



Defending the crossroads, protecting the borders

Mohammad Rahmann scans the border crossing at Torkham looking for anything out of place. He is one of the officers assigned to guard one of Afghanistan's busiest link, to its neighbor, Pakistan. Thousands of people cross this checkpoint daily.

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TORKHAM, Afghanistan – Near the eastern fringes of Afghanistan, a remote crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan is where the war on terrorism is being waged by young men trying to guard their country from Islamic extremists bent on wrecking havoc on its population.

The border crossing at Torkham, illustrates the difficult task of keeping Taliban insurgents and criminal elements out of Afghanistan, while still allowing the free flow of people and commerce to cross between the tribal areas of Pakistan and the eastern provinces of Afghanistan.

“We are doing the best we

can with what we currently have on hand,” said Col. Qader Gul, executive officer with the Afghan Border Police 1st Kandak. “I have many kilometers of border my men are responsible for securing. We do our best, but we are still in the early phases of building an effective border police.”

Gul specifically is in need of more men.

“As of now there are too few men guarding the very porous border between Pakistan, but our numbers are growing,” he said. “This is where the fight against terrorism starts. If we can keep them from crossing from Pakistan into Afghanistan it would improve the security of our country significantly.”

But in Torkham, the



A jingle truck loaded with people and farm animals crosses into Afghanistan. Afghan Border Police are responsible to making sure the truck is free of contraband and dangerous items.

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Left - A mother and daughter cross into Afghanistan, passing by the watchful Afghan Border Police.

Below - An Afghan border police officer stands feet from the Pakistan border as he waves through jingle trucks loaded with commerce and people in and out of Afghanistan.



task is overwhelming for the few ABP on duty. Even though this was a light traffic day, there was still a high volume of people crossing the border, meaning most people only get a cursory inspection.

Standing just feet from his Pakistani counterpart, Mohammad Rahmann has been a border patrol officer for about two years and believes in the mission.

“This is where the security of my country begins,” Rahmann said. “Right here on the border, we’re Afghanistan’s first

line of defense against the terrorists and I am proud to do my part in making my country secure.”

As the sun beats down on Rahmann and his fellow officers, thousands of people walk past him. Some are traders, some are refugees and some are Taliban, said Rahmann.

“We have to screen these people and their wares as they come in,” he said. “There are many people who are just here to trade, or to visit family on the other side of the border, but there are the few who wish to cause trouble for my countrymen and I am determined to help stop them.”

Gul sees hope and a future for his country with men such as Rahmann standing guard over the vast border.

“With good and reliable men, we will defeat all forms of terrorism and make our country prosperous,” Gul said. “It is just going to take a lot of work, reform and time for it all to into place for us. I have no doubt it will happen.”



Above - Looking into Pakistan, three men walk to the border checkpoint to be greeted by Afghan Border Police. The ABP mission is to make sure people crossing into Afghanistan are not Taliban insurgents, criminals or anyone bent on wrecking havoc in the country.