



Afghans likely to be our best ally (Afghans want development, not a return to the past)

21st July, 2010

A new survey shows that 75% of Afghans echo President Hamid Karzai's call for insurgents to lay down their arms and reconcile with the government of Afghanistan.

The research – which was conducted in May 2010 across all seven regions – demonstrated that most Afghans (64%) viewed security as one of their foremost concerns. This chimes with Karzai's opening address at the Kabul Conference where he committed his government to take charge of the country's security by end of 2014.

Commenting on the findings, Afghan specialist and author of the report, Claire Spencer says "We see Afghans showing a sense of realism that the price of not reconciling with the Taliban is a continuation of violence and risk – the very thing that Afghans abhor."

The research indicates that Afghans want to see their government taking charge of key aspects of running the country. 79% of Afghans wanted to see the government, Afghan army and police taking responsibility for security. Over 70% wanted the government through its ministries to take charge of health and education. Whereas only 2% thought international bodies should tackle corruption and none of the respondents said foreign forces should play a role in combating crime. At the same time, joint responsibility between central government, governor and local elders is favoured for reconstruction and development of local communities, and Afghans themselves are ready to work on projects that improve their communities.

Spencer adds "The findings show that the international community has a natural ally in the form of everyday Afghans who seem to be saying that they do not want a return to factionalised rule by warlords and extremists in a country that is isolated from the rest of the world".

Although Afghans in the main indicate through the research that they want to go it alone, and this includes development of their local communities, they do look to the International Community for support in the form of funding, passing on knowledge and skills and the management of the actual reconstruction and development.

The implication for the international community is that the population of Afghanistan is more in tune with its aims than previously thought.

The study shows that Afghans are now looking to their own government to resolve their country's problems and move forward. Given this has been the focus of the International Military Forces and International Agencies this is an encouraging finding.

For further information contact:

claire.spencer@itofiresearch.com

Tel. + 44 (0) 203 178 2160

Mobile + 44 (0) 7786 543506