

The Afghan Perspective

Adapted from the broadcast audio segment; use the audio player to listen to the story in its entirety.
With NATO forces due to depart by the end of 2014, everyday Afghans are feeling a range of emotions.

Reporter Fareedoone Aryan went out on the streets of Kabul to talk with people about the strategic partnership agreement President Obama recently signed.

Rozi Zalmai from Ningarhar Province is relieved to see [NATO] go:

"I think it is not possible for NATO to stay for a long time in Afghanistan, and the reason behind my comment is that they are involved in night raids on the wrong targets. They are killing innocent people and children. They are targeting people on the basis of false reports and information. In this way, it is not possible to bring peace."

But Zalmai's views were not widely shared by others. Traffic police major Abdul Wasi, who works in Kabul, wants NATO forces stay for a while:

"If they leave civil war will start again. We are happy, because people are now living in prosperity and justice. So if they leave, the poor people of Afghanistan will be killed and destroyed. If the United States gives us modern weapons, our forces will be able to fight against their enemies. Otherwise, it is impossible. They can leave when our forces become strong to defend our country."

Others, like Malalai Niazi, are concerned that the country could descend into chaos, and that a short-staffed Afghan army won't be able to guarantee security:

"I don't think that Afghan security forces are able to take over the security responsibilities. It's possible for Afghan forces to take over when they have modern weapons, good food to eat, and everything that an army needs. Otherwise, they can do nothing."

Mohammad Khalil, a soldier at Kapisa police headquarters, says French troops left his area prematurely:

"When French forces left Kapisa, we had daily casualties. Yesterday, one of our ranger vehicles was destroyed. We don't have modern weapons and tanks so we are not able to face terrorists. After 10 years, we can see a lot of changes in our country, so if Americans and NATO forces stay for 10 more years, they must provide tanks, and jets to the air force."

Some Afghans, like Sharzad Akbar, acknowledge that a handover of security duties should be gradual:

"There is some worry that the security situation may change. On withdrawal itself, I think if it's phased, that's fine. One day we have to take care of our own security by ourselves."

The United States recently signed a strategic partnership agreement to support Afghanistan, likely with both money and troops for a decade after NATO leaves. The details of the agreement have yet to be worked out and whether it will satisfy the needs and emotions of everyday Afghans is not yet clear.