and the security situation.

The shura members bring forward matters of concern to their communities to the district authorities. In the case of the Chak-i Wardak shura, the members claimed to prioritize issues first and set the agenda. If that doesn't happen, it usually are the more venerable members of the shura who set the agenda. Social hierarchy is strictly observed, and one rarely notices lack of respect among the members during deliberations.

The woluswal can also put matters to the council members. For example, in Chak-i Wardak the woluswal had asked the council members to decide on which roads needed most urgent repair under the UNOPS road repair scheme. Other matters typically brought to the shura are judicial ones, of which land disputes tend to be the most common. In Chak-i Wardak the shura had quite a sophisticated arbitration mechanism, whereby both sides in the dispute would agree on a special jury of six shura members not connected to the dispute (for more information on the role of shuras in the resolution of legal disputes see the paper by Alex Thier).

Given the admitted inability of woluswals to solve many of the communities' problems, the councils sometimes take matters directly to Kabul. In Chak-i Wardak the shura has recently submitted petitions to both the MRRD and to the Ministry of Agriculture. After writing the petition and signing it, the elders had it countersigned by first the woluswal, and then by the provincial governor. Then they sent a delegation to Kabul, who arranged a meeting with the Ministry. This cannot be done without a contact that helps them get an appointment. The shura showed us the letters that had been commented on and signed by Minister Hanif Atmar of the MRRD and a high official in the Ministry of Agriculture, respectively. The delegation then returned to the department of the ministry in question in Maidan with the instructions of the Minister to convince them to follow up on the request.

When asked, the elders convoked by the woluswals in Saidabad and Jalrez agreed that district shuras are useful institutions, and the woluswals admit that they are useful mechanisms for governance. The shuras support government institutions, and altogether the shuras and the district administration appear to be in mutually supportive symbiosis. However one should take into consideration the apprehensions of the Governor, who stated that as long as the province is not thoroughly disarmed and the government strengthens its footing throughout the province, shuras are prone to be controlled by factional interests. Once these conditions have been met, it would be useful to build on this local governance institution by

- Organizing elections at the *hauza* level on a periodical basis
- Giving the elected shura an official status as "district council" with defined terms of reference
- Providing the shura with a building and cash for expenses (from local taxes)

Moreover Governor Saifullah is in favour of creating a provincial shura that would be composed of delegates of district shuras - when the time is ripe. However he sees no need to formalize this arrangement, which may reflect his concern not to limit his own authority.

### **A Note on Loya Jirga Delegates**

In the three districts visited the delegates to the Emergency Loya Jirga played no role whatsoever, not even as members of the district shura. In Saidabad the council elders seemed content with the electoral process; in Jalrez they showed no interest for the topic; while in Chak-i Wardak they were incensed with the process, in which the commanders (Muzafaruddin and Nangiyalai) had not allowed elections to take place, forcing the Loya Jirga Commission to appoint members instead. As in other cases throughout the

country, the elders were not happy with the Commission's appointees, claiming they were "from outside the district".

Therefore suggestions by UNAMA, the MRRD or the Presidency to involve Loya Jirga delegates as representatives of their constituencies must be assessed critically. In fact Governor Saifullah has told Minister Atmar as much, advising him to invite elders to the planned provincial coordination meetings instead of Loya Jirga delegates.

## Police

According to the data given by the police department in Maidan Shahr there are 1441 police posts in Wardak, of which 898 are currently occupied.

Posts	Province		Saidabad		Chak-i Wardak		Jalrez	
	Total	Current	Total	Current	Total	Current	Total	Current
<b>Officers</b>	396	225	24		24	6	20	6
<b>Sarbazan<sup>5</sup></b>	101	97	6		6	6	6	6
<b>Police</b>	829	516	95		63	17	65	65
<b>Administration</b>	31	11	3		3	0	3	1
<b>Support Staff</b>	84	49						
<b>Total</b>	<b>1441</b>	<b>898</b>						

According to data given by the Moustoufiat in Maidan Shahr, of the 898 active police 400 are based in Maidan, and the remaining ca 500 in the districts. This gives an average of 62 active police per district.

The police force seems to have been almost entirely taken over by men loyal to Abdul Ahmad, the police chief, himself a long-standing supporter of Sayyaf. This reflects negatively on their ability to gain the confidence of the population, who sees the police as the main security threat they face, since many of the thieves operating in the province have been identified as police staff<sup>6</sup>.

As an example all the 65 policemen recruited in the multi-ethnic district of Jalrez come from one single village. They were part of a band of mujahideen fighters loyal to Sayyaf. Since they have no vehicles, when they need to move in the district they stop a car at random and force the driver to take them to wherever they want to go.

Another negative consequence of the policy of staffing the Police according to patronage networks is that most police officers are not trained professionally. In Jalrez 4 out of 6 police officers have no formal training, in Saidabad at least half of them are not professionals, while in Chak-i Wardak no precise figures could be obtained, but professional police officers similarly complained of the lack of formal training among their colleagues.

Training is thus a priority for the police according to all interlocutors. It might however be necessary to clean out the force before embarking on training programmes.

Besides the complete lack of basic equipment, another concern for police officers spoken to is the non-payment of salaries (in Saidabad and Jalrez) and an unfair system of promotions, where professional officers are being bypassed by all those that have better connections in the Ministry.

<sup>5</sup> Apparently Non-Commanding Officers

<sup>6</sup> This has been confirmed by many separate reports received over the last 16 months. Other crimes are attributed to the military

### **National Security Department**

Most of the operatives of the National Security Department in Wardak are unofficial or "undercover". The Moustoufiat gives a total of 21 staff, which are administrative, and all based in Maidan Shahr. The head of the local NSD department, Shir Mohammed Takana, said that the total structure allows for some 320 posts, of which about 200 are currently filled; but he could not give any further detail without permission from the NSD in Kabul. The head of the "Commissary" in Maidan Shahr (see below) said however that he had organized the recruitment of 47 NCOs for the provincial NSD who together form an "intervention group" that is based in the provincial capital. He said that another 10 NCOs had been recruited through the "Commissary" for the districts. The representatives of the NSD in the districts, who although unofficial are quite prominent (they participated in most of our meetings), gave me the following data:

Saidabad: 4 agents

Chak-i Wardak: 6 agents

Jalrez: 2 agents

The head of the provincial NSD stated that the main security threat faced is the proliferation of weapons, and he is in favour of a complete disarmament of all factions. Besides financial support for their operations (equipment and food allowances) he requested training in modern techniques.

He made a point of showing us his office and his staff, of which he said 40% are Tajik, 40% Pashtun and 20% Hazara. More importantly than this ethnic balance (which does anyhow not reflect the ethnic composition of the provincial population, probably 75% Pashtun, 20% Hazara and 5% Tajik) is the fact that many of his staff worked for previous governments, including the Communist regime that he fought. He has not staffed the department exclusively with his own people, as the police chief has done.

However a disproportionate amount of operatives, also in the districts, come from Kabul or other Tajik provinces. This obviously limits their ability to gather sensitive operation, but does increase their loyalty to the regime. Therefore the prime objective of the NSD in Wardak - despite the intentions proclaimed by its head - seems to be political control rather than national security. As the head of the NSD in Chak-i Wardak clumsily said, they need funds "to buy off people" among other things.

### **The "Commissary" and the Military**

To our surprise we learnt that the rank and file of the Police, the National Security Department and the Army are recruited through a provincial body called the "Commissary". This department belongs to the Ministry of Defence but also recruits for the Ministry of Interior and the National Security Department, who are thus only responsible for appointing their respective officers and administrative staff.

The Commissary used to have a representative in each district. Its provincial structure allows for 44 posts, of which 28 are occupied: 12 officers, 7 admin staff and 9 support staff. Its functions are that of a personnel bureau. For example they are tasked with compiling the daily attendance sheets for all the effectives, from the three branches of security.

The Commissary has recruited about 700 soldiers for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division stationed in Maidan. If one applies the usual ratio of soldiers to officers, administrative staff and support staff the total military presence in Wardak is probably about 1200 people.

Most of these are in the base in the provincial capital, but we learnt that a detachment of some 120 soldiers commanded by Redigul (an ex-Hezb-e Islami commander) is stationed in Saidabad, near the locality of Tapetu. It was not clear what the reason of their presence there was.

*END*